

## HOW TO COMBAT GRAFFITI

**Report all graffiti vandalism** to the Apache Junction Police Department so it can be documented and photographed. This helps build cases against the vandals. Most taggers sign their work in the same way and often target the same area.

**Eliminate the graffiti as soon as possible.** The City of Apache Junction Public Works Department offers to remove graffiti with a high-pressure water system at no cost to the resident/business owner, which is done as quickly as their work schedule allows. If the owner wishes to remove the graffiti himself, it should be done as soon as possible. The goal is to deny the vandal any time to display his work.

**Remind businesses that sell spray paint** of city ordinances that prevent them from selling to persons under the age of 18.

**Restrict access to walls by landscaping.** If an area is continually hit by graffiti, consider planting cactus or other vegetation to make it less inviting.

**Increase lighting and visibility in vulnerable areas.**

**Apply graffiti-resistant coatings to protect walls.**

**Install video surveillance to monitor isolated areas**

## SAY "NO" TO GRAFFITI

**If** you witness person(s) in the act of vandalizing a structure, call 911 immediately. Provide as much information as possible regarding the suspects, i.e. number of persons, physical descriptions, clothing descriptions, and any mode of transportation seen. Do not put yourself in danger by interrupting the crime, but do be the best witness you can be until the police have arrived.



**If** you see a graffiti site that has an orange "X" on it, it was added by a police officer to let the public know that this site has already been reported to the police department and is in the process of elimination.

**If** you are a victim of graffiti or see a graffiti site that does not have an orange "X" on it, please call the Apache Junction Police Department at 480-982-8260 and report it. You may also email graffiti information to [AJgraffiti@ajcity.net](mailto:AJgraffiti@ajcity.net), to include reporting of graffiti locations and possible suspects.



TOGETHER WE  
CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE.



# graffiti

Apache Junction  
Police Department

## WHAT IS GRAFFITI?

Graffiti is an act of vandalism, actually the most common type of vandalism, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. It is defined as writing, drawing or symbols applied to any surface without the consent of the property owner, authorized agent or designate.

## WHY DO WE HAVE GRAFFITI?

The majority of graffiti is done by graffiti vandals known as “taggers.” They are motivated by the need to be recognized. They believe that the more often they write their secret signature, or “tag,” the more respect they earn from other vandals. Places that are risky to tag, such as bridges, enhance this respect. The excitement that comes from doing something illegal, such as shoplifting, trespassing, etc., and the rebellious nature of their actions, also motivate taggers. Others deface public areas to show that they, and not the agency responsible (resident, business owner, city government, etc.) are in control.

Graffiti vandals like to believe they are outside of the community’s social structure and see graffiti as a means of expression.

## WHO DOES IT?

Most graffiti is done, according to national studies, by youths whose ages range from pre-teens to early 20’s. Graffiti vandals come from every ethnic and income background. Because

vandals like to mark surfaces where peers will recognize their “tag,” most graffiti in a community is done by those who live there.

Many people believe that graffiti signals the presence of a gang. While gang graffiti is unnerving, it is reported that less than 10% of all graffiti nationwide is gang-related.



## GRAFFITI IS UGLY

When left untouched, graffiti sends the message that we cannot keep order in our community. It says that “taggers” are in control and it is acceptable behavior.

## SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Graffiti is not a victimless crime. Everyone – children, parents, business owners and taxpayers - is hurt by it.

It is estimated that \$7 to \$8 billion are spent nationally each year by cities, communities, public transit departments, residents, and businesses to remove graffiti or repair the damage it causes.

## LAWS PERTAINING TO GRAFFITI (AJCC = A.J. City Code; A.R.S. = State Law)

AJCC 10-6-3A: Unlawful for any person to paint, spray, chalk, etch or otherwise apply graffiti on public or privately owned property.

AJCC 10-6-3B: Unlawful for any person owning or otherwise in control of any real property within the city to permit or allow any graffiti to be placed upon or to remain on any permanent structure.

AJCC 10-6-4: Unlawful for any person to knowingly possess any graffiti implement for the purpose of committing criminal damage to public or privately owned property.

AJCC 10-6-5: Unlawful for any person, other than a parent or legal guardian, to sell or furnish, or permit to be furnished, any graffiti implement to any person under the age of 18.

A.R.S. §12-661: Allows the dollar estimate of damage caused by the malicious acts and willful misconduct of a minor to be assigned to the parent or legal guardian in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.

A.R.S. §28-3320: The Department of Motor Vehicles can suspend the driver’s license of persons under the age of 18 or refuse to issue such license until the person’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if they have been convicted of a graffiti violation.