

# **Graffiti Presentation for Multi-Housing**



**MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT  
TRI-STAR PROGRAM**



# What is Graffiti?

- Graffiti is the words, colors, and shapes drawn, scratched, or etched in buildings, overpasses, train cars, desks, windows, and other surfaces. It's done without permission and it's against the law.
- Graffiti is an act of vandalism.



# Impact of Graffiti on the Community?

- Graffiti has been termed a “quality of life” crime and the impacts graffiti has on a community are numerous.
- Graffiti reduces enjoyment of public spaces such as parks and civic areas. It also causes the area to look unsafe and makes people concerned about their personal safety.
- Graffiti sends the signal that nobody cares, attracting other forms of crime to the neighborhood.
- Graffiti drains tax dollars. Funds that could be used for public safety, roads, parks, and other community improvements, are used for graffiti cleanup.



# Gang Graffiti

- Graffiti is an indication that a gang has claimed ownership over a geographical area.
- Ownership could be limited to a single apartment complex or span throughout an entire neighborhood.
- Gang members will often add their monikers alongside the gang name.

# Gang Communication



- Gang graffiti is often used as a means of communicating rivalries between gangs
- Gang members from rival gangs will cross out graffiti as a sign of disrespect

# Gang Intimidation

- Graffiti is often used as a means to intimidate rival gangs
- In photos below, Westside Crip gang (WSCG) documenting they are a blood killer (BK)



# News Paper of the Streets

Graffiti is often used to send messages to Law Enforcement about the great job they are doing!



# What are Taggers?



- Taggers consider themselves street artists.
- Taggers are not documented as gang members unless they are involved in criminal activity.
- Many tagging crews are now committing crimes like traditional gangs and are known as tag-bangers.
- Tagger graffiti is not usually used to mark territory.
- Tagging is competitive and is used to get recognized.
- Competition between tagging crews has often become violent.
- Taggers are responsible for millions of dollars in damage to private and public property annually.

# Art is not a Crime

Taggers believe graffiti is not hurting anyone.



# Tagging vs. Graffiti



- Tagging usually not gang related.
- Cannot be read easily.
- Colorful & Big, taggers want it to be noticed.

# Tagging Examples





# Graffiti Breads More Graffiti

- If graffiti is not removed promptly, the space invites more graffiti as the “tagger” is confident that their “tag” will be displayed for some time; Graffiti sends out a message that “nobody cares” about the area. This creates an open invitation for littering, loitering and more graffiti.
- The underlying motive of taggers is the desire for public recognition. They gain "fame" and “status” from other taggers by painting their distinctive "tags" in as many places as possible.



# Tips for Graffiti Prevention

- Keep the appearance of your neighborhood clean and neat. Remove litter and trash, fix broken fences, trim landscape, and ensure all lighting is working properly.
- Remove graffiti within 24-48 hours of its appearance.
- Be persistent! Repeat removal will likely be needed, as vandals may try again. However, studies show that the sooner graffiti is removed; the less likely it will be repeated in the same place.
- Install lighting in areas that are dark and often hit with graffiti.
- Plant trees or other greenery near a graffiti-plagued wall. This will help prevent access.



# Educate Residents about Graffiti

- In most cases, the vandal may be a child of a tenant living on your property.
- Create a flyer that educates residents about reporting graffiti on the property, you can also offer a reward.
- Tell parents about signs to look for if their child might be involved in graffiti.
- Many times, the individuals involved may think its too risky due to publication of graffiti on the property and will go elsewhere or not do it at all.



# Graffiti Vandal Indicators

- Graffiti on backpacks, books, clothing, notebooks, or furniture
- Markings on teenager's things resembling graffiti markings found in the community
- **Possession of "Graffiti Implements"**
  - Example: Spray paint, paint markers, shoe polish daubers, drill bits, sandpaper, grinding stones, brillo pads, rocks, lava rocks, permanent markers, stickers (slap tagging), rubber gloves, or acid.
- Photographs/clippings/posters of graffiti
- Graffiti publications
- Use of slang terms associated with graffiti
- Use of Hand signs
- Sneaking out late at night
- Visiting Internet sites about graffiti
- Permanent marker stains or paint stains on clothing
- Friends who are graffiti vandals



# Contacts

**Mesa Graffiti Paint Out**

480.644.3083

**Upload Graffiti Photos To:**

[www.mesaaz.gov/police/send-graffiti-photos.aspx](http://www.mesaaz.gov/police/send-graffiti-photos.aspx)