

“The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear of crime, and to an improvement in the quality of life.”

-Dr. C. Ray Jeffrey

Criminologist from Florida State University, who introduced Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design as a discipline in 1971.

Disclaimer: The recommendations listed in this brochure are made for the purpose of reducing the likelihood of criminal activity and providing for a safer environment. While no guarantee can be stated or implied, the concepts of CPTED have been proven internationally. The City of Tacoma recommends these measures as a public service, with the understanding that there is no way to predict or prevent all crime risks. Local building and fire/life safety codes must be considered when implementing CPTED strategies.

Document Content: This document was prepared using various sources from the internet, jurisdictional and industry materials, and CPTED training information and is considered general knowledge of the Basic Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.



City of Tacoma-Public Works Department
Building and Land Use Services



In support of the City of Tacoma
Safe and Clean Initiative

For more information,
please call CPTED Coordination
at (253) 591-5634

Designing out Crime!



Basic CPTED*strategies for building a safer Tacoma

*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

We constantly respond to our environment, whether we are aware of it or not. Effective design of our environment helps us to feel safer and reduces opportunities for criminal acts to occur.

CPTED, (pronounced sep-ted), is an initiative that helps us create healthy, safe communities through well-planned design.

- CPTED is based on the premise that the design of our environment directly affects our behavior. It influences both the opportunities for crime to take place and our fear of crime. This has an important impact on our quality of life.
- CPTED enhances safety by altering physical design and encouraging positive social interaction.
- CPTED offers an alternative to creating fortress-like communities where we have to lock ourselves away to feel safe and also complements police and security strategies.

How CPTED works

- CPTED promotes design strategies in planned environments that encourage safe behavior and reduce the opportunities for crime to occur through three inter-related basic principles:
 - **natural access control**
 - **natural surveillance**
 - **territoriality**
- Once you know about CPTED strategies, you will see the environment in a different way.

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1 Natural access control (limits access)

Guides people entering and leaving a space through the placement of entrances, exits, fences, landscaping and lighting. Access control can decrease opportunities for criminal activity by denying criminals access to potential targets and creating a perception of risk for would-be offenders.

2 Natural surveillance (increases visibility)

The placement of physical features, activities and people in a way that maximizes visibility. A potential criminal is less likely to attempt a crime if he or she is at risk of being observed. Avoid landscaping that creates “blind spots” or hiding places and make sure there is effective lighting for pedestrians.

3 Territoriality (promotes a sense of ownership)

The use of physical attributes that express ownership such as fences, signage, landscaping, pavement designs, defined property lines and clear distinctions between private and public spaces are examples of the application of territoriality. Territoriality can be seen in entrances into a community or development, and in the use of borders and texture.

In addition to the three main principles described, two other elements support CPTED; Activity Support and Maintenance.

Activity support (fosters community interaction)

Encouraging activities, such as art/ community events, in public spaces that are intended for use by residents and other legitimate users discourages criminal acts.

Maintenance (deters offenders)

A well maintained home, building or community creates a sense of pride. A well kept area tends to make someone feel like they will be observed by neighbors or business owners who care about the area. Without proper care, “grime leads to crime”.

Using CPTED

CPTED can be applied in both existing communities and during the planning stages of new development. CPTED principles work best when applied during the design phase to avoid potential costly changes later.

CPTED is an effective method to help reduce premise liability and give a project “value added” market appeal.

In existing development

- CPTED can be applied creatively by finding solutions to make those spaces safe and help it better meet the requirements of users.
- A CPTED security assessment can be done for an existing home, building, school, playground, park, business, etc. to identify problems and needs.

In new development

- Costly safety problems can be avoided if the principles of CPTED are applied during the design and planning process.
- CPTED reviews are becoming standard practice in the planning process across the country. Ask for a CPTED design review for new developments and projects.
- Design professionals can increase the quality of life for users of a space by incorporating CPTED into the development.

Basic CPTED principles at work

1 Natural access control - *limits access*



Maintained landscape material

- limits access to parking under a building
- reinforces territoriality
- natural surveillance from the sidewalk



Fencing and landscaping material

- designates public and semi-public space
- fenced-off areas can be accessed when gate is open



Use of transparent materials

- allows for natural surveillance
- easy to maintain and is effective

2 Natural surveillance - *increases visibility*



Parking garage

- reduces areas of solid walls
- incorporates an open stairwell that allows opportunity for surveillance



Deck at front of multi-family units

- creates natural surveillance opportunities of the walkway, street, and bus stop
- supports territoriality



Layout offers surveillance opportunities

- low shelving
- centralized platform near front doors
- operational camera and blindspot mirror

3 Territoriality - *promotes a sense of ownership*



Decorative fencing and signage

- helps control access
- celebrates the entrance
- creates “a sense of place”



Fostering a sense of pride in an area

- maintenance
- landscaping
- use of art/community events



Landscaping defines parking lot of business from roadway

- identifies public and private space
- allows for natural surveillance

Tips on crime prevention design

• Multi-family

- Ensure hallways are well lit.
- Install good quality deadbolts, locks and 180 degree or larger eye viewers on unit doors.
- Provide common space in central locations to encourage resident interaction.
- Encourage a Resident Association Watch program.
- Place play areas within view so children can be observed by residents.
- Use deadbolts on exterior doors. Be sure that the throw bar goes at least 1” in to the door frame and that the strike plate is installed with at least 3” screws.
- Install 180 degree eyeviewers and use solid core doors.
- Post addresses and unit numbers in large contrasting colors to the building.
- Design in visibility to laundry and community rooms by using windows.

Businesses

- Locate checkout counters near the front of the store, clearly visible from outside.
- Window signs should cover no more than 15 percent of the windows to provide clear visibility into and out of the store.
- Use shelving displays no higher than 4’ to help see who is in the store.
- Avoid creating outdoor spaces that encourage loitering.
- Ensure lighting is consistent throughout the parking lot and the store.
- Remove any graffiti immediately to deter future occurrences and reduce fear of crime for customers.
- Communicate with other businesses on your block; look out for each other.

NOTE: CPTED principles are site specific. Please be aware of the need to consider the type of use, the area, demographics, etc.

Parks and common areas

- Use walkways and landscaping to direct visitors to the main entrance; use thorny plants along fence lines and under windows to deter access to private areas.
- Place play areas and picnic shelters within view of trails, roads and parking areas to increase opportunity for surveillance.
- Keep shrubs trimmed below 3’ and limb up trees at least 7’ from the ground around facilities to improve visibility.
- Use lighting over entrances, parking areas, and pedestrian scale lighting along walks.
- Schedule activities in passive areas to draw legitimate users to the space.
- Locate restrooms near staffed or active areas or as to be seen from the road.
- Trim back landscaping at least 10’ back from trails to avoid blind spots or ambush points.
- When fencing is needed use transparent or semi-transparent materials to increase visibility into an area.
- Clearly mark hours of operation, rules, and use directional signage to establish acceptable behaviors and guide users through the space.