Method Statement for Graffiti Removal

In summary there are 2 elements in addressing this problem:

1. Removal & cleaning of surfaces attacked by graffiti.

2. Prevention against future graffiti.

1. Removal & Cleaning of Graffitied Surfaces

The objective is to restore a surface to its near original condition by removing graffiti and stains and then protecting these surfaces against future damage.

It is possible to achieve a clean surface using a combination of restorative products from the Graffiti Removal range

1.1. Chemical Removal of Graffiti

The ideal is to remove all graffiti using chemical products, and at the same time avoiding causing damage to the surface.

To remove graffiti & obtain the best results, a fine balance between the following factors must be struck:

(i) Constant parameters: Surface & Graffiti

(ii) Variable parameter: the chemical product selected for use

1.2. Essential Preparation:

• Duration of graffiti being present on a surface

(i) The first factor is the length of time that elapses between the graffiti appearing and when it is removed.

The shorter the time the easier it is to achieve optimum results.

(ii) The second factor is the time that passes between the application of the Graffiti Removal product, and the time it is removed.

If the Graffiti Removal product is not given sufficient time to act, then graffiti will only be partially removed, thus requiring a repetition of the process.

If the product is left too long, the solvent evaporates totally, causing the graffiti to penetrate even deeper into the surface.
It is therefore important to control the speed at which the graffiti paint dissolves, which can easily be done by rubbing the graffiti with a coin or cloth.

• Temperature

(i) The first factor is that of ambient temperature, which ideally should be 20°C.

Higher temperatures cause the solvent to evaporate too quickly, whilst a lower temperature reduces the solvents ability to dissolve the graffiti.

At temperatures <5°C the time it takes for the graffiti to dissolve/soften increases dramatically.

(ii) The second factor is the water temperature used for removal using a high-pressure spray.

The higher the temperature, the greater the ability of water to dissolve graffiti. This allows for graffiti removal to be quicker

and more effective.

In deciding the temperature of the water consideration should to be given to the actual surface being cleaned. The standard temperature is 90°C. However, for paint coated surfaces the temperature needs to be =or< 50°C.

• Force / Pressure

(i) Cleaning with a high-pressure spray gives a quicker and more effective result than using a low-pressure spray.

The objective is to remove the chemical product as well as the graffiti it is dissolving.

(ii) In addition it is possible to remove pigment particles left behind which have penetrated deep into the surface.

(iii) The standard recommended pressure is 150 bars. However, the resistance and fragility of the surface must be considered, which will determine the maximum pressure.

(iv) Painted, render and timber surfaces require greater care in obtaining the optimum pressure.

When dealing with such low-resistance surfaces or in instances where high-pressure spray is not possible, a brush or sponge may be used before rinsing with a low-pressure spray.

• Cost Implications

(i) Cleaning costs will depend in the main on the cost of labour required.

(ii) It is advisable to reduce these costs as much as possible.

(iii) Experience as well as testing on trial areas will enable the right balance to be struck between:
a) the most efficient and effective chemical product(s),
b) the highest applied pressure, and
c) the highest water temperature.

1.3. Preliminary Tests.

Determine the resistance of the surface to:
- water,
- chemical products,
- temperature, and
- the application technique to be used.

(i) Carry out tests on a part of the surface that is not too visible.

(ii) These tests should be carried out first with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover, applying it to a small area, at the base of a graffitied wall.

Leave the product to take effect for two minutes, and then rinse with a low-pressure spray.

Check during and after each test that the surface has not been damaged in any way.

Increase the pressure and temperature step by step, as in the following example:

50°C	50 bars
70°C	100 bars
90°C	150 bars

Choose the chemical product(s) best suited for dissolving the Graffiti.

• The preliminary tests should have given some clues as to which products are not suitable to use.

Centrecoat Cleaning Products can be divided into 2 groups:
a) Neutral pH product Centrecoat Render, Stone and Patio Cleaner that in the main is composed of organic solvents and active agents of varying composition and viscosity.
b) Alkaline product, containing no organic solvent, Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner is primarily used as a surface cleaner but is also very effective at removing residual paint pigments and 'halo' effects. The product is very fluid.

(ii) This experimental process always involves starting with the least aggressive product until the graffiti dissolving point has been found.

Do not forget to wet porous surfaces prior to product application.

(iii) Even though the most efficient product and application time have been selected, some ghost marks may remain; in this event apply Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner.

(iv) In selecting:
a) the most effective product
b) the optimum temperature, and
c) maximum pressure possible
the shortest time for the removal of graffiti without damaging the surface will have been found.

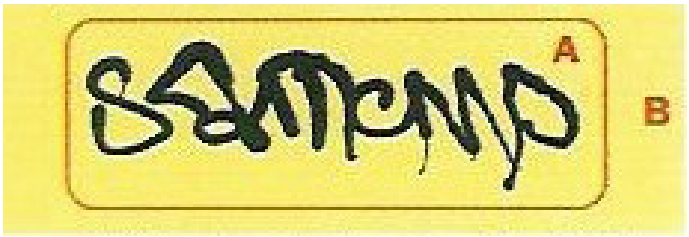
In this event, the most cost effective process will also have been found.

• **Determine which is the best combination of factors** (duration, temperature and mechanical action) for totally removing graffiti without damaging the surface. In addition this combination should be the most economical.

1.4. Procedure.

• **When applied to a large area**, products should be applied from the bottom to the top.
• **If there is a risk of the products running on to a part of the surface that is not to be treated**, it is advisable to continually wet this area until rinsing takes place.
• **Always clean from the bottom to the top.**
• **Final rinsing should be carried out from top to bottom.**
• **When working by hand**, i.e. without a high-pressure spray, always start at the edge of the area to be treated, working inwards to the centre.
• **Leave a surface in the best condition possible.** This is imperative, but raises a problem.

The area from where graffiti has been removed is totally clean. To avoid too great a contrast between this area and the surrounding surface:



Apply the chemical product inside frame A, then rinse at the highest pressure possible.
Gradually reduce the pressure from the edge of frame A outwards to obtain a progressive transition into zone B.

1.5. Types of Surface.

• Very Porous Surfaces.

Examples: Render
Stonework
Limestone

(ii) Maximum temperature: 60°C
(iii) Always wet the surface beforehand.
(iv) Start with a viscous liquid product such as Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover. Wait until the graffiti has completely dissolved/softened, and check this by brushing, rinse at low-pressure, and then clean with a high-pressure spray.
(v) If a halo remains, use Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner
(vi) Rinse thoroughly afterwards.

• Porous Surfaces

Examples: Concrete
Red Brick
Marble

(i) Maximum temperature: 90°C
(ii) Always wet the surface beforehand.
(iii) Start off with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover. Wait until the graffiti has dissolved/softened, check with a cloth, rinse at low-pressure and then clean with a high-pressure spray.
(iv) If a longer application time is required coat with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover. Wait until the graffiti has completely dissolved/softened, check this by brushing, rinse at low- pressure and then clean with a high-pressure spray.
(v) If a halo remains, use Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner.
(vi) Always rinse thoroughly afterwards.

• Hard Surfaces

Examples: Metals
Glass
Polished Stone

(i) Maximum temperature: 90°C
(ii) DO NOT WET THE SURFACE.
(iii) Start off with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover. Spray on, wait until the graffiti has dissolved/softened and check whether it has with a cloth. Remove the graffiti firstly with the cloth and then the remainder of the product with a high-pressure spray.
(iv) If a longer application time is required, coat with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover Wait until the graffiti has fully dissolved/softened, by checking with a brush, rinse at low-pressure and then rinse off with a high-pressure spray.
(v) If ghost marks remain, especially on stone, use Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner taking care that it does not damage the surface.
(vi) Always rinse thoroughly afterwards.

• Painted Surfaces

(i) Maximum temperature: 50°C

On the majority of external wall surfaces water based acrylic/copolymer masonry paints have been used. Graffiti paints in the main based on resins that are dissolved by Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover solvents but the masonry paint resins will be left intact.

(ii) Painted Porous surfaces.
Start with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover. Apply with a brush and wait for the graffiti to dissolve/soften, by checking with a

brush. Rinse at low-pressure and then clean with a high-pressure spray.
If ghost marks remain, apply Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner
Always rinse thoroughly afterwards.

(iii) Painted Non-Porous Surfaces.
No need for wetting.

Use Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover
Brush on and wait until the graffiti paint has completely dissolved/softened by checking with a cloth.

Remove the graffiti, starting at the edge moving towards the centre. Rinse at low-pressure.

• Surfaces Treated with Centrecoat All Surface Protector.

The vast majority of graffiti can be removed with Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover.
The protection provided by Centrecoat All Surface Protector remains effective, even after graffiti has been removed up to 25 occasions

• Signage

Signposts have a very special type of reflective surface to which damage should be avoided by cleaning with care.

1.6. Stains Left By Permanent Marker

Two methods are possible:
- Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover & Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner
- Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner

It is possible to use these two methods in tandem. Whilst both work, the former is preferable because it reduces the risk of leaving behind ghost-marks.

Before treatment it is necessary to check whether the permanent marker stain reacts to one of the solvents or not.

It is imperative to use Centrecoat R12 Graffiti Remover first of all, to avoid the stain penetrating even deeper into the surface. Once applied, cover the product with a plastic sheet to slow down evaporation.

If there are still ghost-marks, remove them with Centrecoat R05 BF Facade Cleaner.

2. Prevention

Apply a product that is best suited to protect the cleaned surface.

Centrecoat All Surface Protector gives a first-rate protection whilst preserving the natural appearance of the treated surface.

October 2018