

Tag Types

Basic techniques for cleaning



Spray Paint, Paint Pens

Apply solvent sparingly to your cleaning tool, not to the graffiti surface, and start with the least abrasive action, i.e. see if the graffiti will come off by just wiping with solvent on a paper towel. Very thick paint build-up may benefit from direct application of solvent. Be patient; rather than scrubbing hard with an abrasive pad, let the already dissolved paint and solvent sit as a paste on any thicker portions for up to several minutes. A razor scraper may help remove thick areas. On painted surfaces, cleaning and wiping small areas quickly (rather than the entire tag all at once) and not allowing the solvent to dry out completely will help keep the graffiti from blending with the underlying paint.

Paint Sticks

Some tags have a raised crayon-like texture. A razor scraper may help remove thick areas before applying solvent.

Permanent Markers

Acetone-based solvents work well on markers, but often a faint ghost image remains, especially on plastic surfaces. Marker often bleeds through spray paint, so clean even if painting over.

Stickers

Start at one corner of the sticker with your razor scraper and lift slowly. If the sticker and adhesive separate or tear use your razor to pry up the resistant areas before continuing. If the sticker is old and the adhesive has dried, spray it with some solvent to loosen it.

Surface Types

Should you clean it, paint it or report it?

Important Notes:

- We are only allowed to clean public (i.e. city-owned) property but in practice we do clean most surfaces which are along the street. Do not go onto private property without permission!
- Only paint if you can match the color of the background surface.



Clean It or Paint It!

- Unpainted metal or enameled metal, e.g. light poles, utility boxes, dumpsters (clean it)
- Painted metal, e.g. some utility boxes, mailboxes, dumpsters and light poles (often can be cleaned)
- Plastic surfaces, e.g. trash and recycling bins, magazine racks, bus stop benches (clean it)
- Traffic signs (clean back, test front before cleaning)
- Painted concrete, block, stucco or wood (paint if you can match the color, otherwise report it)



Report It!

- Unpainted concrete, block, brick or stucco, e.g. curbs, sidewalks, walls, washes
- Traffic signs (front only, if it cannot be cleaned)
- Bare wood, e.g. some utility poles and fences
- Irregular surfaces, e.g. chain link fence with slats, landscape boulders
- Special cases, e.g. cars or other private property

Graffiti Removal

Pocket Guide



Resources

To help you fight graffiti

3 Ways To Report Graffiti in Tucson:

- Call: 792-CITY (792-2489)
- Fill out the webform at: http://tpdinternet.tucsonaz.gov/graffiti/graffiti_form.html
- Email: graffiti@tucsonaz.gov

For a NoTAG presentation in your neighborhood:

- Email: notag.tucson@gmail.com

For more information:

- <http://www.graffitihurts.org/>



NoTAG

Neighbors Organized
To Abolish Graffiti

Supplies

How to make your very own Graffiti Eradication Kit.

The Bucket

Used to carry your supplies, and possibly to stand on if a tag is just a little bit above your reach. If you go around by car, a 5-gallon paint bucket is better. The smaller bucket pictured is less sturdy but fits well in a bicycle's side baskets.

Spray Paint

A few cans of spray paint come in handy for dealing with tags on hard to clean surfaces which have known, matchable colors. Pictured are green and blue paints for the typical residential trash and recycling bins.

Safety Glasses

For eye protection from sprayed, splattering or dripping solvents and paints.

Scouring Pads

For cleaning thickly painted graffiti, or older graffiti which has dried and hardened. Use care in order to avoid damaging the surface underneath.

Solvent-Proof Gloves

To protect your skin from solvents and paints. Make sure they are labelled "solvent-proof" and get the heavier duty ones. From experience less expensive, thinner ones do not last long.

Trash Bag

(not pictured) For stickers and signs you remove, and also for your used shop towels. And, you may further enhance the appearance of your neighborhood by picking up trash.

Nylon Bristle Brush

Useful for cleaning textured surfaces in which some paint is pooled in small surface depressions. For example the green and blue plastic trash and recycling bins.

Razor Scraper

Useful for removing stickers and stick-on reflective lettering. As their adhesive dries, they can become very hard to remove. Get one that retracts so you don't cut yourself when you're not using it!

Shop Towels and Rags

For wiping off the solvent and dissolved paint. Since the towels get quickly saturated with paint that can contaminate the next surface you work on, they are consumed quickly, so paper is more economical. It's good to have a few cloth rags to clean rougher surfaces that shred the paper, or when a surface becomes sticky and paper fibers are sticking to it.

Solvents

Different products may be more or less effective in particular situations, for example acetone-based removers seem to be better at getting magic marker off plastic surfaces. Use all solvents with caution; if you are going to work with them repeatedly or have any breathing problems, you should consider investing in a respirator specially made to screen out the fumes (available at most hardware stores).

