

Wiping out **graffiti**

It's simple: Graffiti is vandalism and vandalism is a crime. The City spends more than \$200,000 each year painting over graffiti on public surfaces. Merced police made 185 graffiti arrests in 2008 and now have an officer assigned to handle graffiti vandalism.

Preventing graffiti is tougher. There are paints and coating available that make it harder to mark up the surface. Plants can be used to cover surfaces and make it harder to

vandalize property.

Removing graffiti immediately is the best deterrent. The vandals are looking for recognition, and if the graffiti is removed, they don't get any recognition. The vandals are persistent, so it may have to be taken off more than once.

If you see a vandal in action, call 911. Do not try to stop the person. Please report older graffiti by calling 385-6912.

Graffiti vandalism facts

Graffiti vandals may be subjected to:

- ✓ Fines of \$1,000 or more per graffiti offense.
- ✓ Fines of up to \$1,000 for possession of graffiti implements.
- ✓ Up to 100 hours of community service.
- ✓ Revocation or delay of driver's license.
- ✓ Jail time and felony charges.

Graffiti removal chart

Aluminum siding, fiberglass	Paint remover (sparingly); rinse with water
Glass	Razor blade to scrape off; can also use paint thinner
Masonry (brick, marble, stone, tile, granite and concrete)	Power washing with low pressure; sand or soda blasting (may create a shadow); paint remover or chemical graffiti remover/solvent applied with a brush and rinsed with water; paint over
Historic masonry or other valuable structures	Seek professional help; there is information from the National Park Service on how to remove it written by Martin E. Weaver
Metal	Paint thinner or chemical graffiti remover/solvent and rub with steel wool or sandpaper and rinse; power washing; paint over
Pavement	Chemical remover and power washing; soda blasting
Street signs	Chemical remover (make sure it does not remove reflective coating)
Stucco	Paint remover/chemical remover and rinse with pressure wash; paint over
Utility boxes	Chemical remover with cloth or scrubber
Vinyl siding	Use chemical solvents sparingly as they may remove the vinyl coating; repaint with primer first
Wood	On painted, unweathered wood try mineral spirits; power washing with low pressure; sanding; repainting
Etching — Etching may be repairable on some glass (seek a professional); replace glass	
Adhesives — Scrape away as much as possible; use nail polish remover or acetone-based cleaner to remove remaining residual. Be aware that acetone-based solvents can soften plastics.	

Merced City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten
Mayor Pro Tem John Carlisle
Joe Cortez
Michele Gabriault-Acosta
Noah Lor
Jim Sanders
Bill Spriggs

Contact the City Council by email at Citycouncil@cityofmerced.org, by calling 385-6834. You can write to Council members at the Civic Center address listed below.

Council meetings

The Council usually meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers in the Civic Center. The agenda is at www.CityofMerced.org.

Contacting us

The Web site, www.CityofMerced.org, contains City Council information, the Municipal Code and General Plan and other information. To contact the Newsletter, e-mail newsletter@CityofMerced.org, call the Public Information Office at 385-6232 or write:

Merced Civic Center
678 W. 18th St.
Merced CA 95340

The Civic Center is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., except holidays.

Call us

City Council	385-6834
City Manager	385-6834
City Attorney	385-6868
City Clerk	388-7100
Airport	385-6873
Code Enforcement.....	385-6861
Finance	388-7900
Inspection Services	385-6861
Personnel	388-7100
Planning Department.....	385-6858
Public Works (7:30-4:30) ...	385-6800
After hours	385-6905
Recreation/Parks	385-6855

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department.....385-6891
Police Department.....385-6912

Ask the City: Is Spring Clean Up coming?

Ask the City is an ongoing column answering questions that have been submitted to us by mail, email or phone. Readers can submit questions to the addresses in the column on the left.

Is the City going to have Spring Clean Up this year? When? A.C. Merced

It's almost a tradition along the lines of blooming trees on M Street. City residents, or property owners, can come to selected loca-

tions in the City to drop off anything from old furniture to tree-cuttings.

City residents will be receiving more information in the mail, along with maps to the locations.

There are some restrictions, such as no hazardous wastes, and there are charges for certain appliances, such as refrigerators.

TVs, computer monitors and other electronics are accepted, but not batteries.

Brush and natural wood will be accepted, but no



treated lumber such as pressure-treated wood or RR ties.

The two weekends selected for the Spring Clean Up are April 18-19 and also April 25-26.

Digital TV transition postponed in some cases

A number of stations in the United States went to all digital broadcasting Feb. 17. However, Congress extended the deadline on the switchover, allowing stations to wait until June 12 to finalize their plans.

The government has ordered TV stations to stop broadcasting the traditional analog signal and begin transmitting digital programming.

Many Americans aren't affected because they are on cable or satellite. Those receiving over-the-air signals may find they are

only getting fuzz if they haven't prepared for the switch. The new digital signals require a TV capable of receiving digital signals, or a digital converter box. There were coupons to get a \$40 discount on a converter box, but those ran out. If you have a coupon, use it before it expires.

TV viewers may also find they need to upgrade their antenna system from the good ol' rabbit ears in order to get a digital TV signal. For more information, go to www.dtv.gov.

There are some road projects in City's future

The City has plans for a number of road improvement projects this year.

The largest one is a \$2.4 million project that will resurface Olive Avenue from Highway 59 to G Street. The project is slated to begin this spring and will be completed relatively quickly because a new paving technique will be used.

Existing asphalt will be



lifted, ground up, mixed with some new binders and then applied to create a new road

surface.

Roadwork also is planned to extend Parsons Avenue adjacent to Ada Givens School.

Work continues on plans for the G Street Railroad Undercrossing.

A citizens' advisory committee meets at 6:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month at the Merced Senior Center, 755 W. 15th St.

Tax help is available at Merced Senior Center

Low and middle-income taxpayers can receive free tax help at the Merced Senior Center, 755 W. 15th St. Tax advisors will be at the Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. Spanish-speaking

advisors will be available, and taxpayers will be able to e-file their returns.

This service is free, provided by the AARP in conjunction with the IRS. For more information, call 1-888-227-7669.