


RISK NAVIGATOR

# Crime prevention through environmental design

 Primary casualty



MARKEL

# About Markel's Risk Solution Services team

Risk Solution Services provides technical insight related to existing and potential insured risk at Markel. The team partners with our customers, claims and underwriters to educate on both current and future risk trends and supports our clients with a broad offering of risk management solutions.



Email our team at [riskolutions@markel.com](mailto:riskolutions@markel.com)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to local authorities

Resources

References



# Design for safety and what is CPTED?



## No one wants to be a victim of crime.

It can have a negative impact on you, your business and your customers. It can also have an impact on your insurance costs through increased premiums and higher deductibles. Although there is no way to prevent crime entirely, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED—pronounced “sep-ted”) can help. This safety guide provides information and tools to help you take positive steps toward crime prevention.

## What is CPTED?

CPTED is a way to design and build your physical environment so that it positively influences people's behavior and reduces crime. People who use CPTED-designed areas perceive them as safe, and would-be criminals see them as highly risky places to commit crimes.

CPTED defines your physical environment as your property and facilities, as well as your use of landscaping, signage and lighting. You can apply CPTED principles to both new and existing facilities. You can start applying CPTED concepts to your business right now.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# CPTED's four principles

## According to the non-profit National Crime Prevention Council, CPTED has four basic operating strategies:

- Natural surveillance
- Access control
- Territorial reinforcement
- Maintenance and activity support

### Natural surveillance

Natural surveillance is the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility. Take a close look at your facility—if you can find places to hide, so can intruders. Here are some guidelines to follow to maximize visibility:

- **Keep the lights on:** Keep lights on inside and outside of your facility, and at your front and back doors. Make sure lights overlap so there are no blackout spots. Lighting is one of the most economical and effective forms of crime prevention. Keeping the lights on keeps crime out!
- **Trim trees and shrubs:** Keep trees and shrubs trimmed, especially those located near your doors and windows.
- **Maintain plantings at the right height:** Trim shrubs to under three feet in height, and prune the lower branches of trees to at least seven feet off the ground.
- **Clear clutter:** Keep windows free of clutter, signs, advertisements and displays. Signs should cover no more than 15% of your window.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References



# CPTED's four principles



## Access control

Access control is a way to guide people through a space by the proper placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping and lighting.

- Use fences or landscaping to prevent or discourage access to unused or sensitive areas.
- Avoid privacy fences or any landscaping material that blocks or limits visibility.
- Limit the number of access points into a building.
- Install heavy dead-bolts or multiple locks to make entry more difficult.
- Use light to discourage or encourage the entrance into an area.
- Strategically position large planters in parking lots to control the speed and flow of traffic.
- Prevent easy access to the roof.

The Virginia Crime Prevention Association offers one additional strategy, called “target hardening”. This focuses on making a site more difficult to access by:

- Installing exterior door knobs a minimum of 40 inches from adjacent windows.
- Installing case-hardened dead-bolt locks with a minimum of one-inch throw on all exterior doors.
- Installing door hinges on the interior side of the door, or using tamper-proof hinges.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# CPTED's four principles



## **Territorial reinforcement**

Territorial reinforcement is the use of physical attributes to express ownership, such as fencing, signage, landscaping, proper maintenance and pavement treatments.

- Define property lines with trees, shrubs and fences.
- Make sure the building's numeric address is visible from the street, and is lighted at night.
- Personalize the property to show pride in ownership. This helps send a message that intruders may be noticed.
- Design fences so visibility from the street is maintained.
- Get involved! Participate in your neighborhood watch, civic association or business watch programs.

Here's a creative suggestion to control access to off-limit areas or to reinforce territorial boundaries. Plant rows of cactus plants or thorn bushes. Passing through these can result in a painful, uncomfortable experience—a potential burglar or vandal may think twice about entering the area.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References



# CPTED's four principles



## Maintenance is key

Maintaining your property is crucial to the successful implementation of CPTED. Buildings and premises that are properly maintained show that people use the area and take pride in ownership.

Maintenance strategies that facilitate CPTED include:

- Maintaining landscaping at recommended height.
- Keeping property clean, and removing trash and graffiti as soon as they appear.
- Implementing scheduled programs for maintaining, cleaning and replacing light fixtures and light bulbs.
- Adding your own personal touch to your property.
- Repainting faded hazard areas and warning zones as needed.

Other considerations:

- Personalize your personal property. Etch or use an indelible ink stamp to mark property with your business name.
- Use window signage to advise would-be burglars that you've marked internal property for immediate identification. Remember, don't overuse window signs.
- Keep an open sight-line so law enforcement personnel can see inside your business if needed.
- Use lighting that shines on your business, illuminating the area. Advise local authorities that if the light isn't shining on your business, it's a signal that something may be wrong.
- Increase police presence at your business. Give officers the opportunity to make phone calls and use lunchrooms or restrooms. The National Institute of Justice encourages the combination of CPTED and community policing as part of a comprehensive strategy to prevent crime. They emphasize that close cooperation between police and residents or businesses can reduce both crime and the fear of crime.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# CPTED's four principles



## Activity support

Activity support is the use of group activities to foster community interaction. Criminal activity is discouraged when residents, customers, businesses and other legitimate users conduct activities in public spaces.

Many communities have established neighborhood watch programs. If your business is in an area with an active community watch program, lend your support and become a member. If you want to start a community watch program or rekindle a previously established program, the Los Angeles Police Department and the National Crime Prevention Institute give the following suggestions:

- **Hold meetings:** Organize and participate in regular meetings that focus on current issues such as drug abuse, hate crimes, school crime, before- and after-school childcare, recreational activities for kids and victim services.
- **Patrol the area:** Organize and participate in community patrols. Walkers can patrol small areas, such as streets and apartment complexes. Drivers can patrol larger areas. Use cell phones to alert police to crime or suspicious activities and identify problems needing attention.
- **Adopt a park or school playground:** Pick up litter, repair broken equipment and paint over graffiti.
- **Work with local building code officials:** Require the installation of dead-bolt locks, smoke alarms and other safety devices in new and existing homes and commercial buildings.
- **Work with parent groups and schools:** Start a McGruff House (McGruff House is a temporary place for children to go when they find themselves in a frightening or dangerous situation) or other block parent program to help children in emergency situations.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References



# CPTED's four principles

## Activity support (continued)

- **Provide a distribution area for newsletters:** Your community newsletter can give prevention tips and local crime news, recognize residents of all ages who have made a difference in preventing crime and highlight community events.
- **Hold social events:** Conduct a block party, potluck lunch or dinner, volleyball or softball game or a picnic. Neighbors who know each other are more likely to watch out for each other.

When you use your business as a meeting place or hub for group activities, you show that you take crime prevention seriously. In addition, you can reinforce your CPTED efforts by posting a notice that you are involved in a crime prevention through environmental design neighborhood watch or business watch.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References



## Creating a CPTED team



When creating your CPTED project team, recruit members who are as committed to crime prevention as you are.

Some of the people, groups, associations and agencies to consider for your team include:

- Building and planning agencies
- Business groups
- Education agencies
- Election officials
- Law enforcement agencies
- Neighborhood groups
- Property or environmental design officials
- Public works agencies
- Sanitation agencies
- Social service agencies

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Market's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# Implementing CPTED



## Successful implementation of a CPTED program requires you to identify potential criminal activity in your neighborhood and then apply the CPTED concepts that best fit your environment.

To assist with this process, the Police Department of Virginia Beach, Virginia developed the following implementation questions:

### **Access, circulation and parking**

- Are there separate entrances for employee vehicles, visitor vehicles and delivery trucks?
- Can entrances be closed, locked or blocked during offpeak hours?
- What provisions are there for emergency access to the site? To the building?
- Is there conflict between access to the property and the normal flow of traffic on adjacent streets and through nearby intersections?
- Is pedestrian movement separated from automobile traffic?
- Are parking stalls and bicycle racks located on the site and oriented to allow for surveillance from the street? The building? Entrances and exits? Adjacent sites or buildings?
- Are building entrances and exits visible from parking areas and pedestrian paths?
- Can intruders gain access to the roof?

### **Neighborhood conditions**

- Who lives in, works in, uses or travels through your neighborhood?
- How many people are likely to be in the neighborhood during the day? In the evening? Late at night?

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References



# Implementing CPTED

## Neighborhood conditions (continued)

- Will neighborhood conditions have any impact on your application of CPTED?
- Will your CPTED implementation positively or negatively impact your business or community?

## Site conditions

- Who will live on, work on or visit the site?
- What time of the day is the site likely to be used? What days of the week?
- How will people get to the site? On foot? By car? By bus?

## Landscaping

- What kinds of trees, shrubs or other plants are proposed or currently at your location(s)?
- What are the recommendations or requirements for plant maintenance?
- Do plants, walls, fences, plazas, berms or other landscape elements reduce or remove the ability to see entrances and exits?
- Do they provide places to hide?

CPTED is most effective when integrated into a comprehensive crime prevention program that includes everyone in the community, from business owners to law-enforcement officials to concerned citizens. In addition to the recommendations in this guide, contact your local law enforcement authorities and city planning offices for help. They can offer creative solutions specific to criminal activity in your area.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# A checklist for starting a community watch program



## You will need

- A person or group of people committed to starting a neighborhood watch.
- A planning committee to initiate the program.
- A list of what issues initially need to be addressed in your community.
- A means of communicating with the residents, e.g., e-mail, fliers, telephone trees.
- Publicity for the initial neighborhood watch meeting.
- A meeting agenda to keep things moving and on track.
- A place to meet.
- A crime prevention officer to discuss the crime issues in the neighborhood and to help train members.
- A map of the community with spaces for names, addresses and phone numbers of all households and business owners.
- Brochures or other materials on topics of interest to the residents.
- A sign-up sheet for those interested in becoming block or building captains.
- Neighborhood watch signs to be posted around the community. Some jurisdictions require a minimum number of participants before neighborhood watch signs can be posted.
- Facts about crime in your neighborhood. (These can be found in police reports, newspapers and getting residents' perceptions about crime. Often residents' opinions are not supported by facts, and accurate information can reduce fear of crime.)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# A checklist for starting a community watch program



## To add excitement

Mix business with pleasure – allow attendees time to socialize.

Seek out neighborhood go-getters – civic leaders and elected officials – to be your advocates and mentors.

Work with such existing organizations as citizens' association, tenants' association or housing authorities.

Provide speakers on topics of community interest.

Link crime prevention into activities promoted by other groups: Child protection, anti-vandalism projects, community service, arson prevention, recreation activities for young people.

Start a neighborhood newsletter.

Arrange for McGruff to make a surprise appearance at a meeting, rally or other event.

## To build partnerships

The police or sheriffs' office's endorsement is critical to a watch group's credibility. These agencies are the major source of information on local crime patterns, crime prevention education and crime reporting.

Local businesses and organizations can help provide fliers and a newsletter, offer meeting places and distribute crime prevention information. Ask an electronics store to donate cellular phones.

Libraries can provide research materials, videos, computers and meeting space.

Media can aid neighborhood watches by publicizing recruitment drives.

Look to volunteer centers, parent groups and labor unions for advice on recruiting volunteers.

Teenagers can also be valuable resources. They can be an integral part of a citizens' patrol including biking and rollerblading to scout the neighborhood.

Places of worship can provide meeting space and a good source of volunteers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References



# Sample CPTED letter to local authorities



(Date)

Name of local authority  
Street address  
City, state, zip code

Re: Crime prevention through environmental design

To whom it may concern:

I have recently been introduced to the theory of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

As a business owner, I am very interested in learning more about CPTED and how this strategy may be utilized in my community. Please have someone contact me or provide additional information that might support my community crime prevention efforts.

Sincerely,

Your name  
Business return address

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# Resources



For CPTED information specific to your city, contact your state and city police departments and city planning offices.

## **American Planning Association**

1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20036-1904  
[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

## **International CPTED Association**

Suite 711, 300 Meredath Rd, NE  
Calgary, Alberta  
Canada  
[www.cpted.net](http://www.cpted.net)

## **National Crime Prevention Council**

2614 Chapel Lake Dr., Suite B  
Gambrills, MD 21054  
[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

## **National Institute of Justice**

US Department of Justice  
810 Seventh St., NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij)

## **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services**

1100 Bank St.  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.dcjs.Virginia.gov](http://www.dcjs.Virginia.gov)

## **U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs  
National Institute of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001  
[www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)

## **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to Kimberly L. Vann, C.P.S., of the Henrico County Division of Police, for her time, knowledge and resources.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

About Markel's Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED's four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References

# References

Sherry Plaster Carter and Stanley L. Carter, “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design,” Planning Commissioners Journal, Fall 1994.

Dan Fleissner and Fred Heinzelmann, Ph.D., “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and Community Policing,” Research in Action, National Institute of Justice, August 1996.

Dorinda R. Howe, “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design,” CPTED Handbook, 2002.

“Crime Prevention From the Ground Up,” National Crime Prevention Council.

“Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, General Guidelines for Designing Safer Communities,” City of Virginia Beach, VA, January 2000.

“Planning Today for a Safer Virginia,” Virginia CPTED Committee and the Virginia Crime Prevention Association.

“Safer Places, A Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Tutorial,” The College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Virginia Tech.

“Take a Stand. Join Neighborhood Watch,” Crime Prevention Tip, The National Citizens’ Crime Prevention Campaign.

This document is intended for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as advice or opinions on any specific facts or circumstances. The content of this document is made available on an “as is” basis, without warranty of any kind. This document cannot be assumed to contain every acceptable safety and compliance procedure or that additional procedures might not be appropriate under the circumstances. Markel does not guarantee that this information is or can be relied on for compliance with any law or regulation, assurance against preventable losses, or freedom from legal liability. This publication is not intended to be legal, underwriting, or any other type of professional or technical advice. Persons requiring advice should consult an independent adviser or trained professional. Markel does not guarantee any particular outcome and makes no commitment to update any information herein, or remove any items that are no longer accurate or complete. Furthermore, Markel does not assume any liability to any person or organization for loss or damage caused by or resulting from any reliance placed on this content. Markel® is a registered trademark of Markel Group Inc.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Markel’s Risk  
Solution Services team

Design for safety

What is CPTED?

CPTED’s four principles

Creating a CPTED team

Implementing CPTED

Checklist for starting a  
community watch program

Sample CPTED letter to  
local authorities

Resources

References