

GRAFFITI TIPS & PREVENTION

What is Graffiti?

- Graffiti is the unauthorized writing or drawing on any surface, building or structure.
- Graffiti can be painted, drawn, etched or scratched into a surface.
- One of the most prevalent forms of graffiti is “tagging”.
- “Tagging” is a simple, quick style of graffiti, involving the marking of the tagger’s initials, symbol or alias.

How does graffiti affect our community?

- If not removed quickly, graffiti sends out a message that people do not care about their neighborhood.
- It also causes the area to look unsafe and people may question their personal safety.
- By allowing graffiti to remain in our neighborhoods, we are creating an open invitation for more littering, loitering and graffiti.
- In addition, failure to quickly respond to the presence of graffiti may also lead to an increase in other crimes and acts of violence.

Who are the victims of graffiti vandalism?

- Graffiti is a crime that costs the community hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in painting and removal costs.
- Whether the target is private or public property, graffiti vandalism affects the entire community.
- Money allocated to graffiti clean up is no longer available to other valuable community initiatives and programs.
- Graffiti also impacts our city’s image, deters patronage of commercial areas and negatively impacts on investment potential and maximum return on residential real estate.

What can I do to prevent graffiti?

- Increase lighting around your property, add motion sensor lighting to ensure your property appears occupied at all times.
- Examine your property to determine if you have any walls or fences that are vulnerable to graffiti vandalism, it is important to eliminate “blank canvases” on your property. One way to eliminate vulnerable surfaces is to plant vegetation such as ivy or thorny bushes in front of vulnerable walls.
- Remove structures that will enable access to second storeys,

these may include ladders or dumpsters. Second storey walls allow for the high visibility of graffiti vandalism.

- Cover walls with protective anti-graffiti coatings. This is recommended if your property has stucco, brick or any other surface that may not be able to be painted over.

Can I clean up graffiti on my own?

- Property owners are responsible for painting over or removing graffiti on their own property.
- Residents are encouraged to do so as soon after the graffiti appears, as this will reduce the opportunity for the offenders to receive notoriety for their crime.
- If you are interested in assisting with graffiti removal from someone else’s property, you will require the permission of the property owner before removing the graffiti.

Tips for removing graffiti:

- Apply a primer coat to the surface to prevent the graffiti from “bleeding” through the topcoat.

- Following the primer coat, apply two coats of latex paint.
- Paint over graffiti with latex paint.
- Residents are encouraged to keep an extra gallon of paint on hand, so that way they will be able to respond to the vandalism as soon as it appears.
- On bare surfaces such as untreated concrete, consider removal of graffiti with chemical solvents rather than paint.

How can we stop graffiti vandalism?

There are a number of positive steps residents can take to reduce the occurrence of graffiti vandalism and facilitate the reclamation of their neighborhoods and town centers.

RECOGNIZE graffiti is a crime!

Don't become immune to the presence of graffiti; recognize that it is not acceptable to allow graffiti to become part of the urban landscape.

REPORT graffiti on all public or private property

Reporting graffiti is important for two reasons:

1. the appropriate steps can be taken for quick removal.
2. tracking of graffiti incidents is necessary in order to determine patterns of vandalism.

If you witness an act of graffiti vandalism in progress, please contact 911 immediately.

REMOVE graffiti within 78 hours

Graffiti vandals generally seek recognition and attention from their peers, by removing tags quickly and consistently, offenders are not able to receive the desired notoriety.

Failure to remove graffiti, may also lead to the appearance of additional graffiti on or nearby the original site.

Volunteer Opportunities!

Whether vandals target public or private property, their crime affects the entire community.

Do your part in helping to keep

Athabasca beautiful by volunteering your time.

Here's how you can help:

Develop a Graffiti Eradication Team.

Volunteers take to the streets to remove graffiti from light standards, mailboxes, transformers and other forms of street furniture.

Develop an Adopt-A-Spot program.

Individuals, organizations and/or businesses are invited to adopt a light standard, mailbox, utility transformer, or other "spot" and pledge to keep it graffiti free for a minimum of 6 months.

Organize a clean up event in your neighborhood.