

Guide to Removing & Preventing Graffiti on Masonry Walls

Getting graffiti off masonry walls takes a little bit of knowledge and a lot of elbow grease. Using the wrong products or the wrong equipment can irreparably damage your wall.

Your first decision is whether to hire someone to do the work or to do it yourself. If you want to hire professionals make sure you use a company that is familiar with masonry work so that they do not damage your brick, stone or mortar joints. These guys understand historic masonry walls and know how to protect them:

Here are two Professional Masonry Cleaners our members recommend:

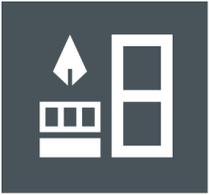
Top Gun Pressure Washing
(720) 540-4880
<http://topgunpressurewashing.com>

Summit Sealants & Restoration
(specializing in significant historic buildings)
Jake Holland, VP
970-596-0443
www.summitsealants.com

Tips if You Plan to Do It Yourself

Removing graffiti stains is not all that difficult. It just takes effort and the right equipment. Here are some suggestions:

1. Wear protective gloves and glasses. Any chemical strong enough to remove paint is nasty stuff. It can burn you.
2. Remove the graffiti as soon as possible. The longer the paint stays on the wall, the more it cures and the harder it is to remove.
3. Before applying any chemicals to a masonry wall first saturate it with water. No pressure needed. Just use a hose. This water keeps the chemicals from soaking deeply into your wall. The stain is on the surface. Keep the aggressive chemicals on the surface, too.
4. Apply the chemicals to the wall and wait for them to break down the paint. (Read the label for "dwell time.")



5. After waiting the prescribed dwell time, scrub the wall with a stiff non-metallic brush.
6. Rinse the chemicals off the wall with water. Again, no high pressure is needed. Just lots of water from the hose. Those caustic chemicals can break down your mortar. It is best to flush them out of the wall. BTW...if you have live plants at the base of the wall, these chemicals might kill them.
7. **Do NOT use Muriatic Acid. It can burn the wall. Products specifically designed for masonry will work best to remove the graffiti.** You can get these at a masonry supply house:

Rio Grande Supply Company
201 North Santa Fe Drive, Denver, CO 80223
303-825-2211
www.riograndeco.com

Threewit-Cooper Cement Company
2900 Walnut Street Denver, CO 80205
303-296-1666
www.threewit.com

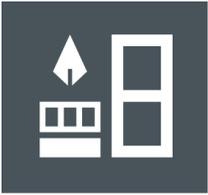
Basalite Concrete Products
4900 Race St, Denver, CO 80216
303-292-2345
www.basalite.com

General Shale
1845 W Dartmouth Ave, Englewood, CO 80110
303-783-3000
www.generalshale.com

Tips if You Rent a Pressure Washer

Renting a pressure washer can significantly speed up the work. Here are some words of advice:

1. Just as with hand washing the wall, you start by saturating the wall with plain water to prevent caustic chemicals from soaking deeply into the masonry.
2. The cleaning chemicals you buy at the Masonry Supply House are concentrated. Follow the dilution rates shown on the label.



3. Keep the pressure low. High pressure washing can erode mortar joints and historic brick. 600 p.s.i. (pounds per square inch) is a maximum.
4. Use a fan-shaped tip and keep the tip at least 12" from the face of the wall. Work slowly and feather the edges of your cleaning area.
5. Finish by rinsing the chemicals off the wall with plenty of clear water.

Recommended Products to Remove Graffiti

ProSoCo

Sure Klean® Heavy Duty Paint Stripper

ProSoCo

Defacer Eraser Graffiti Remover

EaCoChem

LCS Stripping Agent (water based)

EaCoChem

Acrylic Strip Stripping Agent + Stripping Cream (solvent based)

EaCoChem

Graf-Ex Non-Hazardous Low Odor Liquid Stripper (for interiors)

If you are one of those unfortunate building owners whose buildings get repeatedly hit by taggers, you might want to paint your wall with Anti-Graffiti Coating. This is a clear, penetrating, breathable coating that will make the next layer of graffiti much easier to remove. It will save you time and protect your wall the next time the taggers come by. Please note: you will have to reapply the coating after removing graffiti from your wall.

Be VERY careful which coatings you use. If the coating has a sheen, the taggers will be able to tell where the wall is protected and they will simply climb a ladder and hit an un-protected area of the wall. If the coating is not breathable, it will trap moisture behind the coating, causing a white blush of fogginess to cover the wall. Wax-based sacrificial coatings are not breathable. Avoid them.

Recommended Anti-Graffiti Coatings

ProSoCo

Sure Klean® Weather Seal Blok-Guard® & Graffiti Control Ultra 15