



MARCH'S CRIME PREVENTION TIP OF THE MONTH

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Early Spring is a good time to trim back any vegetation that is obscuring the visibility of your home. Vegetation that could conceal criminal activity is a concern related to **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design** or CPTED. CPTED addresses concerns affecting not only personal property but also neighborhoods as a whole.

There is a great deal of information about CPTED available online. However, this handout will provide strategies that should be considered for your personal property.

CPTED does not promote the “fortressing” of properties, quite the contrary. The ability to see what is going on in and around a property should be your first priority. Perpetrators of crime are attracted to areas and residences with low visibility. This can be counteracted in the following ways:

- **Lighting** – Personal residences should have front and back doors that are clearly visible and well lit. Alleys and parking areas should also be well lit. Motion-sensing lights perform the double duty of providing light when needed and letting trespassers know that “they have been seen.”
- **Landscaping** – Uniformly shaped sites are safer than irregularly shaped sites because there are less hiding places. Plants should follow the 3-8 rule of thumb; hedges no higher than 3 feet, and tree canopies starting no lower than 8 feet. This is especially important around entryways and windows.
- **Fencing** – Fences should allow people to see in. Even if the fences are built for privacy, they should be of a design that is not too tall and has some visibility.
- **Windows** – Windows that look out on streets and alleys are good natural surveillance, especially bay windows. These should not be blocked. Retirees, stay at home parents, and people working from home offices can provide good surveillance for the neighborhood during the day.

