

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Businesses that apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies can reduce crime around their property.

Design out crime at your business by maintaining your premises

Maintaining the building exterior and surrounds indicates that the business is active and well-managed, helping to deter crime (as neglect can attract criminal activity). For example, a business owner might regularly repair any damage to the property to avoid the appearance of abandonment.

The maintenance of a space is an important factor in a successful CPTED strategy. Clean, tidy areas contribute to the creation of pride, a sense of ownership and territoriality. Strewn rubbish and over loaded rubbish bins, broken glass and empty alcohol containers, and graffiti and damage to infrastructure creates a perceived view that an area lacks maintenance and care, resulting in a greater concern of general and personal safety. The visual appearance of these areas is significantly reduced by what may be perceived as an apparent lack of control, maintenance and care.

Good Maintenance



Figure 1: Good example of maintaining an area for clear lines of sight and purpose of guiding vehicle access

Poor Maintenance



Figure 2: Abandoned trolleys detract from presenting as a well-managed area and sense of ownership

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Design out crime at your business using natural access control

Natural Access Control is a CPTED strategy that applies appropriate barriers to prevent unauthorised access and to reinforce and guide the legitimate movement of people by directing people through movement controls, such as connected and single-entry pathways, vegetation and landscape design, use of street structures, furniture and multi-use structures while ensuring they don't impede lines of sight, lighting or visibility.

Natural access control involves creating opportunity to guide pedestrian access towards and through areas, including connecting areas and zones of activity, with safe crossings across roadways or zones.

Careful consideration should be given to place design to ensure there is a consistent connection between area activities and creating a sense of direction and purpose across the area and to a broader precinct.

Creating areas of defined but subtle access provides opportunity to determine areas suitable for itemised sales, marketing, seating, signage, litter bins and electronic surveillance. Natural barriers can also be incorporated for dual purposes, including guiding access, creating a point of sale, mitigating access or deterring access.

Good natural access control



Figure 3: Good Natural Access Control to guide vehicles through a drive-through service zone and use of bollards, colour and signage are further contributors indicating that this area is for vehicles only and not for pedestrian access.

Poor natural access control



Figure 4: Natural Access Control could be improved to differentiate and separate pedestrian and vehicle zones.

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Design out crime at your business through social interaction

Social interaction and creating positive community relations will naturally improve surveillance and support appropriate behaviour. This can be achieved by clearly rejecting violence, responding to aggression before it escalates, and addressing violent incidents with a consistent message. For example, a business owner might train staff to identify early signs of aggression and address and divert the behaviour calmly to prevent violence.

Encouraging land uses that generate people activity and casual surveillance in areas that may otherwise be vulnerable or isolated plays an important crime prevention function, with not only deterring crime through activity but creating opportunities for social interaction through community engagement amongst youth and seniors.

Good social interaction



Poor social interaction



Figure 1: Areas designed to attract and facilitate a mix of activities and with passive and electronic surveillance deter anti-social behaviour and create feelings of safety and community ownership.

Figure 2: Isolated areas with no to little activity creates opportunity for anti-social behaviour and opportunistic crimes and legitimate area users may also have feelings of being less safe.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Design out crime at your business using surveillance

Surveillance enhances safety by using space, lighting, and technology to reduce concealment areas, such as avoiding walls near entrances and installing visible lighting and video surveillance. For example, a business might add lights and CCTV around entrances to improve visibility.

People naturally feel safer when they have an awareness of their surroundings and in turn, an offender looking for criminal opportunities will perceive a risk of capture or identification should they be clearly seen or are being observed.

Good natural surveillance should be achievable in most areas but is particularly important around buildings and car parks. Building design and area integration strategies should avoid the creation of blind spots with poor natural surveillance.

There should be limited obstructions to open surveillance and care is needed to minimise shrubbery height and maximise tree canopies to avoid blocking lines of sight and restricting natural surveillance opportunity. Ideally, shrubbery heights should be limited to 500mm and tree canopies above three (3) metres.

Street design may have a focus on large deciduous trees to enhance street beautification. Sufficient lighting should provide a minimum of 20 lux balanced white light and minimise interference between lighting and trees to support natural surveillance during hours of darkness.

Car parks boarded by large windowless walls and alleyways significantly reduces natural surveillance and access control in the area.

Good surveillance



Figure 1: Areas designed for passive and electronic surveillance deter anti-social behaviour and create feelings of safety and community ownership.

Poor surveillance



Figure 2: Isolated areas with no natural or electronic surveillance creates opportunity for anti-social behaviour and opportunistic crimes and legitimate area users may also have feelings of being less safe.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Design out crime at your business through target hardening

Target Hardening involves adding security features, like deadbolt locks, protective window films, and gates, to make it harder for intruders to break into a building. For example, a business owner might install tempered steel deadbolts and window films to prevent break-ins.

People naturally feel safer when they have an awareness of their surroundings and in turn, if there is a presence of security or a high likelihood of a security or police response.

CCTV surveillance and related signage is acknowledged as a valuable and effective tool for the protection of people and property. CCTV plays an active deterrence role to reduce and manage anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol related crime, offences against persons and property and as a powerful investigative tool for local Police. Alongside crime deterrence, the public CCTV system improves the perception of community safety and property protection.

Care should be taken to ensure sign structures are extremely high strength to sustain an attack to avoid damage impacts which will reduce maintenance costs and deter subsequent attacks.

Site surveys may identify vehicle access control vulnerabilities. Area redevelopment provides an opportunity to design out existing vulnerabilities and perform security upgrades.

Australian Government guidance notes released for the purpose of mitigating the risk of a vehicle as a weapon refers to the low sophistication of attacks which may be conducted by lone individuals, operating independently or impulsively.

The consequence of a risk may be described in terms of fatalities/casualties, economic loss, disruption of services and reputational damage. Therefore, assessing what factors will influence the likelihood of a vehicle incident is difficult. In addition, with high traffic and parking volumes, there is an inherent risk of stray vehicles driven by poorly skilled, elderly or reckless drivers.

As with any risk assessment, the vulnerability of a site is assessed based on the adequacy of existing controls.

Signage should be considered for safety orientated messages and for crime prevention purposes. The importance of effective placement of signage cannot be underestimated. Location, height and existing visual distractions are major factors which contribute to the effectiveness of a sign when installed. Signs should be checked regularly for damage or theft.

CCTV Signage should be erected at all formal or high traffic access points within monitored areas and at each camera location. It is important that CCTV signage be installed in positions which allow the best opportunity to capture the attention of pedestrians and improve safety and crime risk management.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Good target hardening



Poor target hardening

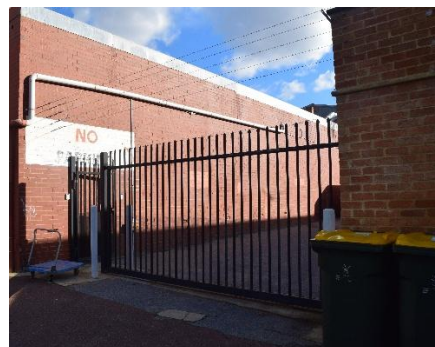


Figure 1: Appropriate use bollards to restrict or deter vehicle access whilst facilitating pedestrian access and use of signage to cover the bollards creates an alternative dual purpose.

Figure 2: Car park entrance has been target hardened with a spiked steel fence and barbed wire however with adjacent bollards and bins providing readily available scaling points for a motivated offender.

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Design out crime at your business through territorial identity

Territorial identity provides a sense of ownership, spatial control and clearly delineates private and public areas to deter and discourage trespass. As an example, using landscaping and appropriate barriers like fences or hedges to separate a property line between a private and public space, while ensuring they don't block lighting or visibility. Area purpose and identity should provide users with a sense of ownership and control of a space, avoiding dead zones or areas subject to low maintenance and care.

Territorial identity creates a sense of 'place' and establishes pride by a person or community. Land use and area purpose should clearly delineate between private, semi-public and public realm. Delineation may be achieved with changes in level, formal entries, fences and barriers, landscaping or signs.

Increasing the use of the area by legitimate groups in the community (i.e. social interaction) increases the sense of ownership, control and may take on the role of voluntary custodians of the area.

Good territorial identity



Figure 5: Strong sense of ownership, spatial control and clearly delineates private and public areas and preventing any vehicle access

Poor territorial identity



Figure 6: Inadequate sense of area purpose, ownership or control