

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is based on a theory that the proper design and effective use of a facility can increase a feeling of safety and improve the quality of life for staff and volunteers and, ultimately, reduce the occurrence of crime. CPTED takes crime prevention to a higher level by studying the site design and working with security professionals, architects, city planners, and landscape and interior designers to create safer designs in new and existing facilities.

CPTED Concepts and Strategies

CPTED considers how people behave in an environment, how that environment lends itself to productive and safe use and how crime prevention may be applied under the circumstances. Issues such as the natural observation, building orientation, entrances/exits, parking lot location, lighting, landscaping, fences, sidewalks and signage are just a few that are considered in a location review under CPTED principles. Interior elements like colors, lighting, ceiling heights, reception area design, hallway size and counter placement make environments feel safe, yet still pleasing to staff and service recipients, while at the same time deterring would-be criminals.

Adaptation

Many organizations are not designing new buildings, but instead are occupying existing buildings and office space. These locations can also use CPTED approaches to help reduce crime. For example, lowered ceilings, softer and lower-wattage lighting and calming paint colors reduce anxiety that can lead to shouting, acting out and other violence. Narrowing the hallway as it leads from the main entry doors to the reception area naturally slows people down and directs them. Customer service counters constructed wider than the comfortable reach of a tall person's arm protect employees and volunteers, without caging them behind steel bars or bulletproof



plastic. Not only do these solutions tend to de-escalate situations for those with criminal intent, they make the site welcoming for those entering the facility.

Four Key Concepts

CPTED is much more than placing deadbolts on doors and locks on windows. The principles can be applied easily and inexpensively to new buildings or remodeling and have been implemented in communities across the nation. CPTED applies four interrelated key concepts:

Natural Surveillance—The placement of physical features, activities and people to maximize visibility, such as:

- Raised entrances
- Low-level landscaping
- Windows facing parking lots
- Exterior of building well lit

Natural Access Control—The physical guidance

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of people entering and exiting a space that limits access and challenges unwanted visitors by the dedicated placement of:

- Entrances and exits
- Fencing
- Landscaping
- Lighting

Territorial Reinforcement—The use of physical attributes that express ownership and make intruders feel unprotected and unwelcome, such as:

- Fencing
- Signage
- Landscaping
- Pavement treatments

Target Hardening—Features that prohibit entry or access, such as:

- Window locks
- Deadbolts for doors
- Interior door hinges

The way we react to an environment is greatly determined by the cues we pick up from those surroundings. Those things which make normal or legitimate users of a space feel safe (such as good lighting), make unstable or unauthorized users of the same space feel unsafe in pursuing undesirable behaviors (such as stealing from motor vehicles).

Basic Safety & Security

The following are a few specific safety and security precautions you can take without rebuilding, remodeling or moving your facility:

- Allow a security professional to conduct a security assessment of your facility. Hazards or threats to your facility should be identified so that steps can be taken to address them. An assessment helps determine if you've implemented reasonable countermeasures to secure your premises

and provide for the safety of your personnel, clients and visitors. The security professional will provide you with a list of improvements you can make to increase safety and security on your premises.

- Regularly remove graffiti from walkways, walls and pavement.
- Pick up litter and debris from the grounds.
- Cut back foliage from windows, entrances and exits to reduce hiding spots and increase visibility.
- Use a buddy system to help employees stay safe walking to their cars.
- Maintain good quality locks on building entrances and windows.
- Offer classes in street smarts to employees and volunteers.
- Periodically inspect lighting around buildings to ensure proper operation and adequate coverage. Light covers should be cleaned at least annually.

For Additional Information

International CPTED Association: www.cpted.net

International Clearinghouse on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design:
www.thecptedpage.wsu.edu