

## GRAFFITI VANDALISM – HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK



CRIME PREVENTION

Graffiti vandalism is a significant problem for businesses, as graffiti detracts from the image that retailers work hard to maintain.

This crime often occurs out of business hours, making many people believe that little can be done to prevent it. However, it is possible to substantially reduce the vulnerability of your premises to graffiti.



- Is your business at risk from graffiti vandalism? YES NO
- Does your business building have blank walls? YES NO
- Does your business building offer graffiti vandals windows or glass doors which are potential surfaces for etching on? YES NO
- Do you leave graffiti up for days or weeks to be admired and added to by graffiti offenders? YES NO
- After hours is the building dark and an easy target for vandals? YES NO
- Does your business sell spray paints or felt pens/markers? YES NO
- Are spray paint or felt pens/markers sold by nearby retailers? YES NO

If you answered YES to any of the above you could become or continue to be a victim of graffiti vandalism.

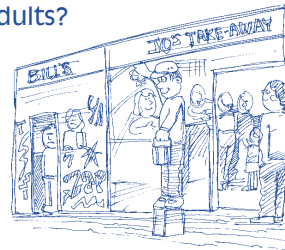
### What is your current approach to graffiti?

Do you:

- Report the graffiti to the police? YES NO
- Remove graffiti by cleaning within 24 hours? YES NO
- Remove damaged items from view immediately? YES NO
- Organise commercial removal of graffiti within 48 hours? YES NO
- Ring Council for advice or assistance in the removal of graffiti? YES NO
- Keep any potential graffiti implements you sell in locked cabinets and ensure that they are sold only to adults? YES NO

YES NO

If you answered NO to any of the above you should consider revising your current practices.

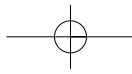


### Graffiti removal

It is important to remove or clean up vandalism and graffiti without delay. If customers see that the shopping environment is clear of graffiti, they are more likely to feel safe, secure and relaxed.

Contact the Council Depot (Mitcham 8374 7722 or Unley 8372 5169) for advice and assistance with the removal of graffiti from porous or non-porous surfaces.

When painting over graffiti, paint the entire wall or panel rather than the affected area only. This avoids creating a patchy surface and removes evidence that it was once a site for graffiti.



## Glass etching

An expensive problem is the etching of scratches onto glass doors and windows.

If you consider that your business premises may be at risk of this occurring you can add protection by applying a plastic film over the outside of the windows. This film can be removed if damaged and a fresh film applied, reducing the cost of window replacement. (See under "Coatings - Protective" in the Yellow Pages.)

An emerging problem is the use of etching cream to etch a tag into a glass window. To reduce vulnerability to shop lifting, it is suggested that retail outlets display etching creams in glass cabinets. Several firms can polish out and remove relatively deep graffiti scratches from glass without distorting the glass (discuss this with Mitcham or Unley Council Depot staff or refer to the Yellow Pages under "Glass Merchants &/or Glaziers").

Increased lighting over windows and doors can reduce your vulnerability.

## Reducing your risk

Follow these guidelines to reduce your vulnerability to graffiti vandalism:

Follow State Government guidelines on the sale of spray paint - keep spray cans in a secure display and do not sell them to minors.

Increase lighting of high-risk areas using sensor lights and vandal-proof permanent lighting.

Note: exterior light fittings manufactured from plastic or fragile materials are easily vandalised and should not be used. Although more expensive initially, the "vandal-proof" products are more resistant to abuse and misuse, making them more economical in the longer term.

Limit access to items that can be used to scale walls. Vandals often climb onto roofs so they can "tag" shop fronts etc. at a height that is difficult to clean off.

Replace or clean outside equipment damaged by graffiti, e.g. commercial waste bins, storage bins.

Don't use graffiti images in advertising materials or in-store displays.

Avoid using problem materials such as "flat" or porous wall finishes in public areas as they are readily stained by graffiti dyes and difficult to maintain. Materials such as strong, wear-resistant laminates, impervious glazed ceramics, treated masonry products, and stainless steel are superior alternatives. Lightweight timber and brittle (synthetic) fencing screens should be avoided in public areas.

Use graffiti-resistant paint. For example: Watty! GranoShield or Vitraform clear sealer by Shipway can be used as a clear sealer over any painted surface; Pascol Anti-Graffiti clear sealer can be used on any unpainted concrete or brick surface. Graffiti can be scrubbed off these surfaces with detergent and water up to five times before a second coat is required.

Darker colours are thought to provide a less attractive surface for graffiti. Consider painting large surfaces with dark paint.

Consider wall treatments. Climbers and other plants can make it difficult for graffiti vandals, and reduce the visibility of any graffiti that does appear. In some areas good quality wall murals have been used to discourage graffiti and vandalism.

Prickly plants (e.g. roses, bougainvillea, hakea and grevillea) can form effective barriers outside ground floor windows and balconies. However, avoid blocking a clear view of the building from surrounding buildings or creating places for potential offenders to hide.

Consider liaising with Council to provide a legal site for graffiti art on a wall or surface that is regularly hit with tags. This site may be either a permanent mural or a site that is regularly repainted by graffiti artists.

