

J. Sargeant Reynolds  
Community College



## Gang Awareness Graffiti is a crime



Many of you have noticed that the college has experienced graffiti being painted at various locations on the college campuses. Favorite spots for painting seem to be the bathrooms, elevators and stairwells, particularly at the downtown campus.

Graffiti is often the first indication that gang activity is present in our community. It marks territorial boundaries and serves as a warning to other gangs that the area marked with unique signs and symbols is the territory or "turf" of a particular gang. Graffiti warns intruders or trespassers from rival gangs and even police, that they are not welcome. It may also be an advertisement for the sale of drugs or a memorial to a fallen fellow gang member.

Graffiti should not be tolerated. Frequently, if left in tact, it leads to the degradation of a neighborhood and the devaluation of property. Studies have shown in many cases that if graffiti is left unchecked and not removed, more and more graffiti will appear. However, not all graffiti is gang related. Individuals known as "taggers" paint graffiti on buildings, fences, signs, highways, overpasses, and even trucks and railway cars. Many of these individuals enjoy a reputation for creativity and will frequently sign their "tagger" name. Please note that this is still an act of vandalism punishable by law.

The JSRCC police department and facilities are working together to stop graffiti. It is very important to remove the graffiti and it is the college's procedure to make every effort to remove the graffiti within 24 hours. Those individuals apprehended for this vandalism will be arrested and prosecuted.

### REMEMBER THE 4 R'S OF GRAFFITI

**Read** – Read the graffiti to determine the gang(s) involved. If you are unable to interpret what is observed, find someone who can. Frequently, a great deal of intelligence can be gathered, such as the nicknames or monikers of gang members, warnings, threats to other gangs, availability of drugs, pending gang wars, and more.

**Report**—Educators, parents and other concerned citizens should report found graffiti to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Law enforcement or corrections personnel should report the existence of graffiti to the departments gang intelligence unit.

**Record** – Use a still or video camera to record the graffiti for possible later use. If graffiti continues to appear after removal, the photographic record may serve as a history of the efforts made to combat the problem.

**Remove** – Remove ALL graffiti as soon as possible after it is discovered. When removing graffiti, paint the entire wall, post, sign, etc. on which the graffiti is found. Studies have shown that "spot" painting to blot out the graffiti is not as effective for the permanent discouragement.

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