

Policy on Graffiti

Policy Title	Policy on Graffiti
Policy #	02.103.1
Policy Owner	Vice President for Administration and Finance
Contact Information	Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Vice President for Administration and Finance at (401) 874-2433
Approved By	Senior Leadership Team
Effective Date	July 30, 2018
Next Review Date	No later than June 30, 2023
Who Needs to Know About this Policy	Faculty, staff, students, and Affiliates of the University
Definitions	<p>Graffiti. The unlawful, willful, malicious, and/or mischievous writing upon, painting, or otherwise defacement of private property, or residence of another, any office building, business or commercial property or public building or public property.</p> <p>University Affiliate. Any individual who is not a faculty member, staff, or student who otherwise has a formal relationship with the University, including but not limited to visiting scholars, visiting students, postdoctoral or other research fellows, professional program participants, adjunct teaching or clinical personnel, volunteers, employees and associates of the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement, and members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. Vendors and contractors are not considered affiliates.</p>
Statutes, Regulations, and Policies Governing or Necessitating This Policy	RIGL §11-44-21.1
Reason for Policy/Purpose	To address Graffiti on URI's campuses effectively in order to: 1.) Minimize incidents of Graffiti on public and private property; and 2.) Ensure prompt identification and removal of Graffiti.
Forms Related to this Policy	None

Policy Statement

The University upholds freedom of expression for all (<https://web.uri.edu/manual/chapter-6/>). However, Graffiti—the willful, malicious, and/or mischievous writing upon, painting, or otherwise defacement of private property, or residence of another, any office building, business or commercial property or public building or public property—is illegal under Rhode Island General Law 11-44-21.1 and is vandalism, not protected speech. A person on the first and second conviction for this crime shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; upon a third conviction the person shall be guilty of a felony.

The purpose of this policy and its accompanying procedures is to:

- Minimize incidents of Graffiti on public or private property on URI's campuses;
- Ensure prompt identification and removal of Graffiti with as little damage as possible to the property so vandalized and in a way that enables the Campus Police to gather evidence for prosecution;

The presence of Graffiti on our campus—without the slightest regard to any “message” it may contain, however favorably or unfavorably that message may be viewed—can quickly make the campus feel unsafe and “run-down” to our residents, visitors, and stakeholders. Graffiti that is not removed as soon as possible creates an air of abandonment of the property which can leave community members feeling unsafe and undervalued.

Quick removal of Graffiti is important because:

- Allowing Graffiti to linger often rapidly attracts more;
- If taggers regularly see their work removed immediately, they will likely move to another area.

Our goal is to have all Graffiti tags removed within 24 hours—before public perception even has a chance to be affected. Graffiti can be difficult to remove and must be done with care in order to not leave the surfaces damaged or looking worse than before the cleanup began.

If the Graffiti is on moveable private property located on a University campus, owner's consent must be obtained prior to removal. If the owner does not want the Graffiti removed, then the private property itself must be removed by the owner within 24 hours of notice.

All incidents of Graffiti must be reported to the URI Police Department immediately upon discovery and will be removed after being documented by the URI Police in accordance with the attached Procedures. No Graffiti removal should be performed by any office other than the University office responsible for repairs and maintenance of University physical property as improper removal can cause permanent damage to surfaces that are incorrectly treated.

Exceptions

None