

# CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

"The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and the improvement in the quality of life."

*National Crime Prevention Institute (NCPI)*

Consider your buildings for a moment. Do bushes and trees block a reasonable view of windows and doors? Do they offer a hiding place for potential criminals? Are areas of playgrounds and playing fields obscured by low branches on trees? Are parking lots well lit?

CPTED emphasizes three specific areas to focus on for safety, these include natural surveillance, natural access control and territorial reinforcement.

**Natural surveillance** means you have the ability to readily observe an area because it is clear, open and well lit, while your structures don't create blind spots.

Examples include:

- **Keep areas well lit.** In particular, building entrances should be bright at all times and provide a clear line of sight from both inside and outside.
- **Eliminate** hiding spots. Cut down hedges to three feet high or lower and remove trees branches below seven feet, solid fences, dumpsters, etc. that create blind spots or hiding places.
- **Low, thorny hedges** work well around windows, because they don't obstruct the view in or out, and they don't provide a comfortable place to hide.
- **Use security cameras** to view areas without natural sight lines. Put up monitors in public areas so that visitors know they are being watched. The last thing a criminal wants to see when they enter a building is their own face on a security camera's monitor.

**Natural access** means that the area is controlled because entrances are visible and access to the site is clearly defined by roads, sidewalks, fences, etc.

Examples include:

- **Use of maze entrances** in public lobbies. The goal is to cut off straight-line access to a potential target, such as a receptionist or district offices. We're not talking about barbed wire -- even tension barriers that have to be jumped or navigated around can discourage the bad guys.
- **Use curbing and landscaping** to direct automobile and foot traffic into a controlled, visible area.



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**Territorial reinforcement** creates a clear distinction between public and private property. This is important for two reasons: legitimate occupants have a sense of ownership and will notice, and even challenge, people who don't belong; intruders, on the other hand, have a harder time blending in.

Examples include:

- **Make sure** receptionists have clear sightlines to all entrances, as well as the ability to quickly and discreetly call for help. A panic button that calls a central station or signals for help via an alarm light in a separate section of the building works well.
- **Make sure** security signage is clearly visible at all entrances.
- **Implement** a visitor badging system, and make sure that all visitors are properly escorted.



Hopefully, this overview of CPTED will provide you with some ideas on improving safety and lowering risks at your facilities. For additional information on CPTED look at these sources:

**Here are a few additional resources:**

- [www.cpted.net](http://www.cpted.net)
- <https://www.ncpc.org/resources/home-neighborhood-safety/crime-prevention-through-environmental-design-training-program/>
- CPTED Training | Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- How to Prevent Crime Through Environmental Design ([thebalancesmb.com](http://thebalancesmb.com))

If you have any additional questions regarding CPTED, please feel free to contact the Risk Management Department at 800-285-5461 or [riskmanagement@sdao.com](mailto:riskmanagement@sdao.com).