

Intro

Graffiti vandalism costs the city of San Francisco millions of dollars every year. This cost does not include the cost that business owners and residents pay to repair their own properties that have been defaced by graffiti vandalism.

Tips in reporting incident of graffiti vandalism.

- 1) Report incidents of graffiti vandalism to the police. If you witness a graffiti **crime in progress**, make note of the suspect's description and call 911. The witness should take particular note of where and a description of what the vandal is writing.
- 2) In cases in which a suspect was not physically seen writing graffiti, victims of graffiti vandalism can call none emergency dispatch at 553-0123 and request to make a graffiti report to a patrol officer. Having a patrol officer take a report is important in cases where a victim can provide a surveillance video or has a reasonable suspicion as to who the suspected vandal may be.

Its important in cold cases to provide a time line estimate for when the graffiti occurred, i.e. between Tuesday May 8 at 11 am and Wednesday May 9 at 1pm.

Note- Reporting incidents of graffiti is important. Graffiti vandals often cause unlimited amounts of damage over a period of time. Sometimes these vandals can be held accountable for past crimes and have to pay restitution to victims, when they are eventually caught.

Tips in preventing graffiti vandalism

Graffiti vandals are often motivated by fame within the graffiti vandal or tagger community. Often times these vandals will place graffiti on an object or area in which they believe the graffiti will stay for a long period of time. If graffiti is removed or painted over quickly after its occurrence, vandals are less likely to return to deface that location again.

Note- Some graffiti often invites more. If a property does not look like it is cared for it will often be seen as an easy target for vandals to commit more acts of graffiti.

Graffiti vandals often commit their crimes at night under the cover of darkness. Due to this factor business owners or residents may consider placing flood lights in areas that are susceptible to graffiti vandalism. Graffiti vandals are less likely to deface property if they are visible.

The strongest graffiti cases are cases in which surveillance video is provided. Numerous arrests have been made by the San Francisco Police Department in cases where victims of graffiti vandalism have provided video of graffiti vandals defacing their property to the police. These cases are far more likely to result in successful prosecution and restitution to the victims. Due to this factor visible video cameras will often detour graffiti vandals from committing their crimes.

*Final Note

Graffiti can be broken down into 5 major categories.

- * Communicative, i.e. A political statement.
- * Hate, i.e. recognized symbols of hate meant to create fear and intimidation.
- * Gang, i.e. Territorial or threatening graffiti written by gang members.
- * Tagger i.e. Graffiti placed on a highly visible area, often with the intent of creating personal fame for the writer.
- * Art. Art has a broad definition. It doesn't matter if its a Picasso; If you don't have permission to write it on someone's property it is not art it is vandalism.

Tagger graffiti is the major source of graffiti complaints, and is the most common form of graffiti.