

**REMEMBER:**  
IF YOU WITNESS ANY TYPE OF  
CRIMINAL ACTIVITY,  
INCLUDING GRAFFITI VANDALISM,  
PLEASE CONTACT THE  
WINCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT  
AT 662-4131.



Provided by:  
City of Winchester  
Zoning Department

667-1815  
plngdept@ci.winchester.va.us



# GRAFFITI Removal Techniques

A Citizen's Guide for Graffiti Abatement



City of Winchester Zoning - 667-1815 - winchesterva.gov

## DECIDING WHETHER TO REMOVE OR PAINT OVER

Graffiti abatement can be accomplished by either removing the nuisance or painting over top of it.

The City does not endorse any particular graffiti removal product and recommends that you visit your local paint retailer for more information.

Depending on the surface where the graffiti is located, it may be easier for you to simply paint over the graffiti.

The information provided in this brochure will assist you in making your decision.

## GRAFFITI: A PUBLIC NUISANCE

In 2008, the Common Council of the City of Winchester, adopted a new Chapter of City Code; specifically aimed at removing the blighting influence of graffiti within the City.

The new Ordinance offers financial incentives for property owners to assist with the cost of graffiti abatement. The City recommends that graffiti be removed as quickly as possible and before the paint cures.

**This guide is intended to assist you in determining the best method for removing graffiti on your property.**

## INCENTIVE PAYMENT

If you are the victim of graffiti vandalism, please notify the Winchester Police Department as soon as you notice the damage. If you abate the nuisance in a timely manner, you may be eligible for up to \$50 reimbursement for your costs of abatement. Call the City's Zoning Department for more information (667-1815).

## IDENTIFY THE SURFACE

**The surface material where the graffiti is located, will most likely dictate the removal technique that should be used.**

This brochure will outline basic methods for removing graffiti that is located on painted or protected surfaces, bare masonry surfaces, metal surfaces, plastic/vinyl surfaces, and glass surfaces. While there is no absolute, simple and quick method to remove graffiti, there are some tips, techniques and strategies that are recognized as being more effective.

**PLEASE USE CAUTION WHEN APPLYING ANY OF THESE SUGGESTED METHODS.**

**READ AND FOLLOW THE MANUFACTURER'S WARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPER USE AND HANDLING OF ANY COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS, TOOLS, OR EQUIPMENT.**

## PAINTING OVER GRAFFITI

Painting over graffiti offers several benefits. It is much cheaper than some other methods of removal. Painting over the surface also provides the opportunity to use glossy enamel, which may resist future vandalism better than a flat finish. Additionally, having extra paint on-hand will ensure a perfect match if graffiti returns.

## PAINTED OR PROTECTED SURFACES

Many types of surfaces are commonly painted or protected by some other topcoat sealer. These surfaces include masonry, concrete, stucco, wood or metal. Local paint retailers offer a variety of commercial graffiti removal products that can remove graffiti from dense nonporous surfaces and some painted surfaces.

## BARE MASONRY SURFACES

The most common types of bare masonry surfaces include, brick, block, and stone. Graffiti removal is less difficult on a surface that is hard and smooth. An extra strength paint remover or graffiti remover can be applied prior to brushing the surface. Wire brushes or wheels can be used on surfaces that are hard, but porous. A wire wheel that attaches to a power drill can be purchased at most hardware stores. After brushing the surface, a high pressure nozzle or power washer should remove the remaining graffiti residue.

## METAL SURFACES

Smooth metal surfaces are typically easier to clean, because of the non-penetrable nature of their surface. A variety of household products can be used to remove graffiti from metal and include; light penetrating oil, turpentine, paint thinner, or fingernail polish remover. Stronger agents, such as oven cleaner or commercial graffiti remover can be used for stubborn damage.

## VINYL/PLASTIC SURFACES

Ordinary household cleaners should be used first, when graffiti is located on a plastic or vinyl surface. Stronger agents, such as penetrating oil, turpentine, mineral spirits, or rubbing alcohol might be needed for difficult stains.

## GLASS SURFACES

Graffiti can be removed from glass using a razor blade or other metal scraper. Using a razor blade holder, scrape the area at a 30-degree angle to the glass. A plastic pot scrubber can be used for any remaining graffiti.