



Cambridge Police Department

Effective Date: September 30, 2002

NEW POLICY # 532
Policy and Procedures

2002-7

Rescinds 2001-5

INVESTIGATION OF DEFACEMENT OF PROPERTY AND GRAFFITI

I. Purpose

- A. This procedure will state the department policy relative to the crime of defacement of real or personal property pursuant to M.G.L. c. 266, §§ 126, 126 A 126B, and 127 and City of Cambridge Ordinance Chapter 9:04.
- B. This procedure will set forth the duties and responsibilities of the Patrol Unit, the Community Relations Unit, Crime Analysis Unit, and the Investigations Unit regarding the reporting and investigation of graffiti offenses.

II. Incidents reported via Emergency Communication Center (E.C.C.)

- A. Patrol Units will respond to the scene of a graffiti incident and an Incident Report (P178) will be completed. (This policy eliminates the Graffiti Inventory Form) When the graffiti is on City property, an incident report will be filed when a city official requests that a report be completed
- B. The Patrol Unit Supervisor will review the report and ensure that photographs are taken of the graffiti.
- C. When the graffiti incident is categorized as a hate crime, the reporting officer or his supervisor will request the immediate assignment of an investigator. If no investigator is working, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Investigations Section for prompt assignment of an investigator.

III. Responsibilities of the Community Relations Unit

- A. Will establish and maintain a Graffiti Hot Line that will accept calls from the public 24 hours per day for graffiti related incidents.
- B. Will ensure that all reports to the Graffiti Hot Line are documented by completing an incident report and by taking appropriate photographs. (See II – B & C)
- C. Will make the appropriate referrals to assist in the clean up of graffiti. This includes notifications to Public Works, Post Office, Electrical Department, etc.

IV. Responsibilities of the Investigations Section

- A. When the Investigations Section is notified of graffiti associated with a possible hate crime, an investigator will be assigned immediately.
- B. The investigator assigned to any graffiti investigation will ensure that photographs of the graffiti are taken.
- C. The investigator will check the graffiti database for similar incidents and/or offenses and will conduct the appropriate investigation.
- D. The Investigations Section will be responsible for follow-up of any instances of graffiti where Crime Analysis has identified an identifiable pattern.

V. Responsibilities of the Crime Analysis Unit

- A. Will develop a database for all graffiti related incidents.
- B. Will input all incidents of graffiti in the city along with a photograph of the graffiti.
- C. Will provide copies of all graffiti related incidents to the Community Relations Unit.
- D. Will maintain a liaison with MIT, MBTA, Harvard University, and Massachusetts State Police to obtain photographs and data regarding past and current incidents of graffiti in Cambridge.
- E. Will notify the Investigations Section any time a person is arrested for graffiti.
- F. Will check the database for any similar incidents of graffiti associated with an arrest for a graffiti offense.

POLICE COMMISSIONER