

Graffiti in Doylestown

Graffiti is the malicious defacement of public and private property. It is not art. It is not an artistic expression. It is not free speech. It is a form of vandalism which is found in both urban and rural areas alike. The best way to combat the blighting effect and reduction of property values that graffiti can cause is for property owners to aggressively remove the offending marks as soon as they appear. This countermeasure deprives the culprit of any satisfaction in seeing their work on public display. If they are persistent, then they are forced to return and risk capture again. Most vandals are not that motivated. Doylestown Borough is committed to fighting this criminal activity, but the entire community must join the fight. This pamphlet offers some technical and common sense advice for the removal and prevention of graffiti in our town.

The Borough Can Help

In addition to stepped up police patrols, the Borough offers free chemicals and will lend hand tools and safety equipment to residents and property owners who have been victims of a graffiti attack:

Removal Chemicals

While supplies last, free graffiti mark removers and solvents are available at no charge to any resident or owner.

Removal Tools & Equipment

The Borough will lend free of charge rubbing stones, wire brushes, safety glasses, and rubber work gloves to any property owner who is removing graffiti. We will also offer technical assistance when possible.

Removal Help

Although the Borough can't have its personnel clean off your graffiti for you, help is available. The Youth Diversion Panel is an alternative sentencing program for local youths who are in trouble with the law. By filing a request with the Borough, the Panel can assign youths to assist property owners with graffiti removal.

RENT-A-KID program of the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce is a source for labor to assist in graffiti removal and other chores. More information can be obtained by calling the C.B.C.C.

Borough of Doylestown



Citizen's Guide to the Removal and Prevention of

GRAFFITI

REMOVAL TECHNIQUES

The most common graffiti is spray paint or markers on buildings, structures and vehicles. If the marks cannot be painted over, then the techniques for removal depend on the type of surfaces painted and the type of paint or marker used. There are 2 categories of surfaces:

Porous

Unfinished wood
Brick, masonry, concrete

Non-porous

Finished Wood
Vinyl & Aluminum Siding
Glass and metals
Your car

There are 2 categories of removal techniques:

Mechanical (Abrasive)

Sanding
Scraping
Wire brushes
Rubbing Stones
Grinding
Water Blasting
Sand Blasting

Chemical

Soaps and Cleaners
Aerosol Graffiti Removers
Thinners & Solvents
Acids

THE PAINT-OVER OPTION

Even if you don't have the right color paint, paint stores now have computers which can exactly match the color of any existing paint. These computers have optical scanners which read the exact color spectrum of a sample chip, including fading and even surface dirt, and create a formula to make a color matching batch of paint. This technology allows a property owner to buy just enough paint to cover the graffiti and avoid having to repaint the entire wall or building.

POROUS SURFACES

These types of surfaces are the most challenging to remove graffiti from because the surface absorbs a certain amount of paint. A combination of chemicals such as commercial graffiti removers or muriatic acid followed by mechanical techniques such as rubbing stones, grinding, water blasting and sandblasting are required to effectively clean most porous surfaces. Care should be exercised, directions followed, and safety equipment utilized when using chemicals as most will remove your skin as well as your graffiti.

NON-POROUS SURFACES

On these surfaces most chemical removers will do a superb job in the dissolution and removal of latex and oil based paints. Mechanical techniques will also work well although aggressive cleaning as well as many chemicals may damage or discolor non-porous finishes. Chemicals and mechanical removal should be performed with extreme caution on finished surfaces such as your car.

PREVENTION

It is impossible to guard an individual property from a determined vandal. But things can be done to avoid being a victim. Exterior nighttime illumination can be an effective deterrent. You must deny the vandal privacy. A well placed spotlight on a remote garage or outbuilding can eliminate a hiding spot and expose the vandal to the view of police patrols. Most vandals do not come from other communities, they are home grown. The ones that hang out in the neighborhood at 8:00pm are usually still around at 2:00am when most graffiti occurs. Find out names. Call the Borough Police. Join the fight!