



Building a Safer Facility by Use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Home invasions experienced by US expatriates living in several Central American countries caused the residents of one community who were concerned about their safety to reach out to Security Advisors Consulting Group for assistance with what they could do to reduce their risk of victimization. Our base recommendations centered around the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED (pronounced sep'ted) principles.

Criminological theory stresses that for a crime to occur the elements of motive, means, and opportunity must be present. It naturally follows that any measures we take aimed at reducing our crime risk should focus on reducing or eliminating one of these factors.

The discipline of CPTED is the study of utilizing elements in the design of a property to make it unattractive to the criminal, reducing their perception of opportunity and hopefully convincing them not to commit the crime, or at the very least redirecting them to commit their crime in another location. For homeowners this can be accomplished in many ways, some of which include:

- “Hardening” the home by installing window bars, gates, or fences so that making entrance appears that it would be more difficult.
- Increasing exterior lighting and keeping foliage trimmed so that intruders will fear being seen as they approach the home.
- Using landscape features such as water features or hedges of thorny or poisonous plants to restrict the number of directions that the home can easily be approached from.

THE AUTHOR

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Drew is the President and Principal Consultant for Security Advisors Consulting Group a consulting firm which offers security assessment, training, and litigation support services.

He has served as the senior most security executive (CSO) for organizations in the healthcare, financial services, education, hospitality sectors, and as a Regional Security Director for Mayo Clinic.

Drew received his training in CPTED from the American Crime Prevention Institute and is certified as a CPTED Specialist by them. He has used CPTED methodologies extensively while designing physical security for residences, hotels, schools, universities, corporate offices, and hospitals.



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- Having a large, or at least large sounding, dog to serve as an early warning system and potentially deter intruders.
- Working to develop personal relationships with neighbors and businesses in the area to ensure that home and business owners develop a sense of community, recognize each other (and anyone who is out of place), and feel an obligation to take an interest in the security of the rest of the neighborhood.

Security is a situational discipline so there is no set of universal measures that can be applied across the board to all locations that will be equally effective at preventing crime. With each location we must focus on the elements that make it an attractive target and determine which of these we can realistically influence in order to make it less attractive. Security Advisors Consulting Group has significant experience evaluating crime risk and developing solutions tailored to the specific environment of our clients. Drew Neckar, the President of Security Advisors Consulting, is certified in CPTED methodology by the American Crime Prevention Institute and has successfully applied it in many instances.

Recently, another security consulting firm contracted us to assist them in developing CPTED based solutions for their client, a top tier private university that was struggling with crimes committed against their students living in residences off campus. A survey of the neighborhoods surrounding campus resulted in recommendations that the university is working to implement, in coordination with students and community groups.

In another instance, a small technical college campus in an urban area was experiencing problems with drug use, damage to property, and littering (including human waste and used hypodermic needles) in their green spaces and parking lots overnight by the local transient community. They had already spent several thousand dollars upgrading their exterior lighting and video surveillance system, but this had not deterred the behavior only ensured that the college had video footage to review after the fact. We conducted an analysis of the general and criminal activity in the area which led to analyzing foot-traffic patterns around the campus. What we discovered was that a natural chokepoint made the shortest path between a heavily wooded area containing a significant transient population and amenities such as convenience and liquor stores lead directly through the campus. At our recommendation, the campus installed a short section of fencing at the chokepoint to re-direct foot-traffic from this path to a nearby sidewalk which skirted the campus. Within a week of the installation of the fence the issues that they had been experiencing for years were significantly reduced.

CPTED solutions are typically less expensive than security technology or staff and as part of a holistic security program can be used in many situations to reduce an organization's crime risk.



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