



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

*Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe*

GRAFFITI

For Parents and
Property Owners

ottawapolice.ca

Ottawa

WHAT IS GRAFFITI?

Graffiti is the etching, painting covering or otherwise placing of a mark on public or private property.

The most common type of graffiti in the Ottawa area is "tagging". Tagging is the quick and repetitive writing, painting or "bombing" of a word, name, symbol or acronym that may or may not contain letters, numbers, or symbols. Other types of graffiti include: gang, hate-based, personalized, political and profane.

Graffiti can be found almost everywhere — in the downtown core, suburban neighbourhoods and rural communities. It exists on many surfaces including bridges, buildings, walls, utility boxes, mailboxes, vehicles, and in parks.

Graffiti is a crime — When graffiti is placed on public or private property without the permission of the owner, it is considered an act of vandalism and is against the law.

WHO IS AFFECTED?

Graffiti vandalism is not a victimless crime.

When graffiti is left to spread in the community it can leave the impression that nobody cares or that nobody is in control. This is called the "broken window" syndrome. When graffiti is allowed to spread, it can harm economic development and lead to further disorder and more significant crime to property.

Unwanted graffiti defaces the surface of the vandalized property. Removal of graffiti is expensive and may cause damage to the original surface.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO COMBAT GRAFFITI?

The City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Police Service in partnership with representatives of the community are proud to be working together to eradicate graffiti vandalism as part of our role in reducing graffiti vandalism in our city.

To achieve this goal, our approach is based on a 4E model of graffiti management.

- Eradication:** Removing graffiti quickly and efficiently.
- Empowerment:** Maximizing use of available resources and relationships.
- Education:** Building awareness about how to prevent and remove graffiti.
- Enforcement:** Applying municipal and penal code laws when necessary.

TAKING ACTION

The best way to reduce the spread of graffiti is to remove it quickly and learn how to prevent it from returning.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Community members play a vital role in keeping their neighbourhoods graffiti free. Graffiti vandals want their work to be seen. Prompt cover-up/removal is the most effective method of combating the problem. If graffiti is covered-up/removed quickly, future acts of graffiti are discouraged. Also, the sooner removal is attempted, the easier it is to remove the graffiti. When you see graffiti in your neighbourhood, it is important to report it.

TIPS TO DETER GRAFFITI

As a property owner, there are measures you can take to deter graffiti. They include:

- Plant vines, shrubs or thorny plants to limit access to walls.
- Increase lighting and visibility. Consider motion or sensor lights to draw attention to any movement on your property.
- Move vehicles, dumpsters or other items away from walls and cover pipes to prevent access to the roof or upper levels of a building.
- Consider a graffiti repellent to protect surfaces against graffiti.
- Use fences and other barriers to discourage through traffic.
- Encourage community pride and respect in your neighbourhood and involve youth in community graffiti removal projects.
- Encourage neighbours to look out for each other. Start up a Neighbourhood Watch program in your neighbourhood.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

If you have concerns your teen is involved in graffiti, talk to him/her about it. Under the *Parental Responsibility Act*, you are financially responsible for property loss, damage or destruction intentionally caused by your children who are under 18 years of age. More information about the *Act* can be found at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.

Our youth need to learn to respect themselves and the community they live in and know that graffiti on private or public property is illegal and disrespectful.

- Be aware of materials they keep associated with graffiti (i.e. spray paint cans and tips, markers, shoe polish containers, etching acid, sand paper, wood-working tools, stencils, rocks, nails, glass cutters, screw drivers, etc.). They may have other indications they are involved in graffiti such as:
 - > Marker or paint stains on hands or clothing
 - > Graffiti tags on clothing, school books or back packs
 - > Owns a sketchbook containing graffiti tags or cartoon-like art
 - > Has a quantity of sticker name tags used for sticker tagging
 - > Graffiti tags appear on furniture, walls or other objects in their room
 - > Frequents graffiti Web sites and reads graffiti magazines
 - > Has a nickname used by his/her friends
 - > Spends time with other youths displaying the above characteristics
- Encourage involvement in positive activities such as sports or school events.
- Help them express their creative energy in a positive way including art classes or design projects.
- If you know your teen is involved in graffiti vandalism, consider prohibiting them from associating with other graffiti vandals.


If you need further assistance, contact a youth service agency in your area or the Ottawa Police Service Youth Section at 613-236-1222, ext. 5355.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Most graffiti can be removed with graffiti removal products and pressure washing. If you require professional assistance, look in the yellow pages under: graffiti removal, building cleaning, building maintenance or cleaning systems. You can also search the Internet for companies in your area.


Private property owners are responsible for the removal of graffiti from their own property.

HOW DO I REPORT GRAFFITI?

If you see graffiti vandalism happening, it is considered a crime in progress and can be reported by calling 9-1-1 .

If your property has been vandalized with graffiti, phone the Ottawa Police Service Call Centre at 613-236-1222, ext. 7300 (TTY  613-760-8100).

All hate-based graffiti should be reported to the Ottawa Police Service at 613-230-6211.

If you see graffiti on public property (parks, roads, street signs, utility boxes, newspaper boxes or Canada Post boxes), call the City of Ottawa at 3-1-1 (TTY  613-580-2401).

If you wish to report graffiti vandalism anonymously, call Crime Stoppers at 613-233-TIPS (8477) or 1-800-222-8477.

Make the Right Call!

Every call is important, but not all calls are life-threatening, and not all calls are police emergencies. Whatever the case, we're here to help. You have a role to play: "Make the Right Call."


9-1-1

Life-threatening emergency or crime in progress

613-230-6211


Other emergencies

613-236-1222, ext 7300

TTY  613-760-8100

Call Centre: to report a theft, property damage, missing person, or stolen vehicle.

613-236-1222

TTY  613-232-1123

All other enquiries and Community Police Centres

See the "Red Pages" in the Ottawa telephone directory or visit ottawapolice.ca for a full list of Ottawa Police services and contact information.

Working together for a safer community



May 2006