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3D Security

## Crime and Maintenance

# CPTED in Condominiums

Properly Maintained Condominiums are Less Likely to be Targets of Crime. (CPTED is an acronym for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)



As many may know, CPTED is an acronym for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. CPTED Concepts are known and have been utilized for the past 50 years for the purpose of reducing opportunities for crime. This concept also has a history of increasing responsible and positive use of the property while at the same time decreasing the likelihood of criminal behaviour.

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

First Generation CPTED has several principles that are commonly used and evaluated when examining a condominium's core security through an audit or

other protective measures. Three of the more basic concepts, which will have a significant effect on the condominium's security rating, are as follows:

Physical Maintenance is a CPTED principle that states that a condominium that is properly maintained is much less likely to be the target of a security incident than a property that is unkept, or has visible vandalism. Properties that appear neglected will often be the source of further abuse, sometimes even by the residents of the condominium. The underlying thinking of the perpetrator being: "if the management of the property doesn't care, why should I?" For this reason, Condominium Management is encouraged to act on cleaning vandalism and ensuring that the landscaping / snow removal of the property is as neat and clean as possible. One item that has been noted to attract the criminal element is vehicles in disrepair (such as a car on jacks or one visibly leaking fluids). This is one of the many reasons that Condominium rules

often state that vehicles parked / stored at the property must be operating.

Another first generation CPTED principle is Territorial Reinforcement. This is a way of demarcating a clear definition of space and boundaries (property lines) that belong to the condominium. By setting these visible boundaries, would-be trespassers to the property will have to psychologically cross a line in order to access the property. This serves many purposes such as reducing crimes of opportunity, as well as potentially highlighting strangers to the property. This enhances the likelihood of them being reported, and therefore prosecuted for their activities. Given that scenario, perpetrators will often bypass the property and move on to easier pickings. Boundaries may be set with fences, signage, vegetation (hostile and otherwise), different colour pavement, etc. These spaces are often broken down into Public, Semi-Public, Semi-Private and Private. By using these different categories, an intruder has more borders to

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cross before he/she can enter the condominium, and, therefore, may have trepidation to even make the attempt. .

The final 1st generation principle for CPTED that is presented is one of Natural Surveillance. This concept seeks to reduce crime by decreasing target opportunities in the condominium by placing physical features, activities and people in plain sight, therefore maximizing visibility. This enhanced visibility has the effect of enhancing the perceived risk of detection and apprehension. An example of Natural Surveillance in condominiums would be the line of sight. Open fences have the effect of defining boundaries of the corporation, but still allow activities on both sides

to be observed. Landscaping is another example, where CPTED principles state that trees branches should be trimmed up to seven (7) feet and shrubs should be no higher than two(feet). This allows for both adequate line of site, and reduces hiding areas for the intruder. Furthermore it will also give condominium residents comfort in knowing that that are easily seen when in the common element.

### 2nd Generation CPTED

As noted above, first generation CPTED consists of more concepts that are physical in nature. A lot of the principles are implemented either by the Condominium Developer during the design phase, or Board Members can incorporate these

concepts when undertaking Reserve Fund Projects such as lobby renovations or upgrading the exterior of the property. In second generation CPTED, the concepts centre on social interaction. These concepts also, rather than dealing exclusively with reducing the opportunity for crime, look to promote the notions of community and neighbourhood in order to prevent the criminal actives from taking place.

The areas that we will examine include:

- Social Cohesion
- Connectivity
- Community Culture
- Threshold Capacity

Social Cohesion is a concept where a condominium seeks to establish positive relationships between the residents, owners, board members and other casual visitors to the property. In conjunction to the concept of 1st generation natural surveillance, this concept states that condominium residents will be more likely to be observant and look out for other residents if there is a positive relationship. Through community events such

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as holiday gatherings and condominium BBQs, it has been noted that residents are more likely to take responsibility for their community, and develop the social skills and motivation to resolve social conflicts amicably.

Connectivity is the next concept of 2nd Generation CPTED and it follows the same guidelines as Social Cohesion. The difference is that, instead of facing inwards to the residents of the condominium corporation, it faces outwards to other organizations. This concept is meant to ensure that a condominium does not operate in isolation, but develops relationships with other organizations such as the CCI. By fostering these relationships, residents feel empowered and will therefore look after the property with more diligence.

Community Culture, the third concept, follows the same lines as the previous two principles discussed. In this principle, residents of the property are encouraged to take pride in their ownership in the condominium. This will re-

sult in group efforts to protect the common element of the property, as well as the other members of their community. Through this concept, residents should be encouraged to speak up if they notice criminal behaviour within the property or surrounding areas (“see something, say something”).

Our final point of discussion is Threshold Capacity. This concept suggests that it is necessary for a condominium to achieve balance socially, as well as to ensure proper use (when possible) of the land space surrounding the property. Discouraging the presence of abandoned buildings and encouraging a safe location for the congregation of younger people will result in a population that is more towards socially productive behaviour. On the contrary, if the areas in the condominium’s surroundings exceeds the intended activities, this may lead to an increase in criminal behaviour.

Traditionally, one of the more frequent criticisms of first generation CPTED was that, while it may have the effect of reduc-

ing criminal activities within a property, it does not address the in-house problems that are inherent in multi-unit living.

A condominium security audit will evaluate the concepts that are presented in the first generation section of this article. Using these as guidelines, Condominium Directors and Managers are better equipped to protect the condominium when awarding contracts or bidding on capital projects. Many capital replacement (RE: reserve fund) projects are excellent opportunities to increase the security of the building, and to better protect the residents within. Along with applying the Integrated Condominium Security Solution (security plan) recommendations from a security audit, Condominiums are encouraged to implement the second generation of CPTED principles into their community culture. The core principle of these concepts is that bringing everyone together will result in more people that will care about the property. The more people that care about the property, the less likely vandalism or theft will occur. **CV**



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