



CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a new and innovative approach to crime prevention. CPTED principles can be applied easily and inexpensively to existing or new homes. It has been implemented in communities across the nation with impressive results (in some CPTED communities, criminal activity has decreased by as much as 40 percent).

The goal of CPTED is the reduction of opportunities for crime to occur. This reduction is achieved by employing physical design features that discourage crime, at the same time encouraging legitimate use of the environment, and improving quality of life. It is a concept that can work not only in housing, but in businesses, industries, public buildings, parks and recreation areas, and schools.

Security concerns have traditionally been given a low priority in the building process. Until the late 1960s, when the federal government took an interest in crime prevention in urban housing, few serious attempts were made to develop a workable philosophy for controlling crime through architectural planning and design. In the early 1970s, several studies financed through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development demonstrated that architectural design could be used effectively to influence crime rates in housing developments. These studies showed that by combining security hardware, psychology, and site design, a physical environment could be developed that would, by its very nature, discourage crime.

CPTED Guidelines

1. Defensible Space

The goal is to make penetration more difficult and time consuming, not to create an impenetrable fortress.

- Interior doors that connect a garage to a building should have a single cylinder dead bolt lock.
- Consider installing a peephole in your door.



- Door locks should be located a minimum of 40 inches from adjacent windows.
- Exterior doors should be hinged on the inside and should have a single cylinder dead bolt lock with a minimum one-inch throw.
- New houses should not have jalousie, casement or awning style windows.
- All windows should have locks.
- Sliding glass doors should have one permanent door on the outside; the inside moving door should have a locking device and a pin.
- Plant a row of thorny bushes or plants (like holly, barberry, old roses, cati, blackberry, or bougainvillea) close to the front and back of your home, and under windows to discourage burglars. Do not let the bushes grow tall enough to obstruct your view out of the windows. Criminals look for easy targets, and crawling through thorny bushes is not an easy or pleasant task.

2. Territoriality

Well maintained properties show a sense of pride and ownership, and are thus not primary targets for criminal activity.

- Homes and lawns should be kept neat and clean.
- The front door should be at least partially visible from the street.
- Windows on all sides of the house provide full visibility of property.
- The driveway should be visible from either the front or back door and at least one window.
- Properly maintained landscaping provides maximum viewing to and from the house.
- Walkways and landscaping direct visitors to the proper entrance and away from private areas. Limit the number of ways people can enter your property.
- Property lines should be defined by landscaping or post and pillar fencing.

3. Surveillance

Criminals are least likely to act when there is a high probability of their actions being witnessed.

- Front porches or stoops create a transitional area between the street, and the home.



- Property lines and private areas should be defined with plantings, pavement treatments or fences.
- The street address should be clearly visible from the street with numbers a minimum of five inches high that are made of non-reflective material.
- Landscaping should not create blind spots or hiding spots.
- Low shrubbery (no more than three feet high) and fencing should allow for clear visibility.
- Lots, streets and houses should be designed to encourage interaction between neighbors, and a feeling of watching out for others.

4. Lighting

Good lighting is one of the most effective crime deterrents.

- All doorways that open to the outside should be well lit.
- Sidewalks, driveways, parking areas and all areas of the yard should be well lit
- Pedestrian scale street lighting should be used in high pedestrian traffic areas

(Sources: Robert A. Gardner, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design", Security Management Magazine, April 1981; Peel Regional Police, "Want to Deter Crime? Think CPTED", www.peelpolice.on.ca/prevention/pted.htm; New Haven Department of Police Service, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design", www.cityofnewhaven.com/police/html/safety/crimeprev_ed.htm)