



# Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a concept to evaluate the physical security of structures. Implementing CPTED can lead to a reduction of fear and incidence of crime and improve quality of life. Using basic CPTED principles, your home security can be evaluated and vulnerable areas managed.

## CPTED

Every environment has three types of people who interact with the space in some way; normal and abnormal users, and observers. Normal users are people we desire to use a location, abnormal users are people who should not be at a location and observers are anyone who can see a location but are not using it. CPTED concepts promote normal users to enjoy space, encourage abnormal users to move along and keep environments easily seen by observers who enhance security by reporting suspicious and criminal activity.

## Three Principles of CPTED

**Natural Surveillance** is the ability to see into and out of areas - A crucial component of security. Crooks don't want to be seen committing crimes. Enhance natural surveillance by trimming back vegetation and landscaping to eliminate areas of potential concealment. Keep shrubs and bushes trimmed below ground level windows and trees pruned above eye level. Use outside lighting at night to enhance illumination in dark areas around your property. Humans are inherently curious about suspicious activity and tend to notice things out of the ordinary. If neighbors look out their window at 2 a.m., they should be able to see your residence clearly. Also, consider the benefits to police officers patrolling your neighborhood at night and observing your residence.

**Territorial Behavior** is the psychological impression users get when in your space. Perception is a powerful crime prevention tool. Communities with rundown dwellings, whether it be overgrown landscaping or peeling paint, exhibit the impression of apathy and indifference. If the owners don't care, why should anyone else? Abnormal users take advantage of run down areas and use them for illicit activity. A common example is public parks in disrepair where criminal activity is rampant and conducted in the open.

**Natural Access Control** is managing entrance to defined areas. Controls may be fences, gates or even landscaping. A classic example is the fenced backyard with a gate. The fence sends the message that there is only one access point and users must seek permission to enter. Even simple low-level hedges or rows of bushes effectively control and keep people out. Common access controls for residences include adding security strike plates with three inch screws on exterior doors and secondary locks on windows and sliders. Locks may be inexpensive wooden dowels. When considering how and where to protect yourself, remember that criminals prey on opportunity. Remove opportunity! Access control devices should not overshadow the importance of surveillance. When possible, install control devices which permit sight to the other side. Wrought iron or chain link fences are good examples.

Index Block Watch  
360-793-2488  
Index@premier1.net  
unofficial site—[www.indexwa.org](http://www.indexwa.org)

**In an emergency call 9-1-1**

PO Box 88  
511 Avenue A  
Index, WA 98256-0088