

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/home-and-neighborhood-safety/positive-change-through-policy>

Graffiti

Graffiti has a negative impact on community members' sense of safety because it can signal the presence of gangs and be used to intimidate others. The populace may feel that there is little caring and respect within the community when a building that has been vandalized with graffiti is not cleaned. Potential criminals may view the community similarly, prompting other delinquent acts. Many communities have adopted policies to combat graffiti, which have allowed them to devote resources and create programs to address the problem.

- In 1984 New York City developed a graffiti-prevention initiative by implementing the Clean Car Program to rid the subway system of graffiti. Although the program began over 20 years ago, it remains one of the most well-known anti-graffiti efforts. The program developed in order to combat the fear of criminal activity on subway cars. Previous attempts to clean the subway, as well as punish taggers, were unsuccessful. The program was based on the notion that the [key to graffiti prevention](#) is timely removal because spaces that have been visibly tagged are more likely to be tagged again. The New York program aimed to remove graffiti from cars within two hours of application. Within five years of the program's implementation, all of New York City's subway cars were graffiti free. The initiative was determined a success because officials were committed to rid the subway of graffiti, used a problem-solving approach to crime reduction, and coordinated the administering institutions.
- Kansas City, MO government officials adopted a policy in an attempt to prevent delinquent youth from acquiring the supplies necessary to make graffiti. [The policy](#) prohibited minors from purchasing spray paint and broad tip markers and forbade minors to possess these tools for tagging while on public or private property from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- The city of Anaheim, CA, recently adopted an [anti-graffiti ordinance](#) that will require individuals who are arrested for vandalism be charged for the cost of graffiti removal. In a further attempt to combat tagging, business owners must keep aerosol sprays or other items that could be used to make graffiti behind sales counters.

Think about graffiti and vandalism in your community. If you don't know about graffiti policies in your area, consider posing the questions below to local law enforcement officials and community leaders.

- What is your community's policy related to graffiti?
- Does the policy state what will happen if graffiti is spotted? Does it state who is responsible for its removal?

- Does the policy include a commitment to educate young people about graffiti and how it can damage a community?