

The Broken Window Syndrome

In New York City, sociologists coined a phrase—the “Broken Window Syndrome”.

Along big industrial corridors, they discovered that if a single window was broken, it quickly escalated into additional broken windows and other vandalism. Yet, by repairing the single window quickly, future damage was avoided.



Most importantly, the public’s perception about safety and neighborhood values rose. Graffiti works the same way!

One small graffiti scribbling may not appear threatening. However, it entices other vandals to do likewise in nearby areas.

Any graffiti, no matter how small, needs immediate attention.

To wait is to feed the “broken window syndrome” and jump-start the spiral of neighborhood decline!

WHAT TO DO:

- To report graffiti in progress, call 911
 - To report graffiti on public or private property, contact DPW&P (call 311 or 508-929-1300)
- Or e-mail us at 311@worcesterma.gov

TIPS TO HELP PREVENT GRAFFITI

- ✓ Report all incidents of graffiti damage to your property to **Worcester 311**. Reporting is important because it may be possible to identify patterns through accumulated reports, helping the Police Department deal with the problem.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for suspicious behavior. Pay special attention to individuals or groups that are loitering. If it appears they are about to apply graffiti, **call 911!**
- ✓ Improve lighting on your property. If graffiti is a problem in your alley, consider installing motion detector lights on your garage.
- ✓ Plant shrubs and vines or make a fence barrier in areas that are graffiti-prone.
- ✓ Inspect your property weekly.

CITY OF WORCESTER

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City of Worcester
Department of Public
Works & Parks

GRAFFITI ABATEMENT PROGRAM



This is an important notice. Please have it translated.
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Este es un aviso importante. Sírvase mandarlo traducir.
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XIN VUI LÒNG CHO DỊCH LẠI THÔNG CÁO ẤY
Ceci est important. Veuillez faire traduire.
本通知很重要。请将其译成中文。
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GRAFFITI— WHAT IT IS AND HOW WE PLAN TO DO BATTLE AGAINST IT!

Graffiti lowers the quality of life in our community. Marking public or private property with a symbol (known as 'tagging') is vandalism. Spray paint cans, felt-tipped pens and sharp instruments are commonly used to 'tag' property and the cost to the community is high.

Permitting or allowing graffiti to remain is a public nuisance. Graffiti not only makes our residential neighborhoods and business districts look unattractive, it affects property values, business sales and our community's image. Ignoring graffiti gives the mistaken impression that it is acceptable and only invites more.

Graffiti, in all its forms, falls into two (2) broad categories:

Graffiti on **public** property (i.e. City-owned buildings, monuments, Parks structures, light poles, hydrants, vehicles); and

Graffiti on **private** property.

The city of Worcester has a two-pronged approach to handling this blight when it occurs.

The abatement of graffiti on any **public property** is handled by DPW&P's **Anti-Graffiti Patrol**. The goal of the Anti-Graffiti Patrol is to abate the graffiti on public property within 72 hours from the time of notification.

The abatement of graffiti on **private property** is the responsibility of the property owner.



The City has zero tolerance towards graffiti. Very simply, we will always take action against it!

THE GRAFFITI ORDINANCE

The city of Worcester's graffiti ordinance deals with **graffiti on private property**. In Chapter 8, Section 43 of the Revised Ordinances of 2008, graffiti is defined as the intentional painting, marking, scratching, coloring, tagging, or other defacement of any property **without the consent of the owner**. Property owners are required to remove **graffiti from their property within seven (7) days** after notice of a violation. If an owner fails to remove the graffiti within that time, the owner will be **in violation of the ordinance**. Violations may be punishable by **fines and/or court action**.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners in the city of Worcester are required to keep their property **free from graffiti**. It is the responsibility of property owners to remove graffiti in a timely manner.

When the City receives a report of graffiti on private property, the **Anti-Graffiti Patrol** will be notified and sent to the location. Patrol personnel will attempt to **contact the owner** to notify them of the complaint and to provide them with a copy of this informational brochure. This brochure contains useful tips about graffiti removal, including some of the resources available within the City to assist with its removal.

The City will also notify the **Department of Inspectional Services** and the **Police Department** of any graffiti reports or complaints. The Department of Inspectional Services is responsible for enforcing the City's graffiti ordinance.

TIPS ON GRAFFITI REMOVAL

- ✓ Remove graffiti from your property **as quickly as possible**. The quicker graffiti is cleaned up, the less likely it is to

- reappear. If you remove graffiti within...
- **24 hours** - there is a **10%** chance it will reappear.
- **2 weeks**—there is a **100%** chance it will reappear.
- ✓ If a large portion of your property that is painted has been vandalized, it may be cheaper to simply **repaint**. It will also give you the opportunity to change paints to a **glossy enamel** which will resist future graffiti attacks better than a flat finish. For added protection, having an extra gallon of the same type and color paint will help ensure a quick and painless perfect match if graffiti returns.
- ✓ Once the new paint is on, you should consider using a **sealer or protectant**. These products seal the small surface pores and inhibit graffiti's ability to adhere.
- ✓ For other surfaces such as brick, cement, concrete, stucco, aluminum/vinyl siding, glass or plexiglass, wood, fiberglass, metal and surfaces that have been etched, it is recommended that you **contact a commercial graffiti remover or a home improvement store or lumber yard** in your area for expert advice and assistance. There are also many **general contractors** who can provide a similar service. The Yellow Pages of your phone directory is a great resource for location and contact information.



GRAFFITI IS AGAINST THE LAW!