



Wiping out Graffiti

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In the last few years, many communities within British Columbia have seen a significant increase in the number of incidents of graffiti. Graffiti for some is an art form, but the local authorities, the majority of residents, visitors and patrons to your facility simply see it as an act of vandalism.

Helpful tips to manage Graffiti at your recreation facility.

- Several years ago, New York City sociologists created the term "Broken Window Syndrome". They realized that a single broken window pane in an industrial area, left untreated, quickly escalated into additional broken windows, graffiti, and increased vandalism. They realized that by fixing the broken window pane quickly, they prevented any such decline.
- The public's perception about safety and neighborhood values consequently rose. Graffiti works the same way.

One small graffiti scribbling may not appear threatening. However, it entices other vandals to do likewise. Any graffiti, no matter how small needs immediate attention. Do not ignore graffiti. Prevent offenders from receiving recognition they desire from their tag. If removed within 24 hours, studies prove that there is less than a 20% chance of recurrence, but if left for two weeks, there is a greater than 90% chance of recurrence.

- Many of our **RFABC Associate members** have specialty products that deal with Graffiti. In the last few years, environmentally friendly products are now available and easy to use. To find out what is now available make contact with our Associates – they may not only have the product you require but the expertise to assist in the application as well.
- Always report Graffiti. Photograph the graffiti; this will assist the local authorities to identify the vandals tag.
- Do not publicize by showing pictures of tags in newspapers or news stories. It will only encourage the taggers.
- Landscaping to deter graffiti vandals - an alternative, depending on watering access, can have excellent long-term benefits. While there are no plants that will actually catch a vandal, plants with thorns or prickly foliage will restrict access. Combined with proper security, you can make certain exterior locations of your facility virtually vandal/prowler proof. Contact your local nursery to determine, which plants may work for your facility and your horticulture zone.
- Improve lighting in the problem areas. Add, motion sensors or even security cameras.
- New companies specializing in the removal of graffiti have emerged. Though, it may be cost prohibitive to use a professional company; they are often very quick and can easily determine the best way to tackle the problem.

HOW TO PREVENT MORE GRAFFITI

If you have to paint over graffiti, it's very frustrating to have it vandalized again. Here are two ways to paint out graffiti that will discourage further vandalism:

THE BEST WAY- Paint the Entire Wall:

Repaint the entire wall, or paint up to 7 feet high (making a straight line across the top) with a color that matches the wall. This leaves no trace of graffiti and does not draw the attention of the vandals. This method is 10 times more effective than patching.

THE NEXT BEST WAY- Paint in Patches:

When it is not possible to paint the entire wall, use a closely matched color blocked over the graffiti in neat, square shapes. The closer the color match, the more effective it is in preventing further vandalism.