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**MAYOR EMANUEL, DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION ANNOUNCE 46 PERCENT  
IMPROVEMENT IN RESPONSE TIMES TO GRAFFITI REMOVAL REQUESTS**

*Faster response time has also greatly reduced number of open graffiti removal requests*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) announced today that response times to graffiti removal requests received from residents have improved by 46 percent, due to a combination of continued implementation and refinement of the grid-based removal system and the addition of more removal resources this year.

"Rapid graffiti removal is one of the best deterrents for future graffiti vandalism," said Mayor Emanuel. "By constantly improving our graffiti removal efficiency, decreasing removal response time and increasing graffiti vandalism penalties and fines, Chicago is establishing a comprehensive and effective citywide approach to fight graffiti vandalism in all neighborhoods and keep our neighborhoods clean."

From June 1 through August 10 under the grid system, graffiti removal crews are responding to requests on average within 3.62 days of receiving the request from residents. During the same date range in 2011, which was before the grid removal system was implemented, graffiti removal crews took on average 6.75 days to respond to a request. During a typical year, requests for graffiti removal by residents are at the highest point during the summer months.

In addition to the increased graffiti removal response times, the City has been able to dramatically limit the number of open requests. As of August 15, 2014, the City has 319 open graffiti removal requests with zero removal requests overdue, meaning no open request is older than 10 days. On the same date in 2013, there were nearly 3,000 open graffiti removal requests with nearly half of the requests overdue. This is a decrease of nearly 90 percent in open graffiti removal requests. So far in 2014, crews have responded to over 77,800 graffiti removal requests.

"Year after year, DSS continues to improve delivery of service under the strategic grid-based graffiti removal system, which is enabling our crews to complete more work each day and ensures we are making smarter use of our resources to keep our neighborhoods safe and clean," said Commissioner Williams. "With the additional graffiti removal resources coupled with increased vandalism penalties, DSS will be able to further enhance graffiti removal operations on behalf of residents."

The grid-based graffiti removal system 'blitzes' four wards per day addressing outstanding calls in targeted geographic areas in each ward. Each ward is blitzed approximately once every 10 days. The grid graffiti removal system was implemented in February 2012 by Mayor Emanuel.

As part of a comprehensive approach to deter future graffiti vandals, City Council approved in July an amendment to the Municipal Code that increases vandalism fines from \$750 to no less than \$1,500 and no more than \$2,500 for each graffiti offense. The amendment also increases fines for any person caught vandalizing public property from no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000. Fines for vandalism had remained unchanged for nearly a decade.

Additionally, to further combat graffiti citywide, Mayor Emanuel included nearly a million dollars in additional resources in City's Graffiti Removal Program in 2014 to help keep Chicago neighborhoods clean. The investments include two additional blasting crews, an additional painting crew and two additional chemical graffiti removal trucks to bring the fleet total to four chemical trucks.

To see graffiti removal crews in action watch a video on the City's Graffiti Removal Program [HERE](#).

Graffiti removal is a free service offered by the City of Chicago. The graffiti program work with aldermen, community groups, block clubs, chambers of commerce and residents to respond to reports of graffiti. Residents who would like to report graffiti can call 311, or visit [www.cityofchicago.org/dss](http://www.cityofchicago.org/dss).

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