



**HEALTH & INSPECTIONS  
DEPARTMENT**

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**TIPS and  
INFORMATION**

**POLICE  
DEPARTMENT**

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Non-Emergency Dispatch  
(320) 251-1200  
General Information  
(320) 345-4444

## Graffiti Enforcement, Prevention & Removal

It is a crime to vandalize or otherwise deface property with graffiti. If apprehended, violators can be required to remove graffiti and pay reparations. Graffiti is a serious public nuisance which degrades neighborhoods and is often used to designate gang territory. To combat the negative effects of graffiti, the City of St. Cloud adopted a graffiti ordinance (Ord. 1007).

This ordinance is not intended to re-victimize the property owners who suffer graffiti damage, but intends to create a partnership to reduce crime and improve public safety. The most effective deterrent is the expedient removal of graffiti. A vandal is unlikely to repeat a graffiti offense if the mark is immediately erased. Immediate cleanup also discourages rival "taggers" and gangs from committing graffiti crimes in the area.

### REPORTING PROCESS

**Report:** Report graffiti to the police by calling 320-251-1200. Do NOT begin to remove graffiti if you suspect that it is gang related. Instead, request that a police officer respond to your property to first take a report. The responding officer will file a report and photograph the damage.

**Document:** Take your own photos of the graffiti damage for your records. Ask the police officer for the case number in case you need a copy for your records. Contact your insurance agency to see if damage is covered.

**Identify:** When possible work with local authorities to identify the person(s) responsible for the damage.

**Remove:** Completely and quickly remove the graffiti. The property owner is required to clean graffiti.

### What happens after a graffiti offense is reported?

The police will investigate the offense. The police will forward the information to the Health & Inspections Department. Staff inspects to see if graffiti has been removed. If graffiti is still present, written notice is sent to the property owner providing three days to remove the graffiti.

### PREVENTING GRAFFITI

In addition to prompt reporting and clean-up of graffiti, the following strategies are proven to prevent recurrence of graffiti problems:

Report suspicious activity. Call 320-251-1200 if you see suspicious persons, vandalism, or graffiti. Always call 911 if it is an emergency.

Make sure your property is well maintained and cared for. Nicely maintained buildings and grounds discourage vandalism.

Let your neighbors know right away if they have been victims of graffiti – they may not be aware.

Form a neighborhood watch program in your area. Inform your neighbors and police of graffiti.

## GRAFFITI CLEANUP

Graffiti removal methods vary based on the surface and graffiti used. Consult a cleanup contractor or hardware store for your specific needs.

**Warning!** Many graffiti cleanup products are toxic. Read manufacturer directions and protect yourself and others from these products.

**Graffiti is easiest to remove immediately after it occurs.** This discourages the perpetrator from striking again. Delayed cleanup often requires harsher solvents, more scrubbing, and greater chance of damage to the vandalized surface.

• **Concrete, Brick, or Cement:** Use extra strength paint remover. Apply with a wire brush, and allow to dry. Rinse with water. Repeat if necessary.

• **Stucco:** Apply extra strength paint remover. Seal area with primer such as "KILZ" and paint over with stucco paint.

• **Vinyl Siding:** Use paint remover sparingly, and test first on an inconspicuous area. Use a small amount and wipe each time with a clean rag. Repaint if necessary. Clean promptly to avoid damage.

• **Aluminum siding:** Use "Goof-off" or "Oops" for latex paints. Oil paints may be cleaned with paint remover, but use sparingly and test first on a small area.

• **Wood:** Unpainted- remove with paint thinner and re-stain/varnish. On painted wood, seal with a stain killing primer and repaint.

• **Glass and Plexiglas surfaces:** Use carburetor cleaner and a clean rag.

• **Metal:** Use carburetor cleaner. If this doesn't work, use paint thinner.

• **Hint:** Soap and water can sometimes remove graffiti. Try a mild detergent, water and scrubbing action first.



Help Clean up Your  
Neighborhood

Report Graffiti to  
the Police