



## **Graffiti Removal Advice Sheet**

For painted wood, the best and quickest way to remove graffiti is to paint it out in the same colour. We use water based masonry paint as a rule, which can be used on both wood and brick surfaces, and which can cover large areas very quickly and easily - and dries very quickly. But if you are dealing with a gloss painted surface, then go for one of the new types which don't require an undercoat, such as Crown's 'Solo'. You should not confuse painting over graffiti with decorating or renovating. What you are doing is removing graffiti, and you can then continue to paint it out as any new tags appear. This will usually take only a few minutes, particularly if you can get together with others. Each time you will be improving the surface and when eventually the vandals move on you can complete the job in whatever way you choose.

With the more difficult, unpainted surfaces or heritage brick work, it will not be appropriate to use paint. This is where chemical solutions have to be used, such as the environmentally and user friendly substances incorporating zest of orange. PCEG has a graffiti kit which includes these products, so if you need to use them - and in particular the gel is the most effective on brick - contact our Graffiti Removal Group Co-ordinator, Annaclaire Purnell on 8317 6607. You can use paint stripper as an alternative, but obviously it is not so environmentally friendly and needs more care. It should be applied with a brush, using gloves and goggles. Quite a lot of water is needed to do a good job when using either the gel or paint stripper - usually a layer of water first and then always water to finish it off. A jet spray is ideal but even a plastic garden hand spray can be effective, as long as it can be refilled. Both these can be easily obtained at garden centres and DIY shops.

Here's what you do: Using the pressurised garden spray, first wet the surface. Then, wearing the special goggles and gloves provided, pour some of the chemical solution into one of the small plastic containers. Now paint over the graffiti, using a brush from the kit, and leave to react for up to twenty minutes if necessary. Then scrub with the scrubbing brush. Finally wash off with the pressurised spray. You may have to do this several times, if you are tackling a large area. If any 'shadowing' remains, rub over the surface with a brick - material from the brick is absorbed quite effectively by the wall. So expect your brick to shrink! Most important: you must thoroughly wash all pieces of equipment, using the spray, when you have finished.

One member of The Blackheath Society, being a keen amateur artist, has experimented with blending colours from sample pots of water soluble masonry paint and applying on brick with a sponge to remove the shadowing effect which can remain after using the fluid, to give a proper finish. Again, she has used different strengths, starting with the weakest and test patching before using. This is an alternative approach to the more basic one, though effective in its way, of rubbing dirt into brick after the graffiti has been removed, with another brick - a natural method to use if there isn't too much graffiti, otherwise it can be demoralisingly slow.

White spirit, methylated spirits or even water, in conjunction with one of the kitchen cleaning products available from supermarkets, can be effective in removing graffiti from windows or gloss painted and other non-porous surfaces, depending on what materials the vandals have used - eg marker pens will often respond to this treatment, but not aluminium or metallic paints.

Unpainted pebble dashed or rendered surfaces are a real challenge. Either use the chemicals mentioned above, or try lots of paint stripper applied with a brush and allowed to sink in for 10-20 minutes, or until the spray paint softens. Then blast it with a high pressure water spray.

For major graffiti attacks phone Cleansweep on 8921 4661. For racist or sexual graffiti or drug litter they should respond the same day, hopefully within 2 hours. If it is a serious attack to a prominent building the response time should be 2 days. For other cases it should be within 7 working days.