

## What is CPTED?

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Commonly known as CPTED (pronounced "sep-ted") is a pro-active crime prevention strategy utilized by planners, architects, police services, security professionals and everyday users of space.

- CPTED surmizes that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and improve the quality of life.
- Emphasis is placed on the physical environment, productive use of space, and behavior of people to create environments that are absent of environmental cues that cause opportunities for crime to occur.
- CPTED is common sense.
- Applying CPTED starts by asking what is the designated purpose of the space, how is the space defined and how well does the physical design support the intended function? Only then, can effective design or problem solving begin.
- There are four underlying CPTED concepts:
  1. **Natural Surveillance** - Is the placement of physical features and/or activities, and people that maximizes natural visibility or observation.



*A basement computer lab with no natural observation.*



*Improved natural observation of the same lab by addition of windows.*



*This picture (left) illustrates natural observation of a parking garage stair tower.*

2. **Natural Access Control** - Deters access to a target and creates a perception of risk to the offender.



*This photo illustrates both natural observation from a business reception area to an elevator lobby area and natural access control. Visitors can clearly identify where they may go.*



*The use of landscape prevents easy access to a roof top, as well as a deterrent to graffiti.*

3. **Territorial Reinforcement** - Defines clear borders of controlled space from public to semi-private to private, so that users of an area develop a sense of proprietorship over it.



*This photo clearly demarks public from private space with the use of a fence.*



*These apartments lack clear definition. Note the ground level windows in this photo. This has been a source of unauthorized access and criminal activity.*



*(Left) The roadway and sidewalks in this photo are defined by using different building materials such as cobble stone and interlocking brick. The bollards further define the space. Another advantage for using multiple surface materials is that it can alert those with visual impairments that there is a change in the space.*

4. **Maintenance** - Allows for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose.

\* \* \*

*CPTED is good planning. It is where you start, and augment  
with good procedural and physical security*

- Timothy D. Crowe

Author, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design