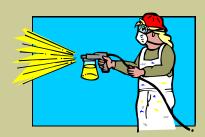
What You Can Do

- Educate the public, especially young people, about the costs of vandalism.
- Clean up vandalism as soon as it happens by replacing signs, repairing playground equipment and painting over graffiti.
- If you see anyone committing vandalism, report it to the police, school authorities, or anyone else responsible for taking action.
 Remember, vandalism is a crime.
- Protect your house or apartment from vandalism by using good lighting and locking gates and garages.
- Support recreational programs for young people in your community. Volunteer your time, donate money or supplies and help in any way you can.
- Be part of a Neighborhood Enhancement Matching Grant Project, perhaps in cooperation with a church or business. Plant trees, bushes, and flowers. Join or help organize other cleanup and beautification efforts.
- Report any violation of city ordinances (vandalism, litter, abandoned cars, etc.) to the proper authority.
- Create a "paint bank" stocked with paints and painting supplies. Those who contribute can use the items when vandals strike.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING VANDALISM

- Organize a graffiti clean-up project in your neighborhood.
- Tap into the energy and idealism of youth. Involve young people in all vandalism prevention efforts.
- Work with your Neighborhood Crime Watch to remove graffiti immediately and continuously from property. Vandals will learn their time and materials are being wasted.
- Keeping property well-lit, clean, and landscaped will help discourage graffiti.
- Plant native shrubs with prickly or thorny foliage near walls and fences.
- Work with schools or the arts community to paint murals on areas that are vulnerable to graffiti. Make it a contest for teens.
- Children should be taught to respect public and private property.
- Organize a monthly park patrol to clean up litter and monitor playground equipment and trash containers. Notify the city of Carrollton Parks Maintenance Office, 1610 Crosby Road, 972-466-3160 to repair equipment and replace or install trash containers.
- Have a Neighborhood Crime Watch meeting on vandalism to discuss its victims, costs and solutions.





COMMUNITY SERVICES

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

PREVENTING VANDALISM



Community Services Division
Department of Environmental Services
City of Carrollton
1945 E. Jackson Road
Carrollton, Texas 75006

Phone: 972-466-4299 Fax: 972-466-3175 www.cityofcarrollton.com



TAKE A STAND!

This morning, people in communities just like ours discovered that their street, neighborhood, or business had changed overnight. That's because they saw graffiti left behind by someone with no respect for public or private property. Look around your community.

Do you see:

- Walls covered with graffiti?
- Knocked-over trashcans or mailboxes?
- Broken street lights?
- Spray paint on stop signs?
- Broken public telephones?
- Missing street and traffic signs?
- Public restrooms with broken doors and graffiti?

Vandalism Costs

- Schools pay out millions of dollars each year to clean up graffiti, repair buildings, or replace vandalized equipment. That means less money for new books, computers, sports equipment, and student activities.
- The city of Carrollton and its taxpayers pay the bills for broken street lights, stolen signs, and vandalized parks.
- Businesses pass the costs of vandalism on to customers through higher prices.

Vandalism Hurts

- People feel angry, sad, and frightened when something of theirs such as: a mailbox, a garden or a car antenna is destroyed for no reason.
- Vandalism indirectly claims other victims. A child is injured because a stop sign was stolen, a person can't reach 911 because the public phone is broken.

Who Does It and Why?

The majority of graffiti is done by graffiti vandals known as "taggers." They 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 materials or trespassing - and the rebellious nature of their action also motivate taggers. Others deface public areas to show that they, and not the agency responsible, are in control.

Most graffiti is done by youths whose ages range from pre-teens to early 20s. 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.

Serious Concerns

- Graffiti is not a "victimless" crime. Everyone including children, parents, business owners, and taxpayers are hurt by it.
- It's estimated, by Keep America Beautiful, Inc., that several billion dollars is spent each year by communities, public transit departments, residents, and businesses to remove graffiti or repair the damage it causes.
- Many people associate graffiti with the general decline of an area, even if it is not true.
 Merchants can lose business because customers feel the neighborhood is no longer safe.
- Graffiti is not just a harmless teenage 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 also be assaulted if they mark over someone else's "tag."
- When left untouched, graffiti sends the wrong message - that we can not keep order in our community.

Graffiti vandals like to believe they are outside of the community's social structure and see graffiti as a means of expression.

So we see that most vandals are young people from grade schoolers to teens to young adults who damage property for one or more of the following reasons:

- Boredom
- Anger
- Revenge
- Defiance
- Alliance

Occasionally, graffiti signals the presence of a gang. Graffiti may be the first sign that gangs are establishing themselves in a community. Gangs use graffiti as their street "telegraph," sending messages about turf and advertising their exploits. Graffiti identifies territorial boundaries, lists members, and communicates with rival gangs. Gang graffiti is unnerving because it is a gang's attempt to say, "This place belongs to us."

A community's first step in eliminating gang activity is getting rid of graffiti immediately. This power struggle can't be won overnight, but persistent communities working in partnership with law enforcement will emerge as victors. Once graffiti is gone, use landscape designs (such as prickly shrubs or closely planted hedges), building materials (such as hard-to-mark surfaces), lighting, or fences to discourage vandalism.

