

From the Desk of Detective Dave

Vandalism:

A Community Problem

April 2017



Smashed toilets, human feces smeared on walls, broken lights, lewd graffiti. Is this a list of things that turn your stomach? These are just a few acts of vandalism that the Frederick Police Department and the Frederick Public Works department have dealt with in your public parks and throughout the community. It's time to help take your community back.

Unfortunately, most of us can relate to how it feels to be a victim of vandalism and part of that usually includes a desire for justice. The State of Colorado recognizes this, and through Colorado Revised Statutes, makes some vandalism (Criminal Mischief - C.R.S. 18-4-501) cases a felony. Damage knowingly caused by vandals, with a cost of at least \$1000 is a class 6 felony. As the cost of damage increases so does the level of the felony. Upon conviction, restitution is typically requested and granted.

Most vandals are younger people who act out of boredom, anger & revenge, defiance or a combination of reasons. Vandalism is often passed off as just "kids being stupid" but their actions are costly and the government (taxpayers) and local businesses usually have to foot the bill for repairs. Businesses may pass the costs of such repairs on to their customers through higher prices. In short, you end up paying for the cost of vandalism even if you weren't directly affected it.

Vandalism occurs when vandals think they can get away with it. Things like, adequate lighting, locked gates & entrances, and strategic landscaping prove to be effective in making it more difficult for them. Taking quick action when vandalism occurs is one of the best ways to deter it. A vandal's goal is to have their destruction displayed for themselves or associates. Don't allow them to have the satisfaction and remedy their acts as soon as possible, but not before contacting the police.

If you have teenagers, approach the topic of vandalism with them. You may think that your son or daughter knows about the consequences of vandalism because you do, but a frank conversation about how much it affects the entire community and how it could affect their future if they are caught can be a great deterrent. If you witness an act of vandalism in a private or public space or are a direct victim of it, please don't hesitate to call police dispatch at 720-652-4222. For more information about deterring vandalism, please contact an on-duty Sergeant of the Frederick Police Department at 720-382-5700.

CONTACT US

720.382.5700

333 5th Street

P.O. Box 435

Frederick, CO 80530



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