

## BUYER'S GUIDE

### Tips for Choosing the Right Anti-Graffiti Solution

Permanent non-sacrificial graffiti abatement solutions have become the anti-graffiti choice for cities and counties worldwide. Residents and policy makers alike recognize that if graffiti is ignored, it has the potential to destroy neighborhoods by driving property values down and inviting additional vandalism.

The most effective weapon against graffiti is the quick removal of it. The longer it stays up, the higher the likelihood of additional tagging. Before choosing a graffiti abatement product for your organization, you will want to understand the business and product benefits of using a performance-guaranteed permanent graffiti abatement solution. You'll also want to understand the true difference between the various categories of anti-graffiti products, as well as essential evaluation criteria.

## ANTI-GRAFFITI CATEGORIES

**sacrificial.** this category of anti-graffiti products uses a wax-like substance that is applied to the substrate. Once tagged, it requires a hot water blaster to remove the graffiti. Over a short time, the sacrificial product breaks down, turns yellow, and must be removed and reapplied, which is time-consuming and expensive.

**semi-permanent.** this approach also offers a temporary solution. The product when applied has a light sheen, therefore compromising the aesthetics of the original structure and causing glare, which can be dangerous in traffic areas. It can sustain a small number of tags. After a few graffiti tags, however, semi-permanent products erode, requiring removal and reapplication.

**permanent/non-sacrificial:** this is the most thorough and risk-free means for removing graffiti. Once applied, permanent/non-sacrificial solutions provide unlimited graffiti removal over the lifetime of the product. No stripping or reapplication required over the product's lifecycle.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

To find the right permanent graffiti abatement solution, it's important to understand the differences between the categories of anti-graffiti solutions described above. The next step is researching vendors, their solutions and support options.

This document identifies and prioritizes criteria for choosing the right graffiti solution for you.

Look for a graffiti-abatement solution that:

- preserves the original aesthetics of the material you're protecting;
- allows fast, easy clean-up, even after multiple graffiti taggings without causing ghosting or shadowing;
- meets your long-term needs.

The optimal provider will excel in these critical areas.

- **Ease of application**—product should provide error-free jobsite mixing and application.
- **Ease of removal** — graffiti removal should provide an effective use of time for large areas with modest physical effort. Removal product should facilitate graffiti removal through application and light agitation of the affected area followed by low pressure water rinse to achieve 100% graffiti removal with no ghosting, staining or shadowing.

- **Environmental impact**—graffiti removal product should be biodegradable with a pH of 7 to 8.5, nonflammable, and in compliance with all environmental regulations. In addition to meeting all existing EPA and OSHA requirements, the application and removal agents should be classified as one or lower in all four classes of the Hazardous Materials Identification System. Runoff and breakdown from the product should have no adverse effects on humans, plants or animals. Product should not require special containment or disposal procedures.
- **Safe removal**--coating should allow total removal of all types of paints and graffiti materials from treated surfaces without damage to the coating or substrate; the cleaning process should not damage color, stain or substrate, regardless of removal product used.
- **Durability of product**—graffiti resistant coating should withstand 120 cleanings over the same area without noticeable deterioration; coating should not require re-application during a period of minimum of ten years after application.
- **Thorough graffiti removal**—upon graffiti removal, there should be no ghosting, staining, shadowing, or evidence of graffiti, and the coating should show no signs of deterioration or change of appearance.
- **Sheen of finish product**—graffiti resistant coating should be a specially formulated matte finish.
- **Protects wide range of surfaces**— typical graffiti targets include architectural CMU buildings and walls, concrete pillars and barrier walls, brick buildings, historic sandstone and granite buildings, metal bathroom partitions and other metal surfaces. That's why it's important that a commercial grade anti-graffiti product protects a wide range of surfaces including concrete, CMU, EIFs, brick, tile, stone, metal, wood, signage, murals, and painted surfaces.
- **Non-sacrificial protection**--graffiti resistant coating should provide non-sacrificial graffiti protection and waterproofing. Coating should be permanent, water-clear, non-yellowing with added chemical and abrasion resistance for painted or stained surfaces, and porous cement surfaces.
- **Product compatibility** -- graffiti resistant coating must be compatible with applied paint and stain products.
- **History of exceptional service**--graffiti abatement product should have a proven history of exceptional service characteristics without a non-uniform change in color.
- **Shelf life**--graffiti abatement product should have a minimum of 12 months shelf life.

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