

Order C EASY MAINTENANCE SELECTIONS

Materials and surfaces can be selected on the basis of maintenance and management of graffiti. These techniques differ from Orders A and B selections. A and B Orders rely on hard design to deny graffiti.

Order C particularly seeks to reduce graffiti through an active maintenance regime, made very easy by design consideration.

Whilst this is the 3rd level in the hierarchy, it is acceptable that selections only be made from this Order.

It may be that on the majority of occasions, selections can only be made from Order C. These selections are made when Order A and B measures can not be used.

Easy maintenance selections mean that graffiti can be readily and quickly removed.

This approach means that there is a predetermined response to graffiti. In addition, making graffiti removal easy allows quick graffiti removal. This means graffitiist's recognition is reduced. This can deter future graffiti.

Most graffiti is applied to a height of 2-3 metres from the ground which means maintenance selections should be applied to a minimum height of three (3) metres from the ground.

TIPS

International research demonstrates that rapid removal (24-48 hours) is most effective in deterring future graffiti.

'Graffiti begets graffiti'. If graffiti is left on a structure it is likely that more will appear. A tag that is left on a structure becomes an invitation to others to leave their mark.

Dark paint colours

The selection of a dark base colour is a good graffiti management strategy.

Graffitiists generally target light-coloured surfaces. Most graffitiists only carry dark colour aerosol cans or indelible marker pens. In addition, the graffitiist would need to use more white or light coloured paint for the graffiti to stand out against a dark surface.

Masking graffiti is far easier when the base paint coat is a darker colour. It is straightforward to paint over a light tag with dark paint. It is less effective to paint over a dark tag with light paint.

The use of dark colours should be considered in the context of design intent, function, heat and perception of safety. Dark interiors in toilets, for example, reduces the opportunity for illumination through the reflection of light and can make the environment feel unsafe and closed-in. Dark lattice or mesh in bus shelters on the other hand is appropriate.



Photo 19 - in this case, a heavily tagged light-coloured concrete wall has been coated with dark green paint to enable easy graffiti masking.

Standard colours

If a property manager, or Government department is responsible for a large number of assets, then the establishment of a standard and limited colour scheme for external surfaces is strongly recommended. The application of standard BCC colours is a requirement of Civic Cabinet and the Executive Management Team. This became effective on July 01 2002.

This approach is an effective way to reduce time and resources spent on graffiti removal. Adopting a standard and limited colour scheme will enable an easy match of colours when required (in the case of masking graffiti).

The greatest ‘loss’ of time occurs when service providers can not recognise the base colour of the structure, and do not carry the paint. Patches of similar colour are usually painted over the graffiti. This leaves tell-tale evidence of the damage, and offers a ‘frame’ for further graffiti tags.

Quantities of matching paint can be readily stored nearby or on-site to enable quick removal. Batches of aerosol paint can be made up, so that in the case of small levels of graffiti, almost anyone can easily paint over any graffiti that may appear.



Photo 20- graffiti masking is very difficult when a structure has a blend of colours. In this case a reliable protective coating would be required.



Photo 21 -an example of what can happen if there are not standard colours for public buildings. In this case, three (3) different light blue paints have been applied, and the patch to cover the graffiti is obvious.



Photo 22 - the standard colour should be applied to a minimum of three (3) metres from the ground.

Specific building materials and finishes

Materials and finishes can be selected that allow for straightforward and quick graffiti removal.

Materials can be selected on the basis that:

- they are not popular with graffitists, and/or
- graffiti is able to be easily cleaned.

The following materials can be selected on this basis:

- ceramic and vitrified tiles
- metal, such as stainless steel
- stone (must be igneous or metamorphic, such as granite or marble)
- glass



Photo 23 - tiles are hard and are quite easy to clean graffiti from. The major problem is that paint easily soaks into the grout.



Photo 24 - the exterior of this public toilet is largely comprised of metal that is easy to clean.

Protective coatings

Protective coatings are designed to provide a barrier between the base coat or material and any graffiti that may be applied.

Protective coatings have a specific role in protecting unpainted brick and masonry surfaces, and surfaces painted unusual colours that may be difficult to match.

Some products can be unreliable and most are expensive. Therefore coatings should be trialed and assessed against the following criteria:

- durability of the product
- ease of paint and marker pen removal
- toxicity of product (risk to tradesperson during application)
- toxicity of removal agent
- cost of application and removal agent
- proven record and referees/ references.



Photo 25 - an example of a likely graffiti canvas at a new development - a protective coating has been applied as a precaution

Sacrificial coatings

Sacrificial coatings are a form of protective coating that are designed to provide a barrier between the base material or coat, and any subsequent graffiti vandalism. These coatings are somewhat 'waxy' in appearance.

Sacrificial coatings are designed to be retained until graffiti damage builds up to a certain level. The coating (containing the graffiti) is then water blasted off. The sacrificial coating may then be re-applied.

Whilst this application is quite effective in preserving the base coating however, the graffiti is retained until the coating is removed. This provides recognition to the graffitist, until the coating is removed.

Surfaces to avoid

Some surfaces and materials may be ruined by the application of paint.

Natural brick or concrete should generally not be used. Graffiti is very difficult to remove from these materials, as paint is able to seep into the surface. It is recommended that brick and concrete facing public space be rendered and painted. (Paint should be a dark or 'standard' colour, applied to a minimum of three metres in height).

Plastic -based compounds such as poly-carbonates and perspex should also be avoided. They become permanently marked and unsightly after the application of paint, and/or removal chemicals. In addition, they can be easily scratched and melted. To maintain appearance the material will need to be replaced.

The use of perspex for example should be avoided.



Photo 26 – perspex is very difficult to effectively remove graffiti from

Untreated wood is a common material used in fencing, and acoustic and retaining walls. This material is a poor selection in terms of graffiti management. Untreated wood often presents as a blank 'canvas' and is very difficult to remove paint from. Most graffiti has to be painted over, or sanded away and the results can be quite unsatisfactory. If wood needs to be used, then it should be painted a dark colour (Order C) and have screening vegetation placed against it (Order A).



Photo 27 – untreated wood should be avoided. If it is required some form of treatment is necessary.

Glossary

Blank Surface

A surface that has no structural features

Canvas

A surface area that is suitable or appealing to graffitiists

Graffiti

Any mark or symbol placed on property without the owners' permission

Graffitiist

A person who applies any form of graffiti

Legal art

Publicly sanctioned and organised artwork

Masking

Graffiti removal technique where the exact base paint colour is applied over the graffiti

Natural Surveillance

Crime prevention strategy where design allows the public and nearby residents to look over a structure.

Piece

A larger, perhaps more artistic and developed mural, that may or may not be sanctioned

Tag

A small mark that is akin to a graffiti sign or signature

SAMPLE APPLICATION OF TECHNIQUES

Graffiti prevention techniques applied to select public structures

	Structure type	Underpass	Overpass	Bus shelter	Inside toilets	Building exterior	Fences	Sound barriers	Retaining walls
Graffiti prevention Technique									
Access control – formal									
Vegetation – up vertical surface						✓	✓	✓	✓
Vegetation- out from surface						✓	✓	✓	✓
Fencing						✓			
Access control – passive									
Pathways						✓	✓	✓	✓
Texture changes							✓	✓	✓
Symbolic fence/ barrier						✓		✓	
Signage					✓	✓			
No lighting						✓	✓	✓	✓
Deny natural ladders						✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of sprinklers						✓	✓		✓
Canvas reduction									
Minimalist design				✓		✓	✓		
(Use of:) grills			✓			✓	✓		
Bars			✓				✓		

	Structure type	Underpass	Overpass	Bus shelter	Inside toilets	Building exterior	Fences	Sound barriers	Retaining walls
Mesh			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Perforated metal			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Cavity brick						✓	✓		
Legal art		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Disrupt canvas						✓	✓	✓	✓
Rough textures						✓	✓		✓
Maintenance selections									
Dark paint colours			✓	✓				✓	✓
Standard colours		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Tiles		✓			✓	✓			
metal				✓		✓	✓		
Stone		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Glass						✓			
Protective coatings		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓