



How to Report Graffiti Vandalism

Graffiti, like everything else, comes in waves and the City of Rancho Santa Margarita needs your help in stopping it. The Police actively patrol the City and pursue any and all leads related to graffiti vandalism. We encourage all residents to observe their surroundings and report graffiti vandalism as quickly as possible following these guidelines:

- If you actually see graffiti vandalism in progress, please call the Police at **(949) 770-6011** immediately with as much detail about the area, street name, and vandals as possible. Do not approach or confront the vandal yourself. While catching the vandal is significant to us, your personal safety is of the utmost importance to us.
- If you observe graffiti with no vandals in the area, please report that graffiti vandalism to the City's Public Works Department staff at **(949) 635-1800 extension 6501**. Public Works staff will determine if the graffiti is on public or private property and will work with the property owner on timely removal of the graffiti.
- Rapid removal (preferably within 24 hours) is the most effective way to prevent graffiti from reappearing as it reduces the recognition that a graffiti vandal desires. It also shows that the affected area is being monitored and looked after. If graffiti is left on a structure, it is likely that more will appear.
- Rancho Santa Margarita participates in an Orange County Sheriff's Department program called Tracking Automated Graffiti Reporting System (TAGRS) in which all graffiti is photographed and documented and entered into the TAGRS database. This database helps to track and link incidents throughout Orange County and aids in the investigation of graffiti vandalism.
- Tips for HOA's, businesses and homeowners on preventing graffiti vandalism:
 - Create or modify large surfaces so they do not look empty like a "blank canvas" waiting to be filled
 - Restrict access to a potential "blank canvas" or target area
 - Minimize solid vertical surface areas or use rough textures or protective coatings on these surfaces
 - Improve lighting and eliminate "hiding spots" for the vandal to take cover in
- For additional information on graffiti vandalism, please refer to the City's Municipal Code Chapter 8.03 on the City's website.