

Tips for Parents

Check backpacks for markers and/or spray paint, as well as sketch books, pieces of paper with graffiti "tags" on them, aerosol can caps and/or nozzles, white shoe polish and photographs of graffiti pieces or murals. Check school papers for graffiti "tags" and/or sketches of murals.

One of the things that task forces have learned is that most parents have no idea that their children are involved in these crimes. It is important to know who your children are associating with and make sure they are home at curfew time.

Remember—Graffiti is a crime. Known as "Criminal Mischief" it is a Misdemeanor and can be a Felony under Florida State Statute 806.13

Graffiti Prevention

"Tagging" is the permanent marking of public or private property with initials or an acronym to gain recognition and notoriety. The intent is to deface as many surfaces in the most notable way possible. When used by gangs, graffiti elevates violence and promotes gang membership. Graffiti also contributes to the overall decline of the neighborhood as it gives the impression that no one cares about the overall state of the community.

However, there are things you can do to prevent such activity.

- Paint over graffiti **immediately**
A tagged wall is ten times more likely to be vandalized than a clean wall. A patched over wall is three times more likely to be vandalized than a completely painted wall.
- Plant Holly, Bougainvillea, or other plants that present a barrier in front of frequently tagged walls.
- Install motion activated lights in dark areas that may be prone to vandalism.
- Know your neighbors and be aware of activity in your neighborhood.
- Talk to your children about the consequences of vandalism and property damage. Remember that parents of children involved in graffiti can be held financially liable.
- Apply protection products to minimize potential damage done by graffiti.



For more information about this program contact:

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Graffiti Eradication Program



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BEFORE AND AFTER GRAFFITI ERADICATION



The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, in its continuing efforts to save the quality of the community, established a **Graffiti Eradication Program in 2000**. This program uses the Sheriff's Office and community resources.

What is Graffiti?

Graffiti is an act of vandalism that costs taxpayers money. These monies go toward building and property repair, clean up and restoration. Graffiti is defined as **writing, drawings or symbols applied to any surface without the consent of the property owner, authorized agent or designate**. Graffiti vandals use a variety of materials such as spray paint, crayons and permanent ink to deface property. Hobby

Parents of children involved in graffiti vandalism can be held financially responsible for the damage done by their children.

knives and razor blades are used to cause permanent damage to glass and other surfaces.

Where does graffiti crime occur?

Graffiti crime can occur anywhere. Some of the more popular targets include:

- Public and private buildings
- Newspaper vending boxes & utility boxes
- Street signs
- Parks, playgrounds & recreational facilities
- Bridges and overpasses
- Public transit property and vehicles

Why should I be concerned about graffiti?

Graffiti is a serious crime that impacts all the citizens of Sarasota County. Removing graffiti and repairing the damage it causes costs county tax dollars. Properties can be devalued and business owners can lose customers from the negative image that

graffiti generates. Moreover, the presence of graffiti can send the message that a neighborhood is in decline or over-ridden with crime.

What can the public do to help?

In Progress Graffiti Calls

If you see graffiti/vandalism in progress, dial 911. Do NOT approach those involved in what you believe to be criminal activity. Stay on the line with 911.

Pre-existing Graffiti

Anyone can report a graffiti location online through the Sheriff's Office web site. The electronic form is quick and easy to use. Simply type www.sarasotasheriff.org and click on the *Graffiti* link or email ssograffiti@scgov.net