



## **CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN**

### ***CPTED STRATEGIES (CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN)***

#### **Definition**

What is CPTED? We believe that *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* is based on the belief that crime can be directly related to the design of our physical environment. Timothy Crowe from the National Crime Prevention Institute states, *"The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life."*

#### **Purpose**

CPTED strategies, (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), simply means that the way we design certain things within our environment, can play a role in how crime can affect us. CPTED is a multi-layered, multi-discipline approach to deterring criminal behavior. It incorporates principles in planning, landscaping, architecture, and law enforcement measures to reduce crime, the fear of crime, and the opportunities for crime to occur. **The main goal of CPTED is to deter criminal behavior.**

Research into criminal behavior shows that an offender's decision to commit a crime is influenced more by the perceived risk of being caught than it is by cues to reward. CPTED emphasizes enhancing the perceived risk of detection and apprehension.

There are four overlapping strategies to CPTED.

- Natural Surveillance
- Natural Access Control
- Territorial Reinforcement
- Maintenance

The individual features of CPTED strategies can be quite complex. Strategies of CPTED for new construction can begin before property is even acquired, and buildings are designed. The scope of this bulletin will touch of these CPTED concepts in a very introductory way. These tips should provide a basic understanding of how certain environmental factor may contribute to criminal activities.

## **Natural Surveillance**

Natural Surveillance deals with the location or placement of physical features and the activities of people, in a way that maximizes visibility. It is meant to make sure intruders are easily observable, and therefore in theory, less likely to commit crimes. After all, it is less likely they will offend if they fear they are being watched and may be apprehended.

Here are some examples of Natural Surveillance

- Windows overlooking sidewalks and parking lots.
- Security lighting in strategic locations at night.
- Low aisles in retail store that people cannot hide behind.
- Open stairways and elevators.
- Maze entrances in commercial buildings, thus eliminating doors.
- Keeping windows of commercial establishments free of excess signage or obstructions.
- Placing work and leisure activities in the open where people see each other.
- Complement Natural Surveillance measures with security cameras and signage.

## **Natural Access Control**

Natural Access Control is meant to control or limit the opportunity for crime by clearly defining the differences between public and private spaces. By selectively placing entrances and exits, fences, lighting, and landscaping, you can limit access, or control the flow of people to better manage this concept. Denying access to crime targets can deter criminal activity by creating a perceptual risk to offenders. Proper Natural Access Control can reduce the need for expensive security equipment.

Here are some examples of Natural Access Control.

- Highlight the main entrance to a building.
- Clearly mark public walkways and paths.
- Clearly identify areas that are off-limits to the public.
- Design streets and sidewalks to physically guide people where you want them.
- Design or construct see-through fences.
- Limit the number of entrances and exits to buildings and even parking lots.

## **Territorial Reinforcement**

This concept clearly defines private spaces and creates or reinforces a sense of ownership. It is understood that people have a desire to protect or defend their own space. We want to expose criminals to scrutiny, and make them feel they are vulnerable to detection. A symbolic barrier can provide a psychological deterrent to some potential offenders.

Here are some examples of Territorial Reinforcement.

- Define property lines. Even a small picket fence in the front yard does this psychologically.
- Use landscaping to designate areas which are off limit.
- Design pathways, gates, or signs to emphasize the differences between spaces.
- Use security lighting or security systems to establish boundaries.
- Have customers walk past a “checkpoint” staffed by a person or camera.
- Display security signage at access points.

## **Maintenance**

It is imperative that CPTED features be properly maintained. This helps to prevent reduced visibility due to overgrown plants, and inoperable or poorly working security lights. Poor maintenance provides an expression that the owner may not be concerned or pay attention. Proper maintenance is another way to show we are watching, we are vigilant, and we do care.

James Q. Wilson & George L. Kelling introduced the *“Broken Window Theory.”* They said that *“Maintaining urban environments in a well ordered condition may prevent further vandalism as well as an escalation into more serious crime.”* If we fail to address the *“broken windows”* in our community, it will likely lead to an increase in more *“broken windows”* and a steady decline of community pride, feelings of safety, and a cooperative spirit. If this degradation occurs, crime will undoubtedly increase. This is where the police need your help. Property owners, local residents, local government, and businesses must all work together along with the police to effectively deal with the *“broken windows”* theory.

Here are some examples of proper CPTED Maintenance.

- Remove gang graffiti as soon as possible.
- Repair damaged and unsafe structures, or in some instances, tear them down.
- Maintain landscaping and lighting.
- Cut grass and weeds, and keep trees and shrubs from becoming overgrown.
- Keep yards free of junk vehicles and other useless property.

Using the ideas and concept of CPTED should lead to less crime, and a safer and healthier community. As stated at the beginning of this bulletin, it takes a multi layered and multi disciplined approach to make these strategies work. If you have any additional questions about CPTED, or how we can work together in your neighborhood, please give us a call at 765-807-1200.

*The Lafayette Police Department’s Crime Prevention efforts are meant to strengthen the partnership between our members, and the community that we serve. We hope that together, we can make our community safer.*

