



Safer Canterbury

Creating Safer Communities



Neighbourhood Support
New Zealand





1 WHAT IS CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN ("CPTED") ?

The design of buildings and the arrangement of streets, parks and other outdoor spaces can influence the opportunity for crime and the level of fear of crime.

Careful environmental design can help make places less susceptible to crime and enable people to feel more comfortable outdoors.

Crime statistics indicate to individuals that there is no significant risk of becoming victims of crime. However, these figures bear no resemblance to the level of fear individuals may have at the possibility of becoming a victim. It is this fear of crime, particularly of attacks associated with theft or sexual motives, which inhibits the mobility of community members. Women and the elderly, for example, suffer disproportionately from the fear of crime.

An improvement in the quality of life, by reducing crime and the fear of crime, is essential and a basic right for everyone. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ("CPTED") is one important strategy for achieving this.

How can environmental design help prevent crime?

Careful environmental design can help to prevent crimes like personal assault and vandalism. The major principle of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is:

- **Natural surveillance – “see and be seen”**

People are usually less likely to commit crime if they are (or think they may be) being watched. Conversely people are likely to feel safer if they think someone is ‘looking out for them.’

Crime prevention can be achieved by security cameras and the presence of security personnel. However it can also be achieved by natural means such as:

1. Designing buildings to overlook streets and public spaces

Ways to design buildings which offer passive surveillance include:

- Locating windows and doorways to overlook the street and other public spaces
- Siting activities such as shops and offices at the front of buildings



- Siting kitchens and living rooms at the street fronts of houses

- Using low or see through fences between private buildings and public space



2. Ensuring that there are clear sightlines along routes by:

- Avoiding sudden corners or blind bends along pedestrian or cyclist routes



- Ensuring that planting does not grow to obscure the view or provide hiding places for offenders



Carefully consider the design and location of fire exits in buildings. Avoid dark recesses or concealed corners adjacent to pedestrian routes if possible.

3. Providing good standards of lighting by:

- Choosing lighting that illuminates pedestrian areas as well as roads





- Providing consistently placed, high quality lighting which will not conflict with planting or create large areas of shadow



4. Ensuring that there is plenty of activity by:

- Designing pedestrian/cycling routes to ensure that they will be well used to prevent them becoming isolated and unsafe



- Designing pedestrian routes so that they run alongside vehicular routes and are highly visible



- Locating and designing parks so that they are overlooked by roads and houses



- Encouraging a mix of uses so that space is used throughout the day and the evening e.g. a mix of offices, residential and restaurants



Other important components of CPTED

People will feel vulnerable in situations where they could be trapped in a space with a potential attacker. These sorts of spaces include: pedestrian/cycling routes which run through underpasses, tunnels or cuttings alongside limited access roads; or between properties with high sided walls where there is no means of escape.



5. Avoiding potential entrapment situations by:

- Providing alternative pedestrian/cycling routes so people do not have to take unsafe routes
- Clear signage can be used to warn people of potential entrapment spots



6. Keeping up a good appearance

Places which are run down and neglected tend to feel less safe. Regular maintenance of buildings and garden areas along with the removal of graffiti and litter all help to make people feel more comfortable in outdoor spaces.



7. Clear Ownership

People have a proprietary interest in their own property. Where there is no clear ownership of space, offenders can be indistinguishable from legitimate users. Damage to property is less likely if it is clear who owns it, therefore communal or “left over spaces” which no-one assumes ownership of are best avoided.

8. Not everywhere can be safe

It would be impossible to make everywhere feel safe and the experience of our environment would likely be poorer if we did. Some areas will be “off limits” particularly at night. People who do not feel safe in these areas should be able to choose not to go there and have access to an alternative safe route.

This is the first in a series of leaflets giving guidance to designers, property owners and decision makers about how to reduce the fear of crime in our environment.

Other leaflets in this series are:

2. How Can Residents Help To Make Their Neighbourhood Feel Safer?
3. How Can We Make Our Parks, Reserves And Waterways Feel Safer?
4. How Can We Make Our Streets And Car Parks Feel Safer?

Future leaflets are intended to cover:

- How Can Designers And Developers Make New Subdivisions Feel Safer?
- How Can Designers And Developers Of Buildings Help To Make Our Environment Feel Safer?
- How Can We Make Our Main Streets And Local Shops Feel Safer?
- How Can Designers, Developers And Managers Make New Shopping Malls Feel Safer?
- How Can We Make Our Central City Feel Safer?
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2. HOW CAN RESIDENTS HELP TO MAKE THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD FEEL SAFER?

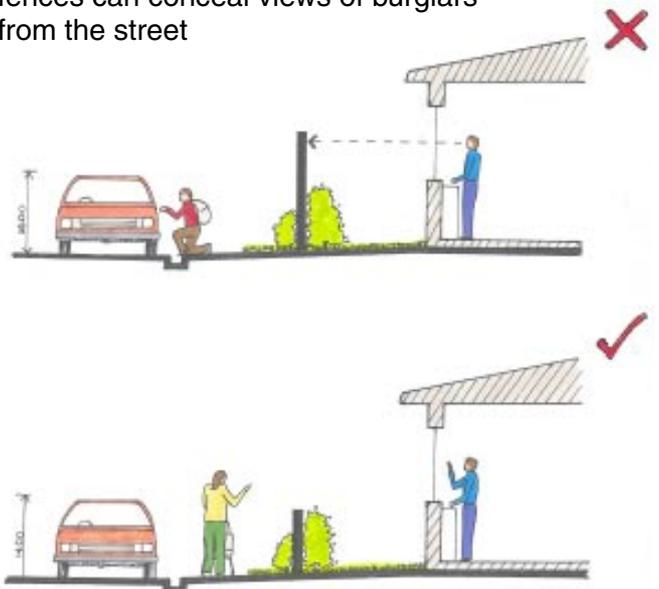


People naturally wish to live in environments where they feel safe and not vulnerable to crime. Where people are being (or think they may be being) watched, they are usually less likely to commit a crime. Residents can help to make their neighbourhood feel safer by watching out for each other and joining a Neighbourhood Support Group.

Things to do on your own property:

Ensure that you have a clear view of the street and that passers by can see you by:

- Keeping fences between front windows and the street low (below 1.4m) or having see through fences (railings) as high fences can conceal views of burglars from the street





- Ensuring that trees and shrubbery do not obstruct the view of the street from the house



Make sure your house and garden are well maintained to convey an appearance of occupation, and to minimise places where offenders could hide. Ensure that there are no hiding places on your property where offenders could trap unsuspecting pedestrians.

Examples of hiding places include:



- large bushes which overhang the footpath

Planting thorny plants such as: Roses e.g. 'Yellow Mermaid' (well suited to training along a wall with plentiful bright yellow flowers and robust thorns), Purple Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Chinese Holly Grape (*Mahonia lomariifolia*) under ground floor windows may also help to deter burglars.



Ensure that your house number is clear and easily visible to assist with locating your house in emergencies.

Ways in which you and your neighbours can make your neighbourhood feel safer

Co-operation with, and concern for neighbours is a simple yet successful way of increasing the security and well-being of neighbourhoods. Neighbours don't have to intrude into each other's business or even be great friends to make the neighbourhood safer.

Know who should be in and around your immediate neighbour's properties and be prepared to ask questions of strangers. Keep watch on suspicious strangers by:

- Writing down their description and noting the time and date
- Writing down the registration numbers of unfamiliar vehicles
- Reporting anything suspicious to your local police station
- Keeping an eye on homes that are vacant during holidays and during the day

Approach new neighbours and welcome them. Swap names and telephone numbers with neighbours and agree to assist each other (refer to sample template insert for a way of doing this).



Get to know your neighbours and let parents know that their children can come to you for help if necessary.

When your neighbours are away you can help give the appearance of occupancy and reduce the chance of random holiday burglary by:

- Clearing mail and papers
- Parking a car up the drive



- Keeping lawns mowed

- Watering gardens and lawn in summer
- Using vacant clotheslines
- Turning on lights and television at night
- Drawing curtains at night and opening them in the day
- Watching their home... question strangers but don't mention that the neighbours are away



Form a Neighbourhood Support Group

Neighbourhood Support groups have been in existence in New Zealand since 1979. Originally a Police initiative, Neighbourhood Support used to concentrate mainly on neighbourhood crime, such as burglary and theft of vehicles. Since 2001 the Police are no longer the driving force behind Neighbourhood Support. It is now a standalone organisation, working in partnership with Police, Civil Defence and the NZ Fire Service. The emphasis is now on all facets of community safety, not just crime.

The aim of Neighbourhood Support is to make our homes, streets, neighbourhoods and communities safer and more caring places in which to live.

A Neighbourhood Support group can:

- Encourage neighbours to talk to each other
- Foster a sense of community spirit, where everyone is respected and valued
- Identify the needs of all neighbourhood members
- Identify the strengths and skills of all neighbourhood members
- Empower and educate neighbours to take responsibility for their own safety
- Support victims of crime
- Minimise burglaries in the local area
- Reduce graffiti and vandalism
- Reduce all types of violence, including family violence
- Enhance the safety features and appearance of the neighbourhood
- Encourage the sharing of information that will help reduce the risk and fear of crime
- Decide on ways to handle any civil emergencies (fire, earthquake etc) that might occur
- Liaise and co-operate with other community groups
- Know when and how to contact Police and other emergency services or support agencies

A neighbourhood support group is especially valuable for older people and those who live alone. They gain comfort from knowing that help is nearby. The good news is that these groups don't take a lot of time or involve a lot of work. A neighbourhood support group is free and it works.



Members of the groups display Neighbourhood Support stickers on their windows and letterboxes, and larger signs are attached to power poles. This sends a very powerful message to criminals that there is an active group and they tend to go away. Additionally, the groups have a contact list which is distributed among the members (*refer to the sample template attached*).

If you wish to set up a Neighbourhood Support group or want further information, contact either your local Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator at Christchurch 341 5829 or nationwide at: Freephone: 0800 4 NEIGHBOURS (0800 4634442) or your local Community Constable at the nearest Police Station.

This is the second in a series of leaflets giving guidance to designers, property owners and decision makers about how to reduce the fear of crime in our environment.

Other leaflets in this series are:

1. What Is "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED)?
3. How Can We Make Our Parks, Reserves And Waterways Feel Safer?
4. How Can We Make Our Streets And Car Parks Feel Safer?

Future leaflets are intended to cover:

- How Can Designers And Developers Make New Subdivisions Feel Safer?
- How Can Designers And Developers Of Buildings Help To Make Our Environment Feel Safer?
- How Can We Make Our Main Streets And Local Shops Feel Safer?
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3. HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR PARKS, RESERVES AND WATERWAYS FEEL SAFER?

Parks, reserves and routes alongside waterways are often perceived as being unsafe areas, especially after dark. The application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles can help to increase the usage of these areas and decrease the fear of crime.

The safety of parks, reserves and waterways will be affected by:

- Their location and layout
- Their relationship with surrounding activities
- The activities contained within them
- The design and location of landscaping and structures within them

1. General

Good planning and design contributes to increased usage, a good relationship between public and private spaces and maximised informal surveillance.

This can be achieved by:

- Locating parks so that they can be easily seen from surrounding houses and streets





- Locating high use elements, such as toilets, playgrounds, and main paths, so that they are visible from adjoining streets, houses, and from within the park



- Avoiding the use of high solid fences along park and waterway edges
- Using fencing that is of a low or 'open' (transparent style of construction) where fencing is required



- Providing facilities for activities which attract people into parks and reserves, and encourage them to stay longer, e.g. BBQ facilities
- Providing a range of recreational opportunities and spaces in order to ensure activity throughout the day and a range of users (for example, passive open grassed areas as well as active areas such as sports facilities)



Encourage a sense of ownership of the park by:

- Involving surrounding residents and property owners in the design (or redesign) and ongoing management of the park
- Setting up an “Adopt a Park” scheme and encouraging the reporting of vandalism
- Providing pedestrian gates in residential fences bordering reserves

2. Pathways

Pedestrian access ways can enhance the function of public open spaces, but they need to be carefully designed and located.

Pathways can be made to feel safer by:

- Ensuring the provision of adequate sight lines along the route
- Avoiding dense planting of tall shrubs within 2 metres of either side of pathways

Help to make people feel safer in a park by:



- Avoiding areas of potential entrapment or concealment along the pathway

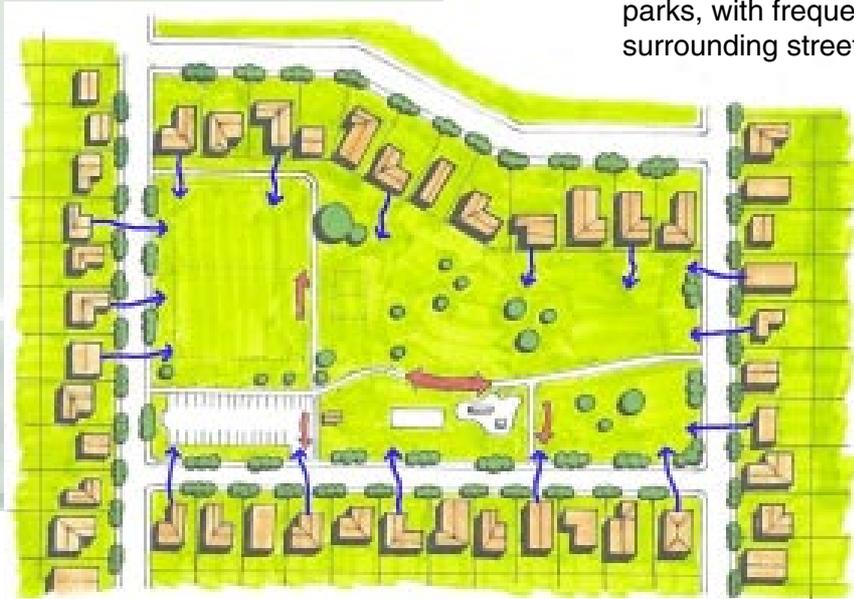




- Directing people through safe areas with good signage and lighting



- Providing at least one safe route through parks, with frequent 'escape routes' back to surrounding streets and car park areas



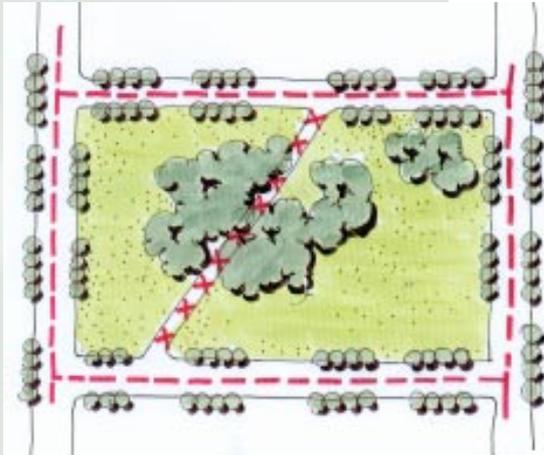
- Safe route
- Escape routes
- Lines of sight



3. Lighting

Use of parks at night should be discouraged and only paths that are essential designated routes should be lit. However lighting alone will not make parks or a route safer. Lighting should be carefully considered and combined with other safety design measures.

Lighting can be used to make parks feel safer by:



- Providing lighting only where the use of a path is essential at all times
- Encouraging the use of alternative safe routes by locking park gates, or by not lighting parks at night



- Providing lighting which is consistent along the path and at a high level shining down rather than at eye level, which creates glare and prevents pedestrians from seeing beyond the lighting



- Locating lighting at a height that prevents access and tampering, or using vandal-proof fittings where lighting is provided at a lower level
- Ensuring lighting levels permit users to recognise and identify a face at least 25 metres away

Consider security lighting for all accessible areas including the car park area. Security lighting should be movement and sound activated and carefully positioned to ensure that it will be effective. Care should be taken to prevent lighting causing unwelcome glare in neighbouring properties.

4. Planting and Maintenance

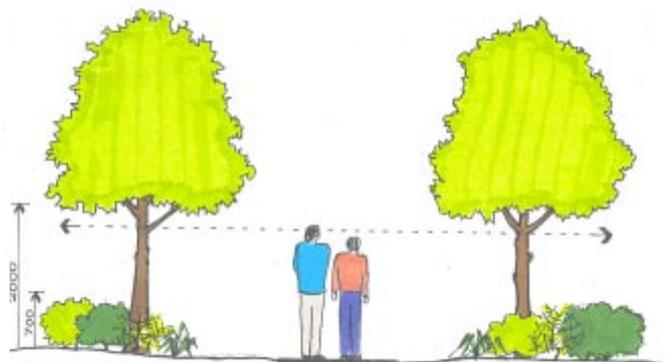
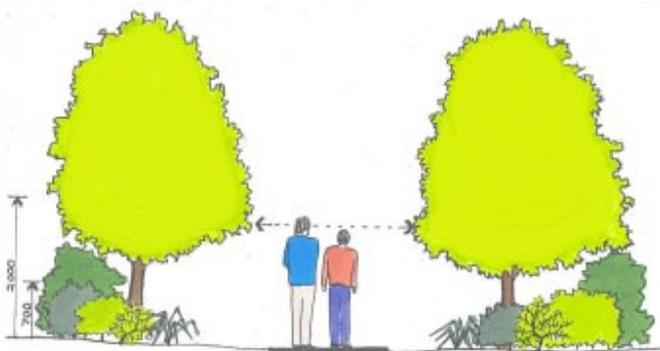
Planting and fencing provide an amenity and safety function, but care should be taken to ensure they do not block views, or create 'hiding places' and entrapment spots. A neglected space is likely to invite anti-social behaviour and will feel unsafe. Particular care should be taken when considering the area around toilet facilities.

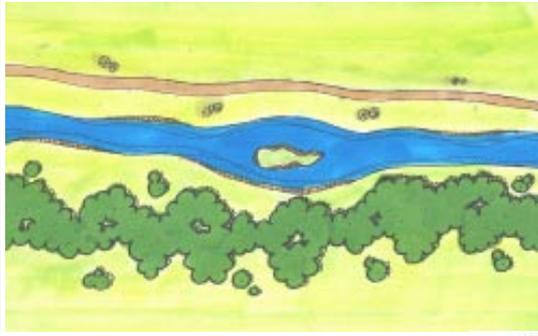
Parks, reserves and waterways can be made to feel safer by:

- Ensuring good visibility, with toilet doors opening directly onto public space and planting kept low



- Ensuring that planting does not obscure lighting or views by avoiding plants or shrubs that block the field of vision between 700 mm to 2000 mm above ground level
- Pruning trees regularly to ensure clear trunks and avoid obscuring visibility





- Avoiding potential hiding places through appropriate planting design and incorporating thorny plants into planting mixes
- Using water as a natural barrier between paths and vegetation

5. Seating

Careful choice and location of seating can help to make public open spaces more popular and increase safety.

This can be achieved by:



- Placing seating in locations which are visible from the park or surrounding streets



- Locating seats so that they face the pathway as a path going along the back of a seat may make a person who sits there feel uncomfortable or unsafe





- Planning seating layouts to encourage social interaction and casual surveillance

6. Signs

Signs can help to make people feel safer in a park or reserve by:

- Providing well placed direction information signs



- Using symbols, maps and diagrams to assist users
- Designing signs to be clear for people with disabilities and speakers of other languages
- Using signs which indicate routes so users know their destination



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4. HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR STREETS AND CAR PARKS FEEL SAFER?

The street space and car parks have traditionally been designed to meet the needs of drivers and to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are protected from accidents involving vehicles. However these spaces also make up a major part of the outdoor environment, in which people should be able to be safe and feel safe from crime. The application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles can help to make our streets and car parks feel safer.

1. Pedestrian and cycling routes

Footpaths and cycle-ways can be designed to feel safer by:

- Providing a clear line of sight along the length of the footpath or cycle-way





- Co-ordinating lighting and tree planting to ensure that there is no obstruction of lighting

- Providing consistent lighting of sufficient quantity and quality along the length of the footpaths and cycleways
- Clearly marking the entry and exit points of recreational routes and discouraging their use after dark, e.g. by not providing lighting



- Ensuring routes are well marked and signposted, e.g. "Path through to North Road"



- Locating footpaths and cycle-ways alongside roads rather than segregating them



- Providing bicycle parking in spaces that can be informally viewed from streets and buildings
- Alleyways between properties often feel unsafe and are frequently subject to vandalism.
- Alleyways can be made to feel safer by:
- Encouraging the use of low or see-through fencing on either side of the alleyway



- Closing some alleyways so that pedestrian activity is concentrated on only a few of them
- Taking the opportunity to widen or straighten alleyways by acquiring adjoining properties



Under-passes/tunnels create fear in many users, and therefore are best avoided wherever possible. Over-bridges tend to feel safer but must also be carefully designed to avoid users feeling unsafe, or encouraging people to cross roads in unsafe places.

Where under-passes or over-bridges are required they can be designed to feel safer by:

- Designing the under-pass or over-bridge to be as wide, short and straight as possible to allow clear sightlines through
- Providing good levels of lighting



- Providing open or transparent sides to over-bridges to allow surveillance

- Providing and maintaining good lighting
- Locating under-passes and over-bridges in positions where surveillance is possible from surrounding buildings and roads

2. Bus Stops

People use bus stops at various times of the day and night and as in any public space, may feel unsafe.

Bus stops can be made to feel safer by:



- Ensuring users are clearly visible from the street and adjacent buildings

- Locating bus stops in well lit areas



- Avoiding siting bus stops in places where there are potential entrapment sites nearby, e.g. vacant land, alleyways, or buildings set back from the street



- Erecting information signs showing routes and times of departure
- Ensuring that timetables are easy to read and up to date

- Including an identifying number on the bus stop with a phone number for reporting vandalism
- Keeping bus stops well maintained

3. Car Parks

Inadequately lit or isolated parking areas are potential areas for crime. These areas can be improved by:

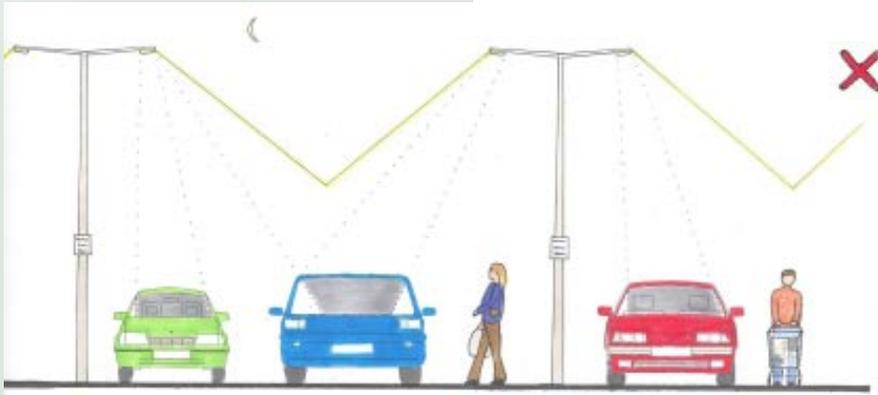
- Locating parking in areas which are highly visible and can be overlooked



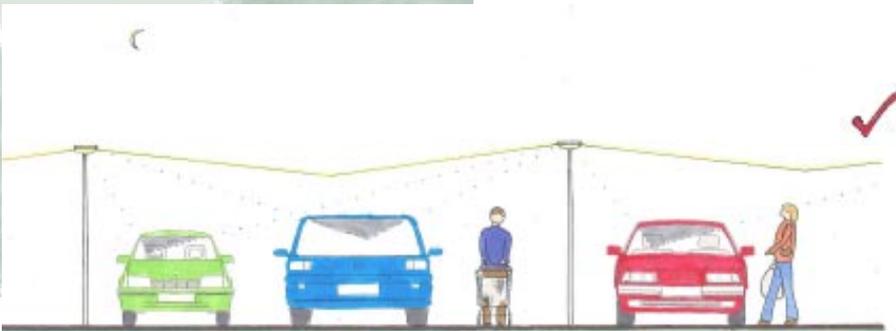
- Ensuring planting in or around car parks does not provide opportunities for concealing potential offenders



- Providing clear pedestrian paths through car parks which lead directly to streets, shops and other facilities
- Locking car parks which are not used at night
- Lighting paths to and from parking areas which are used at night and ensuring paths are highly visible
- Providing adequate lighting to allow clear visibility without shadowed areas



- Providing adequate lighting to enable users to see into their car before entering



- Ensuring lighting and signs are well placed to allow easy location of vehicles when returning to them



- Providing frequent, clearly visible entry, exit and directional signs which are lit at night if necessary



- Erecting signs to remind people to lock their vehicles and keep valuables out of sight
- Relaxing parking restrictions after dark so that people can park close to where they are working or visiting
- Locating emergency telephones in large parking areas
- Ensuring that staff working after dark are not required to walk alone to isolated parking areas

4. Parking Buildings

Poorly designed parking buildings can feel unsafe both for users and passers by. They can be improved by:

- Designing parking buildings to be as open and light as possible by painting the interior walls with a light colour to reflect available light and to increase visibility
- Designing parking buildings to have high ceilings and minimising the space obscured by columns
- Providing clear pedestrian paths through the building, which are sited away from columns or other potential hiding places for offenders
- Providing adequate lighting

Ensure that car parking buildings do not present blank facades to the street so that stretches of street are not overlooked. This can be achieved by:

- Having railings or low planting along the frontage instead of a blank wall, or;



- Locating other activities at street level, such as shops or apartments

Where planting is used along the street frontage of a car parking building, care should be taken to maintain planting at a height which will not obscure views in and out of the building.

Parking Buildings can also be made to feel safer by:

- Locating lifts and stairwells where they are highly visible, and providing security measures in lifts or locking lifts at night
- Placing parking attendants' booths in areas where they can see and be seen
- Clearly marking exits, main routes and parking levels with distinctive, visual reference points, e.g. colours or symbols
- Installing lights with protection against breakage
- Installing emergency telephones in large parking buildings
- Considering other means of summoning assistance, e.g. panic buttons, security cameras, and/or sound monitoring.
- Installing toilets only if they are going to be supervised



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Acknowledgements

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