



Gang graffiti, the singular of graffiti, is often the first indication that gang activity is present in your community. It is the newspaper, the billboard, the Internet of the world of gangs and serves to mark the gang's power and status. It marks territorial boundaries and serves, as a warning to other gangs that the area marked with unique signs and symbols is the territory or "turf" of a particular gang. Graffiti warns intruders or trespassers from rival gangs and even policemen, that they are not welcome. It may also be an advertisement for the sale of drugs or a memorial to a fallen fellow gang member.

Graffiti should not be tolerated in ANY community. It frequently, if left in tact, leads to the degradation of a neighborhood and the devaluation of property. Studies have shown in many cases that if graffiti is left unchecked and not removed, more and more graffiti will appear. The removal of graffiti is extremely costly and some cities, that have developed graffiti removal programs, have spent huge sums of money to reclaim and beautify the neighborhood or community.

Most municipalities have codes or laws that deal with the defacing of property. Many have seen the need to pass laws that deal directly with graffiti perpetrators and many of these laws have severe penalties to deal with violators who are convicted

**NOTE:** Not all graffiti is gang related. Individuals known as "taggers" paint graffiti on buildings, fences, signs, highways, overpasses, and even trucks and railway cars. Many of these individuals enjoy a reputation for creativity and will frequently sign their "tagger" name.

It is none the less important to immediately remove this type of graffiti. **IT IS STILL VANDALISM!!!**

#### **REMEMBER THE 4 R'S OF GRAFFITI**

**Read** – Read the graffiti to determine the gang(s) involved. If you are unable to interpret what is observed, find someone who can. Frequently, a great deal of intelligence can be gathered, such as the nicknames or monikers of gang members, warnings, threats to other gangs, availability of drugs, pending gang wars, and more.

**Report** -Educators, parents and other concerned citizens should report found graffiti to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Law enforcement or corrections personnel should report the existence of graffiti to the departments gang intelligence unit.

**Record** – Use a still or video camera to record the graffiti for possible later use. If graffiti continues to appear after removal, the photographic record may serve as a history of the efforts made to combat the problem.

**Remove** – Remove ALL graffiti as soon as possible after it is discovered. When removing graffiti, paint the entire wall, post, sign, etc. on which the graffiti is found. Studies have shown that "spot" painting to blot out the graffiti is not as

effective for the permanent discouragement of graffiti as is covering the entire subject area.