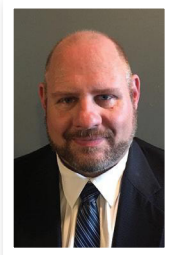


CPTED in Condominiums



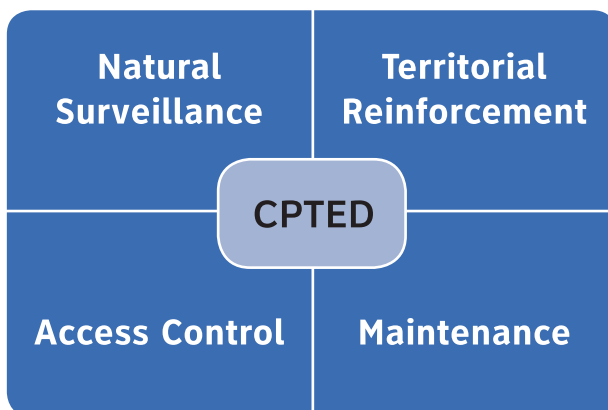
By Scott Hill



CPTED is an acronym for **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design**. The purpose of implementing CPTED principles into the design of the condominium is to reduce the opportunities for crime that are inherent in the design of condominiums or their neighbourhoods. CPTED has a proven record of being properly researched and utilized successfully on an international basis. It also has a history of increasing responsible and positive use of the property while at the same time decreasing the likelihood of criminal behaviour.

The goal of implementing CPTED can be defined as follows:

- Provides the opportunity to reduce crime within the condominium
- Reduces the owner's and resident's fear of crime within their building
- Encourages social interaction and vigilance
- Improves quality of life for those residing within the condominium



As shown in the diagram, there are several principles in the CPTED concept. In this article we will be examining three of the more basic ones that can still have a profound effect on a condominium's security rating. The three that we will be discussing are:

- 1 Physical Maintenance
- 2 Territorial Reinforcement
- 3 Natural Surveillance

Starting with Physical Maintenance, this principle states that a condominium that is visibly well maintained is less likely to be targeted than one that it not. This is also occasionally referred to as the *broken window theory*. Unkept properties will attract crime and vandalism much faster than ones with apparent care and diligence. Property Managers and Condominium Directors must ensure that vandalism (tagging) is removed as quickly as possible, that the landscaping is kept neat and clean (not overgrown), and that evident damage (concrete spalling, etc.) to the common element are repaired as soon as possible. Neglected space will often result in mistreatment of that area by people, sometimes even the residents of the building.

The second principle is one of territorial reinforcement. This is a way of creating a clear definition of space and boundaries (property lines). By doing this, the condominium can clearly define the space that authorized users are allowed to access. Conversely, it will also allow these users to identify non-legitimate personnel (and hopefully reported - see Natural Surveillance). Territorial reinforcement can be accomplished with landscaping, hardscaping, fences, signs, flags, etc. For the purpose of a CPTED report, the area's boundaries are usually separated into public, semi-public, semi-private and private.

Our final discussion principle for CPTED is one of Natural Surveillance. This is the physical placement of features, people and activities to maximize the visibility of the condominium community. In other words, it allows the authorized users (condominium residents) to feel comfortable knowing that they are easily seen (when in the common element). Conversely, it makes intruders to the property nervous for the same reason - enhanced visibility increases the likelihood of being apprehended, or at least witnessed. This is accomplished at the condominium by proper lighting and reducing the areas of concealment (blind corners, shrubs, trees, solid fences, etc)

One question that is often asked is when, in the building process, does CPTED principles get implemented into the design of the facility?

There are 7 phases of CPTED design, ranging from *Concept* (#1) to *Close Out* (#7, or in condominium terms: occupancy). During a recent CPTED seminar, the presenters asked the participants to provide information about their projects. One of the questions asked was on the timing of when the Security Professional are brought into the project to implement the CPTED and other security recommendations. The vast majority of the attendees report that they were brought in at either the *Concept* (#1) or *Schematic Design* (#2) phase of the project.

Unfortunately, this is not usually the case in condominium developments. In a previous article on condominium security in *Condo-Contact*, we discussed the challenges of condominium security in the development stage. At that time, we made the recommendation that condominium developers would be well served by having a PSP (Physical Security Professional) or CPP (Certified Protection Professional) in the early stages of the development. Such advice would reduce the likelihood of the Physical Protection System being either over, or under-designed. Additionally, the advice would ensure that all security components (cameras, lighting, access control, intrusion detection, etc) would be fully integrated with each other, rather than stand alone systems. It would also give the first condominium board of directors a security plan to implement future security solutions.

Happily, there are other opportunities to implement CPTED principles into the Condominium's life cycle that are under the control of the Board of Directors. The two that would immediately come to mind would be when updating the Reserve Fund Study (either class) or during a large project.

It is our contention that every condominium should undertake a professional security audit to ensure that they have a proper understanding of where their vulnerabilities are located. In a professional audit, CPTED is a stand-alone section of the report that will measure the effectiveness of the current (if any) CPTED measures in place and will make recommendations on implementation of these measures to better secure the facility. Additionally, having such a report prior to the updating of a Reserve Fund Study would allow the Board of Directors the ability to prioritize their security requirements based on risk and budget. These priorities can be implemented into the reserve fund study over a period of years.

In the absence of the security audit, there are other projects that present excellent times to incorporate CPTED concepts.

For example, during a landscaping upgrade or enhancement plan, appropriate shrubs and plants may be chosen that will enhance the territorial reinforcement. Or at the very least, a condominium can insure that their landscaping contractors are following the 2-6 rule (trees to be trimmed up to 6-feet & shrubs to be trimmed down to 2-feet) to ensure that they are not offering areas of concealment (Natural Surveillance).

Or, during a common area upgrade (like a lobby), a security consultant may assist with providing advice on Natural Surveillance to enhance the awareness of the area and increase the risk of getting caught to would-be intruders (proper line of sights, placement of fixtures to reduce risk, etc.).

The above examples are some basic illustrations to outline the benefits of incorporating CPTED security principles into the Integrated Condominium Security plan. With the above as an example, Condominium Directors and Managers can enhance the security of condominium by keeping the principles in mind when awarding contracts or bidding on capital projects. Many capital replacement projects are excellent opportunities to increase the security of the building and better protect the residents within. ■

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