

*Working
towards a clean
and green
Washington,
DC*

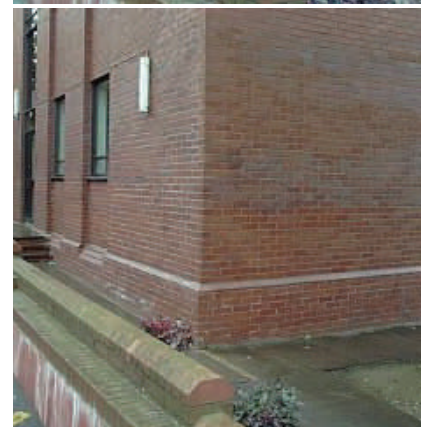
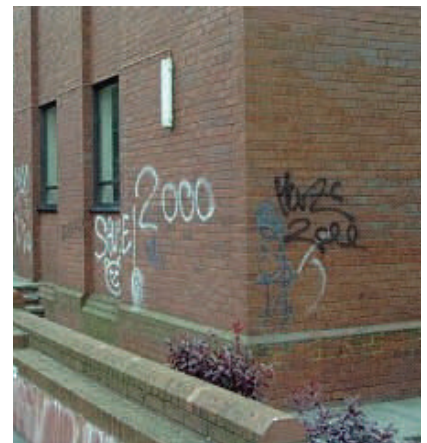
GRAFFITI

- a drawing or writing that is scratched, painted or sprayed on walls or other surfaces in public places.

WE SEE GRAFFITI IN MANY AREAS IN THE CITY on buildings, overpasses, train cars, fences, desks, and other surfaces. Graffiti is done illegally and it's against the law — graffiti is vandalism and **it is an arrestable offense**. Concerned District of Columbia residents can pitch in to work with City services to help prevent graffiti.

HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT GRAFFITI?

- The best way to prevent graffiti is to remove it as soon as possible. Sometimes this may be difficult but studies show that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of the graffiti occurring again.
- Plant trees or other greenery near a graffiti-plagued wall. This helps to reduce access to the wall.
- Plan a paint-brush mural to cover a wall continuously plagued with graffiti. If you do not own the property you must first get permission from the owner.
- Adopt a spot in your community and make sure it stays clean and free of graffiti. School principals can encourage their classroom teachers to adopt a spot on the school grounds.
- Request a presentation on graffiti prevention for your neighborhood group or for a local school.
- Coordinate a graffiti awareness campaign at a local school or in your community. For assistance or more ideas you can visit www.graffitihurts.org or call the Office of the Clean City.
- Make a request for lighting to be installed in areas that are dark and often hit with graffiti by calling the Mayor's Citywide Call Center at (202) 727-1000 or visiting www.dc.gov.



Pictured above: Before and after graffiti removal.



Pictured right: A graffiti-plagued wall at 13th and U Streets, N.W., was turned into a beautiful mural.

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Government of the
District of Columbia

HOW DOES GRAFFITI EFFECT ME AND MY COMMUNITY?

- Graffiti removal is expensive and diverts tax dollars from funds that are needed for schools, roads, parks, and other city improvements.
- Graffiti decreases residents' feelings of safety, decreases property value, and can contribute to loss of business growth and tourism.
- Areas filled with graffiti are less appealing to those who may be looking to buy or rent property. Property becomes more difficult to sell.
- Graffiti damages property and sends a signal that no one cares about the community which in turn welcomes crime and street delinquency into your neighborhood.

ORGANIZE A GRAFFITI WATCH

You and your neighbors can be the “eyes” of your neighborhood, surveying, documenting and reporting graffiti to the Mayor’s Citywide Call Center at (202)727-1000.

Keep these things in mind that will help fight graffiti:

- Make a list of patterns words, names, and designs that appear most frequently.
- Keep records of locations where graffiti most often appears.
- Report your findings by calling the Mayor's Citywide Call Center.
- Involve young people in all vandalism prevention efforts.
- When you see that a building has been vandalized by graffiti be sure to contact the property owner and stress the importance of quick cleanup. Form a neighborhood group to help property owners clean up graffiti quickly.
- After a mural has been painted, it is important that a group is identified to perform the maintenance on the mural, especially if graffiti does resurface.

Many of the facts and figures used in this tip sheet are from the Graffiti Hurts® website, www.graffitihurts.org.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHARGES AND PENALTIES

DEFACING PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY. Includes writing on, drawing on, or painting on, property, buildings, statues, or monuments. The maximum penalty is a \$1,000 fine and/or 180 days in jail. A person convicted of violating this provision may *also* be required to perform community service. (D.C. Code 22-3312.01)

The District of Columbia courts shall find parents or guardians civilly liable for all fines imposed or payments for abatement required if the minor cannot pay within a reasonable period of time established by the court.