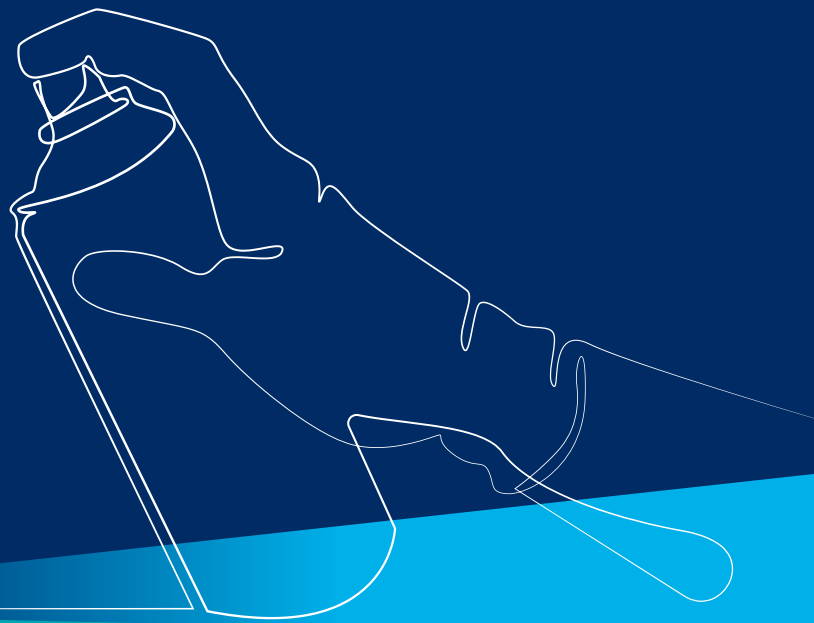


GRAFFITI VANDALISM & PRIVATE BUSINESS

Report crime to
Police on **131 444**
and suspicious
activity to **Crime
Stoppers** on
1800 333 000



DESIGNING OUT GRAFFITI.



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DESIGNING OUT GRAFFITI IS A STRATEGY TO
**PREVENT GRAFFITI BY REDUCING OFFENDER
OPPORTUNITIES** THROUGH EFFECTIVE DESIGN
AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTS

In Australia, graffiti vandalism is viewed by the community as a top neighbourhood problem.

While it is difficult to accurately report the total cost of graffiti vandalism, it is estimated that the cost to Western Australian State Government Agencies, Local Government Authorities, infrastructure owners, businesses and private property owners is in excess of \$30 million each year.

It is evident that the persistence, spread and visibility of graffiti vandalism throughout WA, has served to heighten the public's sensitivity to crime and community safety. Throughout these guides, graffiti vandalism will be referred to as graffiti.

Disclaimer: This document contains general guidelines for graffiti removal. No responsibility is accepted for any damage, injury or loss resulting from application of this advice



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WHAT IS GRAFFITI?



In Western Australia, under the Graffiti Vandalism Act 2016, graffiti vandalism is a criminal offence.

This applies to any person who damages or marks property without the permission of the property owner, and can take the form of writing, drawing or scratching onto surfaces using implements such as paint, markers, stickers and sharp instruments.

There are different ways in which offenders engage in graffiti, including (but not limited to):



Tags - the offender's 'signature'



Pieces - a large multi-coloured image



Throw ups - a larger form of the tag usually in bubble-shaped lettering



Etching - graffiti scratched or burned into the surface



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WHAT IS DESIGNING OUT GRAFFITI?



Designing Out Graffiti is a graffiti prevention strategy which aims to reduce opportunities for graffiti offenders, through the design and management of the built and landscaped environment.

Designing Out Graffiti originates from Designing Out Crime, which works on the same principles but more widely spread across all crime types. It is also known as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), which is based on the theory that proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life.



Proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime.



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MANAGING GRAFFITI.



Managing graffiti requires a multi-level approach using a range of strategies.

Reducing offender motivation through:

- Social crime prevention (e.g., Neighbourhood Watch)
- Alternative activities (e.g., sports facilities)
- Urban art projects (see Goodbye Graffiti website)

Deterring re-offending by:

- Rapid graffiti removal
- Tough penalties

Environmental design to make graffiti harder and riskier, using Designing Out Graffiti principles.



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HOW TO DESIGN OUT GRAFFITI.



Urban Art used as a graffiti prevention strategy (City of Canning).

Designing Out Graffiti is about designing products, materials, buildings and spaces in a way that deters offenders by:

- Make graffiti harder to apply and restrict access to target areas
- Enhance surveillance
- Use anti-graffiti coatings for fast removal

Who else can Design Out Graffiti?

- Planners and designers
- Manufacturers and retailers
- Government agencies
- Commercial building owners
- Private residents and the community



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WAYS TO DESIGN OUT GRAFFITI.



Any area or structure can be the target of graffiti, however some areas or structures may be more likely targets than others.

Locations that are ongoing targets of graffiti are known as graffiti hotspots.

Identifying hotspots allows graffiti prevention strategies to be concentrated at locations where they will have the most impact.

Hotspots should be identified and assessed to see what Designing Out Crime principles can be applied to reduce the likelihood of ongoing incidence.

- Elevated locations that are accessible make desirable targets for graffiti offenders because they are highly visible.
- Avoid external design elements that provide opportunities for access to prominent locations for tag (e.g. unsecured and moveable waste bins).



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IDENTIFYING GRAFFITI TARGETS.



Note the solid wall on the left has been vandalised but the palisade fence on the right has not.



Product designs using permeable materials can assist in reducing graffiti through increasing area surveillance and providing less surface area to damage.

Any surface can be a target of graffiti, however vandals will generally choose a target that provides maximum exposure of their "tag" which will remain in place for the maximum amount of time, and which they can graffiti without being apprehended.

Most likely targets of graffiti may include:

- Blank walls along major roads
- Accessible elevated locations
- High visibility areas
- Quick escape routes
- Locations where vandals blend in (e.g., transport stations/vehicles)
- Obscured areas where offenders are hidden
- Difficult-to-clean surfaces
- Surfaces easy to spray paint or mark



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REMOVE TARGETS OF GRAFFITI.



Assess whether design of buildings or products are providing likely targets of graffiti. Consider the following questions:

- Does the design have large blank solid walls?
- Does the design create natural ladders that allow offenders to access or climb to upper levels?
- Are there design features that could be altered to make them more difficult to graffiti?
- Next consider whether design components could be altered to remove likely targets of graffiti. For example:
- Can unnecessary walls/objects/structures be removed from the design?
- Can elements of the infrastructure be built underground, such as services cabinets?
- Can access be controlled to certain vulnerable areas?
- Can design elements that provide natural ladders be redesigned to limit access?
- Can alternate building elements or materials be used to remove targets of graffiti? For example, consider using barriers that do not provide solid surfaces to apply paint/markers to, such as palisade fences rather than solid walls.
- Manufacturers can review product designs to assess whether changes in the design of products can remove opportunities for graffiti.



Assess whether design of buildings or products are providing likely targets of graffiti. Next consider whether design components could be altered to remove likely targets of graffiti.



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HARDEN TARGETS AGAINST GRAFFITI.



Secure access paths to rooftops to minimise opportunities for offenders to access to prominent locations for tags.



Secure outdoor bins to restrict roof access.



Target hardening has two key purposes which are aimed at making it more difficult or risky for offenders to graffiti a space, or to make the space easier to clean, by changing the design or treating the target.

Methods to target harden:

- Use rough or non-porous surfaces to deter paint and markers.
- Cover walls with hedging plants or creeping vegetation, avoiding natural ladders.
- Apply anti-graffiti coatings for easier cleaning.
- Minimise natural ladders to prevent access to upper-level targets.
- Place signs out of reach of offenders.
- Secure outdoor bins to prevent access to roofs and elevated areas.



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SURVEILLANCE IN TARGET HARDENING.



Maximise surveillance of areas at risk of being targeted. Considerations may include:

- Use permeable or semi-permeable fencing instead of solid walls.
- Place windows for natural surveillance.
- Install CCTV in high-risk or poorly monitored areas.
- Introduce activity-generators to attract people and deter offenders.
- Install signage to identify asset use, owner, and contact for witnesses.
- Design spaces to create ownership, making offenders more visible and reportable.
- Install secure lighting with a 15m visibility range to eliminate concealed areas.



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SURVEILLANCE IN TARGET HARDENING.



Install CCTV in high-risk or poorly monitored areas.



Place signs out of reach of vandals.



Use creeping vegetation to cover graffiti-prone walls.



Avoid porous concrete or brick, which absorbs paint and complicates removal.



Use glazed tiles for easier graffiti cleaning.



Plant golden grevillea, olive grevillea, dwarf myrtle, syzygium, or callistemon to create natural, unappealing walls.



Apply anti-graffiti coatings on porous materials.



Use uneven surfaces to deter marker application.



Place hedges, fibrous walls, or dense, thorny vegetation in front of targets to deter vandals.



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LANDSCAPE & PLANTING.



Graffiti vandals prefer surfaces such as brick walls, sheds, and solid fences due to their flat, visible nature.

Vegetation covering surfaces makes them less suitable for graffiti, as the colour and irregularity of plants prevent clear markings.

When using vegetation on walls, prevent it from becoming a ladder for offenders by ensuring:

- It can't be used as a support when climbing.
- It lacks weight-bearing lattice supports.
- It includes natural defences like spikes.

Alternatively, low maintenance natural fibrous materials like bamboo or brushwood provide similar graffiti resistant properties and can be used to cover surfaces quickly.



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GOOD & BAD LANDSCAPING.



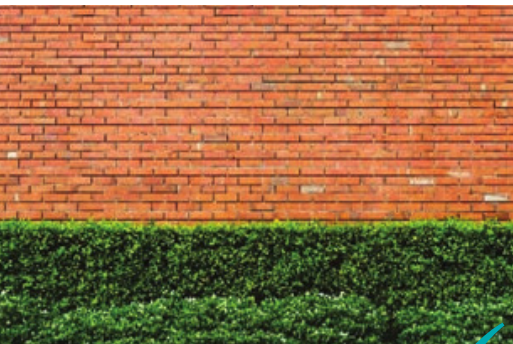
Thorns and spikes enhance vegetation's natural defence. ✓



Fibrous coverings protect against graffiti. ✓



Lattice supporting vegetation can serve as a ladder for offenders. ✗



Placing a hedge against a wall reduces accessible area and increases exposure to detection. ✓



Dense, immovable vegetation in secluded spots prevents undetected vandalism. ✗



Large grassed areas without boundaries fail to define the space as private. ✗



A simple garden border defines the beginning of the owners' private space. ✓



Dense vegetation obstructs surveillance, aiding offenders. ✗



Rail fences provide barriers without compromising surveillance; avoid designs that form ladders. ✓



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MAXIMISE NATURAL SURVEILLANCE.



The location of trees and large shrubs should take into consideration their impact on visibility and opportunities for concealment.

Consider the following suggestions:

- Keep dense shrubs under 70cm tall.
- Tree branches should hang at least 2.4m above ground, avoiding light blockage and window views. Trees should not enable roof access.
- Use motion-activated or solar lighting for cost-effective night surveillance improvements. Use noise-producing ground cover like pebbles to deter offenders.
- Maintaining a tidy yard deters vandalism by enhancing surveillance and reinforcing ownership.



A tidy yard can deter vandalism by presenting a 'cared-for' appearance.



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NOT SURE WHAT TO PLANT?



Talk to your local nursery for plant suggestions specific to your location, and tips on creating and maintaining your graffiti resistant garden.

Here is a list of vines and hedges that may be suitable:

VINES

- Black Coral Pea - (*Kennedia nigricans*)
- Coral Vine - (*Kennedia coccinea*)
- Native Wisteria (*Hardenbergia comptoniana*)
- Snake Vine, Climbing Guinea Flower / Golden Guinea Vine (*Hibbertia scandens*)
- Red Maranthus (*Marianthus erubescens* BILLARDIERA)
- Holly-leaved Hovea (*Hovea chorizemifolia*)

HEDGES

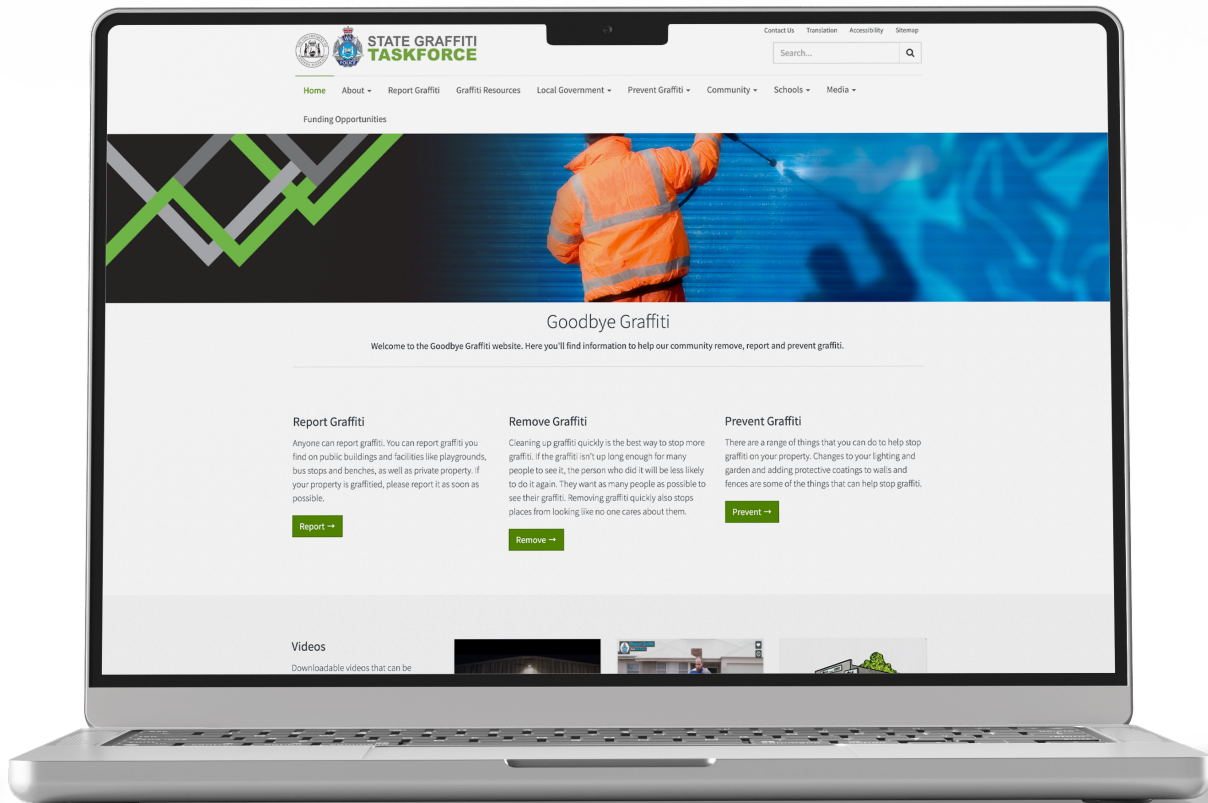
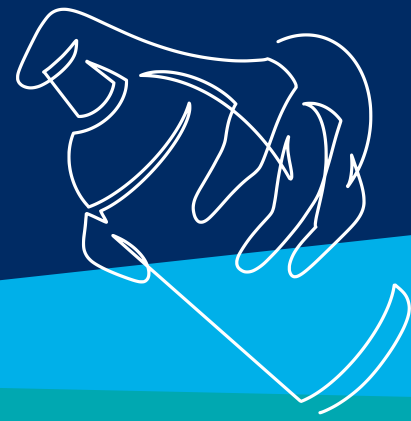
- Golden Grevillea - (*Grevillea chrysophaea*)
- Olive Grevillea - (*Grevillea olivacea*)
- Dwarf Willow Myrtle - (*Agonis flexuosa nana*)
- Syzygium (various species)
- King's Park Special (*Callistemon 'Kings Park Special'*)



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.



If a surface is unsuitable to apply natural forms of protection, anti-graffiti coatings can facilitate fast removal.

Chain waste bins away from vulnerable structures to prevent them being used as natural ladders or as concealment.

Remove any graffiti as quickly as possible, the longer graffiti remains on display, the greater the reward for the vandal and the more likely it is that the location will continue to be targeted.

Visit the **Goodbye Graffiti** website for information on removal methods and a list of graffiti removal companies.

It pays to contact your local council first, as some councils offer a free graffiti removal service. Report all graffiti via the online reporting form at wa.gov.au/reportgraffiti.



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LIGHTING & SURVEILLANCE.



Key aspects of Designing Out Graffiti involve enhancing and maintaining lighting, as well as natural and formal surveillance.

These measures aim to increase the perceived risk of detection for offenders by eliminating hiding spots, ensuring clear lines of sight, and using appropriate security devices.

Lighting chosen for practicality can be equally ineffective as a deterrent. When walking through a garden at night you may only need to see the ground you are walking on, but this limited lighting leaves a large portion of the environment in darkness.

Maximising surveillance through lighting:

- Should illuminate up to 15m.
- Must be securely installed to prevent tampering.
- Use toughened glass or grills around bulbs to resist breakage.
- Place mechanisms out of easy reach to prevent tampering.
- Control switches indoors to avoid external access.
- Avoid placing near trees or structures blocking light.
- Prevent access to windows or roofs with strategic placement.
- Use graffiti-resistant surfaces for visibility.



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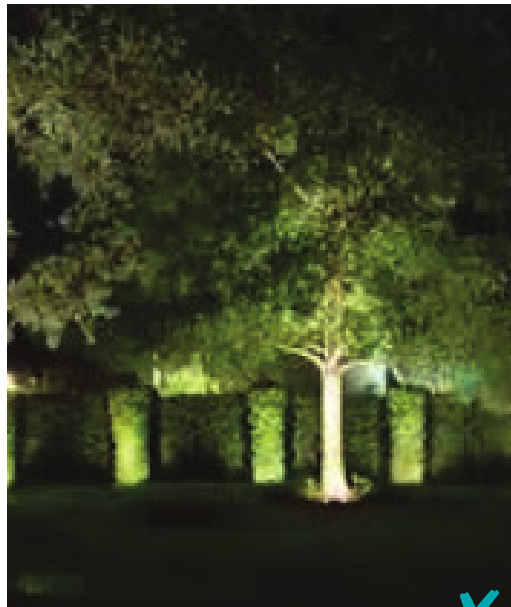
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GOOD & BAD LIGHTING.



Easily removed or vandalised low-level lighting. ❌



Range of lighting reduced by vegetation coverage. ❌



Low lighting with small field of visibility. ❌



Secure, solid graffiti resistant lighting. ✅



High set lighting, providing a wide field of visibility. ✅



Low surrounding vegetation maximises lighting range. ✅



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MAXIMISE NATURAL SURVEILLANCE.



Having effective lighting is important to deterring vandals, but if a potential witness has their line of sight blocked, the offender will still go undetected.

To allow effective surveillance of the front yard from the street and from inside the residence, it is recommended that the space between 70cm to 2.4m above the ground remains clear.

Solid structures like fences and dense vegetation should be no more than 70cm high, and tree branches should fall no lower than 2.4m.

Reducing the amount of solid walls and fencing also has an additional advantage in that it reduces the number of graffiti-prone surfaces.

The physical environment should allow you to see what is going on around you while minimising options for concealment.

By forcing vandals to remain in sight for as long as possible, you considerably decrease the risk associated with committing an offence on your property.



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The physical environment should allow you to see what is going on around you while minimising options for concealment.



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POOR VS OPEN LINES OF SIGHT.



Solid walls prevent natural surveillance and provide an ideal surface for graffiti.



Using open rail fencing above 70cm opens the line of sight.



High hedges cut down the line of sight.



Low vegetation allows passive surveillance.



Trees blocking entries can conceal illegal activities and can also provide natural ladders for offenders.



Keep entries visible to increase the chances of detecting offenders.



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MAXIMISE FORMAL SURVEILLANCE.



The purpose of Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV), Security Patrols and alarms in Designing out Graffiti is to deter offenders from vandalising property by making them aware that they may be under surveillance.

For this reason, overt, advertised surveillance rather than covert methods is encouraged.

Signage can be an effective tool for informing potential offenders that formal surveillance is in place on your property. The perceived deterrent effect of these signs has resulted in some members of the community choosing to display them without the associated devices or services. This practice is undertaken 'at the owner's risk' though, as they may still be the target of crime, yet lack the support offered by the actual systems.

CCTV in particular is most suited to areas that are prone to graffiti attacks but lack opportunity for natural surveillance.

When considering whether to spend significant amounts of money on formal surveillance, it is important to note that it is most effective when used in combination with other surveillance principles, access control, territorial reinforcement and target hardening.



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RAPID REMOVAL OF GRAFFITI.



Prompt graffiti removal is seen as best-practice as it diminishes the level of recognition and reward achieved by graffiti vandals. It also reinforces ownership and prevents assets from appearing uncared for and subsequently attracting more vandalism.

Before removing graffiti you should always photograph the damage for evidentiary purposes, and report the incident online at wa.gov.au/reportgraffiti.

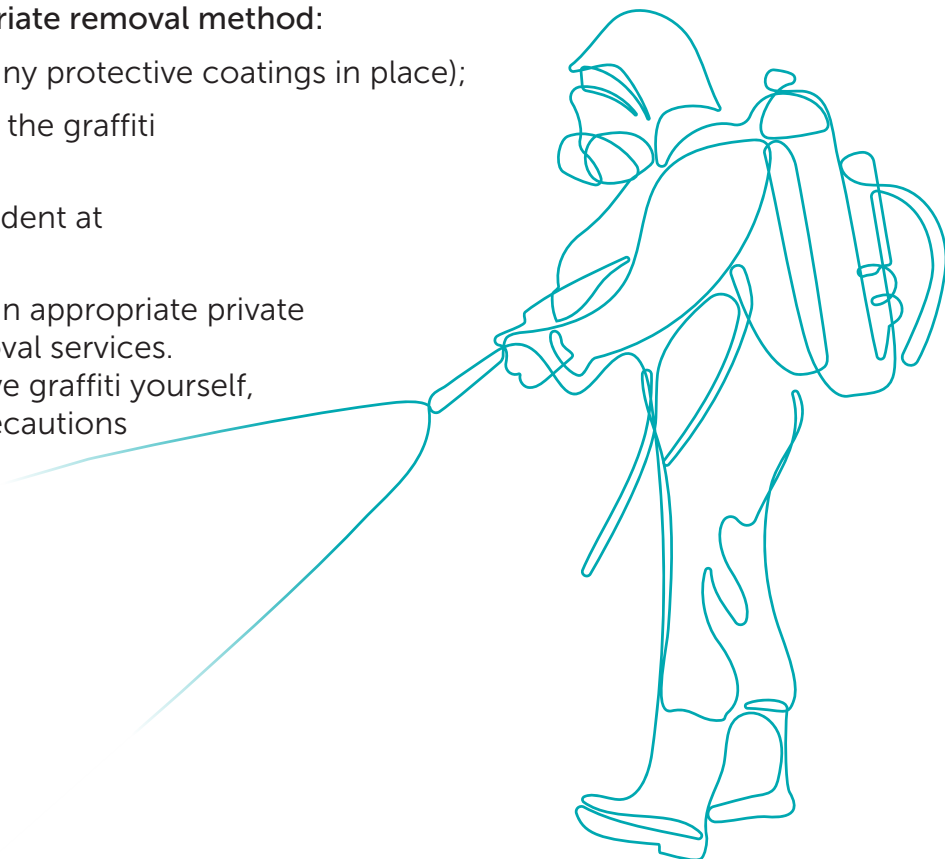
If you cannot remove graffiti from your property yourself, contact your local council for assistance or seek professional assistance.

Removing graffiti

The type of material used to damage surfaces (e.g. spray can, marker) and the type of surface damaged (e.g. brick, painted surfaces) will determine the most effective removal method.

Steps to determining the appropriate removal method:

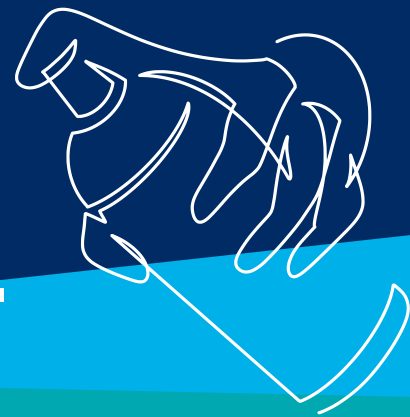
1. Identify the surface (including any protective coatings in place);
2. Identify the substance used for the graffiti (spray paint, marker pens etc.);
3. Photograph and report the incident at wa.gov.au/reportgraffiti; and
4. Contact your local council or an appropriate private professional for advice or removal services. Whenever attempting to remove graffiti yourself, ensure the necessary safety precautions are followed.



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REMOVAL METHODS COMMON SURFACES.



Brick, render, limestone and natural surfaces.

A number of specific graffiti removal products are available from retail outlets. Household products which may be effective include:

- Cold caustic oven cleaners (spray the oven cleaner onto the damaged area and leave for 6-8 hours, scrub the surface with a hard scrubbing brush and wash off with water); and
- Liquid laundry detergent or methylated spirits may be effective for marker damage.



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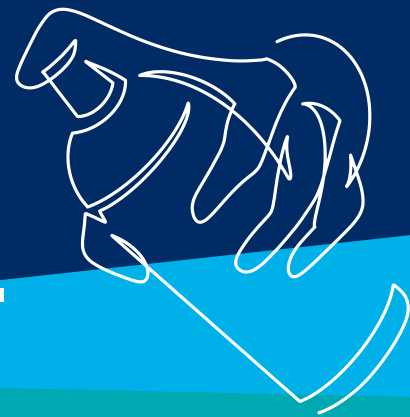
It is important to wear gloves and safety glasses for protection when using caustic cleaning products.



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REMOVAL METHODS COMMON SURFACES.



Unpainted Metal Surfaces

Graffiti on metal can often be removed using less aggressive methods first:

- Wipe with paint thinner or lubricating oils like WD-40.
- Use light abrasives, but be cautious of scratches.
- Try high-pressure hosing.

If these methods fail, consult a professional. As a last resort, paint the entire section or structure.

DO NOT USE CAUSTICS ON OR NEAR ALUMINUM.

Painted Surfaces

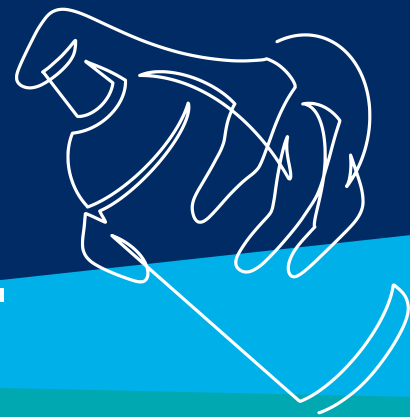
- Repainting is often the best method for graffiti removal on painted surfaces:
- Use the matched colour to avoid attracting more graffiti.
- Ensure the surface is clean and dry before repainting.
- For surfaces with many paint layers, use an abrasive to remove build-up and maintain structural integrity.



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REMOVAL METHODS COMMON SURFACES.



Fibro-cement ("super-six") Fences

Painting out graffiti damage is recommended, as this type of surface is porous. Painting out an entire sheet or sheets of fencing will help achieve a more uniform appearance and prevent the fence from appearing 'patchy'.

Try paint that is Asbestos Grey or Polished Grey in colour for a close colour match.

Plastic Surfaces

Paint thinners are not suitable for use on plastics as they can penetrate and permanently alter the surface structure.

Instead, milder oils such as products like WD-40 may be enough to break down markings to then wipe off.

A light sanding can also be effective although this may leave scratch marks. Painting over graffiti may be a good option on plastic surfaces.



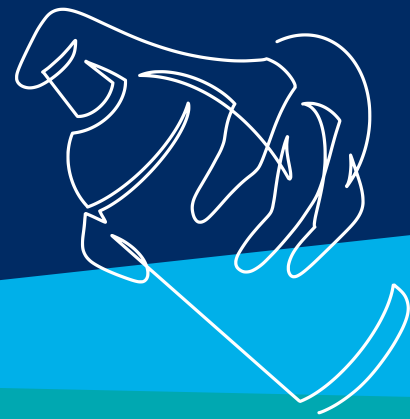
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REMOVAL STANDARDS.



Removal standards aim to provide professional graffiti removers with some guidelines to establish a common practice. It is acknowledged, given the different competency levels of graffiti removers, that two standards are practicable.

Preferred

The highest standard of removal that can be achieved, which usually leaves no evidence of graffiti or damage to the surface.

Acceptable

A lower standard than desirable, where some evidence of graffiti (shadow) or damage to the surface may remain.



View the graffiti removal standards at
wa.gov.au/goodbyegrffiti



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PROTECTING SURFACES.



If a surface has been vandalised with graffiti in the past, or appears a likely target in the future, pre-emptive steps can be taken.

With both types of coating, care should be taken to use appropriate removal methods to prevent further damage to the surface.

Protective coatings

Coatings are particularly useful on natural surfaces. There are two main types of protective coatings available:

Sacrificial

These coatings are removed along with any graffiti and need to be reapplied to protect the surface. These coatings tend to be cheaper and less toxic than the longer lasting alternative.

Non-Sacrificial

These coatings (provided they are applied correctly) will remain on the surface after several graffiti removals, without the need to reapply.

Vegetation coverings

Covering surfaces with vines or other vegetation can make them significantly less prone to graffiti.



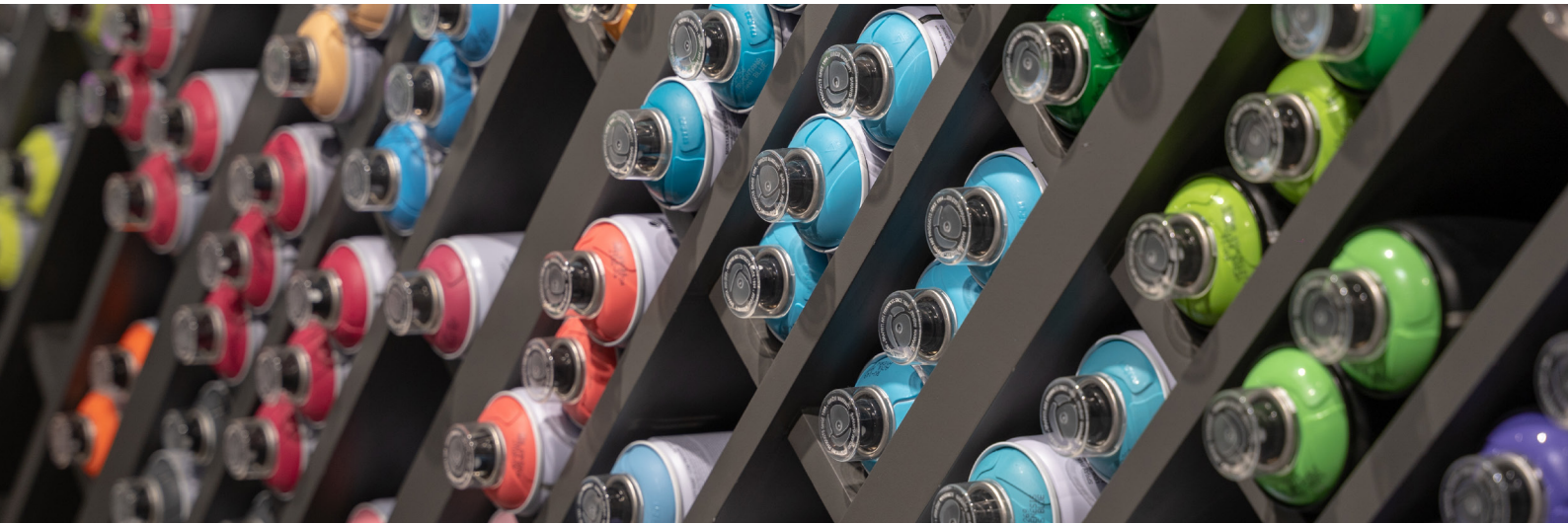
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ADDITIONAL TIPS TO STOP GRAFFITI.



Report graffiti

Reporting graffiti vandalism is easy and can be done online at:
wa.gov.au/reportgraffiti

Be sure to take photos if you can, and attach them to your online report. If the graffiti is racist or obscene, or you witness someone doing graffiti, please call **131 444**. If you have information about someone who is a graffiti offender, you can report this information to Crime Stoppers by calling **1800 333 000** or online at www.crimestopperswa.com.au.

Secure graffiti materials

Keep spray paint cans, paints and large marker pens secured in lockable storage areas to reduce vandal access, as theft of implements is a common method of acquiring graffiti materials. Retailers can follow a Voluntary Code of Conduct for the storage of graffiti implements for theft prevention.

On 1 January 2010 it became illegal in Western Australia for any retailers or other persons to sell spray paint and certain marker pens or similar implements to persons under 18 years of age. Retailers and other sellers face fines of up to \$6,000 for selling certain implements to any persons under 18.

Anti-graffiti laws are set out in the Graffiti Vandalism Act 2016. For more information on the Voluntary Code of Conduct and graffiti-related legislation please visit the Goodbye Graffiti website.



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GRAFFITI AUDIT CHECKLIST.



A quick checklist to review your Designing Out Graffiti considerations.

1. General Impressions

- What are your general feelings towards this place? i.e. building etc
- How comfortable do you feel?
- What makes you feel this way?

2. Access Control

- How many entry points for potential offenders?
- Is there fencing?

3. Lighting

- How good is the lighting?
- Does it evenly illuminate the area or create shadows for concealment of potential graffiti offenders?
- Are any lights broken and are there any signs indicating who to report this to?
- Do trees or bushes obscure lighting?
- Are you able to identify a face 25 metres away?

4. Signage

- Are there signs to identify space ownership?
- Are signs at a height that makes it hard for potential graffiti offenders to reach?
- What signs need to be added?

5. Landscaping

- Is there opportunity for planting vegetation to deter offenders?
- Designing Out Graffiti CPTED Checklist 37

6. Isolation

- Does the area feel isolated?
- Is the area patrolled or monitored with surveillance equipment?
- Is the area designed for natural surveillance?
- Is it easy to predict when people will be around?

7. Entrapment Sites

- Are there recessed areas that could be locked? e.g. laneways
- Are there small confined areas where potential graffiti offenders could hide? (Between garbage bins, doorways)
- Are there objects that could be secured to prevent being used as potential natural ladders?

8. Escape Routes

- How easy would it be for a graffiti offender to disappear?
- Is there more than one exit?

9. Activity Uses

- How much activity is there in the area, during the day or at night?
- Do the activity levels provide passive surveillance of the area?

10. Maintenance

- Does the place feel cared for?
- Is there litter lying around?
- Do you know who to report maintenance to?

11. Territorial Definition

- Is the site clearly defined?
- Are transitional zones defined?
- Is there conflicting use of space?

For the complete Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design AUDIT, visit the Prevent Graffiti section of the Goodbye Graffiti website.



WA Police Force website
Emergency
Police Assistance
Crime Stoppers

wa.gov.au/police
000 for life threatening situations
131 444 when police attendance is required
www.crimestopperswa.com.au