

Why Graffiti Appears

The majority of graffiti is done by graffiti vandals known as "taggers", who are motivated by the need to be recognized. They believe that the more often they write their street signature, or "tag", the more respect they earn from other vandals. Places that are risky to "tag", such as bridges enhance this respect. The excitement that comes from doing something illegal - shoplifting material or trespassing - and the rebellious nature of their actions also motivate taggers. Others deface public areas to show that they, and not the agency responsible, are in control. Graffiti vandals like to believe they are outside of the community's social structure and see graffiti as a means of expression.

Who Does It?

Most graffiti is done by youths whose ages range from pre-teens to early 20's. Younger children and adults have also been caught. Graffiti vandals come from every ethnic and income background. Because vandals like to mark surfaces where peers will recognize their "tag", most graffiti in a community is done by those who live there.

Graffiti & Gangs

Many people believe that graffiti signals the presence of a gang. While gang graffiti is unnerving, less than 10% of all graffiti nationwide, is gang related.

Should I Be Concerned?

- Graffiti is not a "Victimless crime". Everyone - children, parents, business owners & taxpayers - is hurt by graffiti.
- It is estimated that several billion dollars is spent each year by communities, public transit agencies, residents & businesses to remove graffiti or repair the damage it causes.
- Many people associate graffiti with the general decline of an area, even if it's not true. Merchants can lose business because customers feel the neighborhood is no longer safe.
- Graffiti is not just a harmless teen-age phase. Graffiti vandals are at an increased risk of becoming involved in shoplifting or other criminal activity, drugs, and being injured while "tagging" dangerous locations. They can be assaulted when they mark over someone else's "tag".

- When left untouched, graffiti sends the wrong message - that we can not keep order in our community.

What Can I Do?

- Report graffiti vandalism to Belmont Police.
- Remove graffiti immediately and continuously from your property. Vandals will learn their time and materials are being wasted and will move to another spot. The City of Belmont can help with this (read on).
- Keeping your property well-lit, clean, and landscaped will help discourage graffiti.
- Plant native shrubs with prickly or thorny foliage near walls and fences.
- Be part of a community or neighborhood improvement program. Join or help organize cleanup and beautification efforts.
- Talk to your children about respecting public & private property.

Belmont Graffiti Abatement Program

Sections 7-601 through 7-610 of the Belmont City Code deal with the issue of graffiti. Important points are:

- Graffiti must be painted out within 15 days of discovery.
- The City will reimburse victims for the cost of painting out graffiti up to \$150 for the first incident and up to \$100 for each incident thereafter. Receipts must accompany claims for reimbursement.
- If graffiti is not painted out within the required time, the City can have it painted out and charge the victim for the cost of painting it out.

How Do I Apply for Reimbursement?

Contact the Belmont Police Department
Graffiti Abatement Program
One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont
Phone: (650) 595-7400



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***Belmont Police
Department***

***Graffiti Abatement &
Prevention Program***

