The quick removal of graffiti is the most effective means to prevent further acts of vandalism.

In Partnership With
York Regional Police

We Need Your Help to Combat Graffiti

For more information regarding graffiti crime, call the

Graffiti Eradication Information Hotline
at 905-771-0198 or visit RichmondHill.ca/Bylaws.

Working Together to Prevent Crime.

For more information, contact:

By-law Enforcement
Planning & Regulatory Services Department
Phone: 905-771-0198
Fax: 905-771-5445
Email: bylaw@richmondhill.ca

To obtain information about the Town of Richmond Hill in your preferred language, please call Access Richmond Hill at 905-771-8800.

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How is Graffiti Defined?

Graffiti is Vandalism

Graffiti means one or more letters, symbols, figures, etchings, scratches, inscriptions, stains or other markings that disfigure or deface a structure or thing, howsoever made or otherwise affixed on the structure or thing.

Graffiti vandals use a variety of materials, such as spray paint, crayons and permanent ink, to deface property. Hobby knives and razor blades are also used to cause permanent damage to glass and other surfaces.

Historically, conventional graffiti represented a youthful “rite of passage” - part of a phase of experimental behaviour. Spontaneous graffiti has often been characterized as play, adventure or exuberance. It is not. Graffiti constitutes vandalism of someone else’s property.

Common Targets and Locations of Graffiti

Graffiti crime can occur anywhere. Some of the more popular targets include:

- public and private buildings;
- newspaper and utility boxes;
- municipal street furniture;
- parks and playgrounds;
- bridges and overpasses;
- public transit property and vehicles; and
- Canada Post mailboxes and property.

What’s Being Done About it?

The Town of Richmond Hill is working with the York Regional Police to stop graffiti in the following ways:

EDUCATION: Raising community awareness by hosting Anti-Graffiti Workshops in our schools, libraries and community centres

EMPOWERMENT: Empowering our communities to stop graffiti through the support of our politicians and legal system

ENFORCEMENT: Enforcing graffiti laws by laying charges where appropriate

In an effort to deal with graffiti in the Town of Richmond Hill, an Anti-Graffiti By-law (No. 60-07) was enacted and passed on June 12, 2007. The By-law is enforced by the Town of Richmond Hill By-law Enforcement section and allows for a minimum fine of $400 to violators and up to $100,000 for continued or multiple offences. As well, upon conviction, a special fine with no limit to a maximum penalty. The Town of Richmond Hill wishes to deter any violators from acts of vandalism.

What You Can Do to Help

When witnessing suspicious behaviour or graffiti crime, call the Police immediately and provide them with descriptions of the suspects and their vehicle (if any), including the make, model, colour and licence plate number.

Defending Against Graffiti Crime

- Restrict access to walls by planting ivy, thorny bushes or trees
- Apply graffiti resistant coatings to protect walls
- Increase lighting and visibility in vulnerable areas
- Install video surveillance to monitor isolated areas
- Establish a strong Neighbourhood Watch program

Related Problems

Graffiti is not an isolated problem. It is often related to other crimes and disorder problems, including public disorder, littering, public urination, loitering and shoplifting graffiti materials. Graffiti is also related to gangs and gang violence, as gang graffiti conveys threats and identifies turf boundaries.

How Graffiti Affects Our Community

Graffiti affects the community in many ways, including:

- Increased taxes to fund clean-up programs
- Local property values may decrease
- Heightened fear of crime in the community
- Local economy may decline, causing small businesses to close
- Graffiti gives the impression that no one cares about the overall state of the community