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# **Creating Safer Communities**



**An introduction to  
Crime Prevention Through  
Environmental Design (CPTED)  
for architects, planners,  
and builders**

Designed in partnership with:



## Introduction

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Research has shown that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in both the opportunity for crime and fear of crime. Through their involvement in design and construction, architects, planners and builders can influence the creation of safer neighbourhoods and communities. This pamphlet provides a general overview of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for professionals who work in urban design development and related areas. It is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis or a checklist.

## What is CPTED?

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CPTED is an approach to planning and development that reduces opportunities for crime.

Communities, neighbourhoods, individual homes, and other buildings, streets, and parks can all be made safer through the application of design principles that make it more difficult to carry out inappropriate activities.

CPTED can reduce crime and fear through:

***Territoriality*** - fostering residents' interaction, vigilance, and control over their neighbourhood

***Surveillance*** - maximizing the ability to spot suspicious people and activities

***Activity support*** - encouraging the intended use of public space by residents

***Hierarchy of space*** - identifying ownership by delineating private space from public space through real or symbolic boundaries

***Access control/target hardening*** - using physical barriers, security devices and tamper-resistant materials to restrict entrance

***Environment*** - a design or location decision that takes into account the surrounding environment and minimizes the use of space by conflicting groups

**Image/Maintenance** - ensuring that a building or area is clean, well-maintained, and graffiti-free

### What is the role of CPTED?

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CPTED is part of a comprehensive approach to crime prevention. By emphasizing modifications to the **physical** environment, it complements community-based policing, Block Watch, and social programs that address some of the root causes of criminal behaviour.

### What are the main steps in CPTED projects?

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1. engage the support of residents and other key partners
2. identify crime and disorder problems in and around the site
3. analyse current or proposed design based on existing crime problems and potential criminal opportunities
4. develop preventive or corrective design options
5. carry out preferred option
6. monitor and evaluate how the implemented option affects crime, resident surveillance, interaction, and territoriality
7. disseminate and promote evaluation results

### When can CPTED be applied?

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CPTED can be applied to identify and remove potential problems in proposed developments. It can also be used to correct existing design problems that may invite crime.

### What are some CPTED tactics?

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### ***Neighbourhoods:***

- minimize the number of entry and exit points on a block
- design roadways to discourage through-traffic
- maximize residents' ability to view public spaces
- encourage residents' use of public spaces
- provide appropriate lighting for streets, paths, alleys, and parks
- encourage residents to watch over each other

### ***Houses:***

- clearly delineate private property (e.g., yard, driveway, walkway) from public space (e.g., street, sidewalk) through shrubbery, alternate paving stone colour, and changes in grade
- provide unobstructed views of surrounding area
- ensure entrances are visible and overlooked by window
- avoid landscaping that may conceal offenders
- install bright security lights
- use solid-core exterior doors
- use solid door frames with proper strike plates

### ***Apartment buildings:***

- provide common spaces to encourage tenant interaction
- minimize the number of units sharing a common entrance
- equip entrances with an intercom system
- ensure hallways are well-lit
- install deadbolt locks and peep holes on unit doors
- provide children's areas that can be easily observed

- provide windows that allow for surveillance in laundry rooms

### ***Parking lots and garages:***

- avoid enclosed, underground, multi-story garages
- install bright lights over driving lanes and parking spaces
- use paint to increase light levels
- control access and egress with automatic doors and gates
- avoid pillars and recesses that may hide offenders

### ***Public spaces:***

- encourage use by legitimate users
- avoid placing dark, and or hidden areas near activity nodes
- install appropriate lighting
- avoid placing covered outdoor areas where loitering may be a problem

## **Who are other key CPTED partners?**

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CPTED works best when fully supported by the community. Other key partners include:

- ***neighbourhood residents:*** who can make their communities safer through participation in the development and implementation of CPTED-based strategies for crime prevention
- ***new home buyers:*** who can ask for a home built to CPTED principles
- ***apartment building managers:*** who can organize the safety of tenants
- ***elected officials:*** who can encourage the integration of CPTED principles into official plans, zoning by-laws and development

- permits
- **police officers:** who can conduct CPTED assessments in existing neighbourhoods and review applications for new developments
  - **insurance companies:** who can offer discounts for safe designs

## What are some highlights of CPTED's ongoing use?

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- incorporation into local government crime prevention plans (Toronto, ON; Edmonton, AB) and police mandates (Peel Region, ON)
- application in the design of towns (Tumbler Ridge, BC); neighbourhoods (Erin Mills, ON); public housing (Vancouver, BC); parks (Lethbridge, AB); shopping malls (Langley, BC); schools (Brampton, ON) and public libraries (Kitchener, ON)
- codification in building codes and zoning by-laws (North York, ON; Vancouver, BC)
- encouragement of resident interaction and social cohesion (Montreal, PQ)
- reduction of crime through better street lighting (Toronto, ON)

## Further Reading

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Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (1996)

***How to Lock Out Crime: Protecting Your Home Against Burglary***

City of Edmonton (1995)

***Design Guide for a Safer City***

City of Toronto (1992)

***A Working Guide for Planning and Designing Safer Urban Environments***

Department of Justice (1996)

## ***Building a Safer Canada: A Community-based Crime Prevention Manual***

Wekerle, G. and C. Whitzman (1995)

***Safe Cities: Guidelines for Planning, Design, and Management*** - Van Nostrand Reinhold

YWCA Vancouver Housing Registry (1995)

***Making your Suite Safer for Women - Safer for Everyone***

## **CPTED Internet Sites**

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International CPTED Association:

<http://calgary.shaw.wave.ca/ccpc/ica.htm>

Peel Regional Police:

<http://www.peelpolice.gov/research.html>

National Crime Prevention Council (U.S.):

<http://www.ncpc.org/2add4dc.htm>

The Planning Center:

<http://www.planningcenter.com/cvcpted.htm>

RCMP Crime Prevention Victim Services:

<http://www.rcmp-ccaps.com>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation:

<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>

International Centre for the Prevention of Crime:

<http://www.crime-prevention.org/icpc/>

For more information contact, your local police department.

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