



City of Imperial Beach Graffiti Abatement Program

How Does Graffiti Hurt?

Property Value - According to the National Association of Realtors, properties located in neighborhoods where there is graffiti vandalism lose 15% of their value.

Safety - Patrons of buildings, parks, or public facilities where graffiti vandalism has occurred may feel that if graffiti is tolerated, then more serious crimes, such as theft and assault, may also go unchallenged.

Clean-Up Cost - According to the U.S. Department of Justice, "an estimated \$12 billion a year is spent cleaning up graffiti in the United States." Additionally, a Public Technology Inc. 2002 survey of communities found that " San Diego County spends about \$1 million per year on graffiti removal."

Graffiti Prevention

- **Keep up the neighborhood** - Make every effort to keep the appearance of a neighborhood clean and neat. Remove litter and trash, fix broken fences, trim landscaping, and ensure all lighting is working properly. According to the San Diego Sheriff's Department, an exterior appearance that suggests apathy and neglect attracts vandals.
- **Remove graffiti promptly** - Rapid removal is an effective prevention tool. Data shows that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of recurrence.
- **Encourage citizen reporting** - Through resident reporting to Graffiti Hotline 619-575-3745 with as specific information as possible, graffiti removal is able to occur in a more timely matter.
- **Provide alternatives** - The Institute for Law and Justice, Inc. manual on safe neighborhoods suggests diverting graffiti criminals to positive alternatives. Throughout the City, youth have opportunities to participant in City programs such as the school clubs, sports, or the Boys and Girls Club.

Graffiti Prevention: Tips for Businesses

Graffiti contributes to reduced retail sales, a decline in property values, and citizen fear. A business littered with graffiti is less likely to be patronized. Citizens feel less safe and secure entering a storefront where graffiti is present. The following are steps to take to aid in the prevention of graffiti:

- Ongoing upkeep.
- Rapid removal.
- Control access:
 - Incorporate shrubs, thorny plants, and vines to restrict vandal access.
 - Add or improve lighting around the building to promote natural surveillance.
 - Use fences, controlled entrance and exits, and other barriers that discourage through traffic.
 - Limit access to roofs by moving dumpsters away from walls and covering drainpipes to prevent vandals from scaling them.
- Set up security:
 - Organize a "Business Watch" with nearby merchants to keep tabs on a business area. Businesses may want to employ security personnel to monitor property.
 - Employ graffiti-resistant materials or coating on a chronically hit wall.
- Work with the Community:
 - Refrain from using graffiti images in ads or promoting graffiti in any way.
 - Print graffiti prevention messages on bags, sales flyers, tray liners, book covers, calendars, and other promotional items.

Taggers

Graffiti does not mean that gangs are in your neighborhood! "Taggers" write the vast majority of graffiti in Imperial Beach. A tagger writes his or her nickname ("tag") so that his or her peers will see it. Taggers vandalize all parts of the city, and are not necessarily tied to a specific neighborhood. Taggers are usually part of a group called a "crew." Tags can be recognized by their particular style, which consists only of the tagger and/or crew name. Tag names are typically one short word, like "BUSTER," and crew names are usually three or four initials, such as "RLP." Taggers thrive on placing their tag names on as many and as dangerous places as possible. The objective of tagging is peer recognition: the tagger gains more notoriety the longer the tag is "up." Quick removal of graffiti is important because it discourages more tagging.

A Sign of Urban Decay

Today, graffiti is a sign of urban decay. It has become everyone's eyesore. Graffiti generates fear of neighborhood crime and instability. It is costly, destructive, lowers property values and sends a message that people of the community are not concerned about the appearance of their neighborhoods. It is also against the law!

Graffiti is Not Art

Graffiti is not art; it is vandalism. It is prohibited when done without permission of the property owner. Furthermore, **IBMC 12.72.070 Graffiti- Declaration of Nuisance** requires that property owners keep all walls, buildings, fences, signs and other structures and surfaces visible from the public right-of-way free of graffiti. Failure to remove graffiti promptly is considered violation of the Imperial Beach Municipal Code and properties may face fines or other actions as specified by the Code.

To get additional information:

Visit the city website:
<http://www.cityofib.com/>

Either via mail or in person, visit:
City of Imperial Beach
Public Works Department
495 10th Street
Imperial Beach, CA 91932

Telephone:

Graffiti Hotline: (619) 575-3745
Public Works: (619) 423-8311
Fax: (619) 429-4861
Code Compliance Division: (619) 628-1359 / 628-1358