

Graffiti Removal Help for Citizens

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office received a grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation to help victims remove graffiti from their property promptly, while minimizing the cost of doing so.



Unincorporated Jefferson County had nearly 300 reported incidents of graffiti in 2006. Quick removal of graffiti has proven to be the best deterrent. In 2006, the Sheriff's Office enlisted its inmate worker crew to remove graffiti from public property, such as street signs. However, graffiti on private property has remained a problem for the property owner to solve alone.

The Wal-Mart Foundation has awarded a grant providing \$1,500 to the Sheriff's Office to purchase graffiti removal supplies, such as paint, paint thinner and sandpaper, for residents and business owners whose property has been "tagged" or defaced.

To qualify for supplies through the grant, residents must first report the graffiti to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office at 303-277-0211. For more information or to obtain supplies for removing graffiti, contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 720-377-2002.

www.jeffcosheriff.com



As law enforcement professionals, we pledge to serve the Jefferson County community, build trust and confidence, and respond to community needs with:

Integrity

We interact with each other and the community we serve with honesty, dignity, and respect.

Innovation

We respond to the community's needs with vision and initiative, relying on both traditional and non-traditional problem-solving methods.

Partnership

We actively promote a spirit of teamwork and cooperation through open communication and the free exchange of ideas.

Service

We continuously develop our skills and talents to provide top quality, responsive, effective law enforcement services.

Accountability

We ensure judicious management of human, financial, and physical resources.

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
200 Jefferson County Parkway
Golden, CO 80401

Office Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.
Phone: 303.277.0211
Emergency: Dial 911
www.jeffcosheriff.com

CRIME PREVENTION

Graffiti



What it means, what to do



Graffiti

Graffiti has existed since the beginning of time in one form or another, from hieroglyphics to petroglyphs to rock outcroppings along the Oregon Trail. However, today's brand of spray-painted self-expression is viewed less as art and more as an eyesore to motorists and property owners who must view it, or worse -- remove it.

Tagging

In the second half of the 20th century, urban gangs began using graffiti as a territorial marker. This practice, known as "tagging," continues today, but is now practiced by people unaffiliated with gang activity as well.

Young males between 13 and 25 create most of the graffiti that's out there. A "tagger" will usually use a pen, marker, or spray-paint to put a unique design in a public place. The design will be proprietary to the tagger and may be initials, an illustration, or a combination of numbers and letters that is unique -- like a signature. Most tags represent the tagger's nickname, and tend to be short so as to make them easier to complete quickly.



Tagging in its most basic form is nothing more than advertisement for its author. Promience, difficulty, and proliferation of one's tag gain the

author status in the tagging community. Individual taggers or "tagging crews" of friends account for most of the graffiti you may see. In one incident, the Sheriff's Office caught a tagging crew spray-painting an underpass; they were carrying digital cameras to document their activities and share with their friends.

Vandalism

Graffiti can also be simple vandalism, or "criminal mischief." While tagging is serial in nature, vandalism

is not. Tagging is an ongoing effort to place one's signature in multiple locations; vandalism is usually a single occurrence. Vandalism can be used to express political views or personal feelings, or to display one's artistic talents on a public canvas. This type of graffiti can vary from "Billy loves Sally" carved into a picnic table to large colorful artistic wall murals.



Vandals may also deface property for the sake of defacing it. Markings from vandalism may not be any recognizable signature -- just a message or a mess of paint.

Gang-related Graffiti

Gangs use graffiti to mark territory and as a way to communicate both internally and externally. Gang graffiti is usually simple, as its authors are more interested in marking territory and communicating short messages than they are in artistic expression.

A tag created by a gang member features the name of his gang. Tag wars occur when members of another gang use another color to cross it out and leave their own tag. Gangs undergo this process to claim their turf. The more artistic the image, the more likely it's the work of a tagger crew and not a gang. Gangs don't bother as much with art; they are concerned only about making their presence known.

Graffiti in Jeffco

About 70 percent of graffiti in Jeffco is tagging that is not gang related. The Sheriff's Office views graffiti as a crime, as well as a quality-of-life issue for residents. In addition to making arrests for criminal mischief when possible, the Sheriff's Office documents graffiti in an attempt to identify taggers.

Because of the serious crimes perpetuated by organized criminal organizations (gangs), the Sheriff's Office closely monitors all gang related activity.

What You Can Do

Report new graffiti to the Sheriff's Office as soon as you see it by calling our non-emergency number: 303-277-0211. The Sheriff's Office will send a crime scene technician to photograph the graffiti to identify the tagger, as well as analyze it to determine if it's an indication of gang activity.

A property owner is responsible for graffiti on his or her own property. If your property or business is affected by tagging, your best course is to paint over the markings as soon as possible (after contacting the Sheriff's Office to document the incident), to discourage tag wars on your property and the surrounding area.



Contacts for Graffiti Removal in Jeffco

- Along state and interstate highways (C-470, I-70, US Hwy 285), call the Colorado Department of Transportation at 303-757-9514
- Along county highways and roadways, call Jeffco Road & Bridge at 303-271-5200
- In Denver Mountain Parks, call 303-697-4545
- For Foothills Parks & Recreation facilities, call 303-409-2300
- For RTD bus shelters or park-n-ride facilities, call 303-299-6700
- On U.S. Postal Service mailboxes and equipment call 303-297-6447
- For telephone, utility, and cable television equipment, call the company that owns the box (the telephone number is usually located on a sticker on the outside of the equipment). For Qwest pay phones, call Qwest at 1-800-477-7211, option 2.

For trash dumpsters, call the company that owns the dumpster (the telephone number is usually located near the company logo).

On billboards and bus benches, contact the advertising company that owns the property (the telephone number is usually located on the base of the billboard or bus bench). You can also contact Jeffco Highways & Transportation at 303-271-8495.

If you do not know who the owner is or need further assistance, contact the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit at 720 377-2002 or 303 271-5363.