



POLICE DEPARTMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recent damage to Salem Police station

Salem, Ore. — Over the past several months, the Salem Police station has incurred almost weekly vandalism. During anti-police protests in front of the building, protesters have applied chalk, other substances, and signing to the sidewalks, planters, stairways, walls and portico of the building. At times, the protests have drawn counter demonstrators and in one instance, an armed confrontation occurred where a man was arrested for discharging a firearm.

The graffiti has done varying degrees of damage to the facility. Typically, City of Salem facilities crews have been able to wash off the graffiti, but recently the damage appears to be longer lasting if not permanent. One evening of damage required the construction company for the building to resurface and retexturize the cement steps. Removal of the graffiti has cost the City of Salem hundreds of dollars in staff time, with costs to the contractors being much higher.

Balancing the public's right to the freedom of expression and gathering with unlawful actions is a priority for the department. Because of this, we have used discretion toward the minor damage to the building in the recent past. As this damage has become more costly and permanent, we are forced to set boundaries and limits as to where similar activities can occur on the property. If these limits are not respected, enforcement action may be taken.

[Salem Revised Code 95.085](#) *City property-Defacing or injuring* which specifies one cannot deface or injure any public property or to remove any part of any tree, fence, gate, or building, or to place any sign, card, bill, mark or paint upon public property.

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