

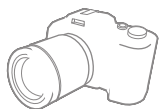
Stop graffiti vandalism

Fact sheet 5 - Preventing graffiti vandalism – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

WHAT IS CPTED?

CPTED stands for “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design”.

CPTED involves the application of a range of design principles to an area or site to minimise the potential for that site to facilitate and support criminal behaviour. It is based on the premise that the environment may influence people’s behaviour. CPTED principles are ideally incorporated at the design stage of a development, but can also be applied to existing developments and areas where crime and safety are a concern.



SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance involves the design of facilities to maximise visibility of the site. Maximising casual surveillance increases a sense of safety and can deter criminal activity. This can be achieved by ensuring that adequate sightlines and lighting exist, and by increasing the number of people actively using an area.

Designing in sightlines

Places can be made more attractive and less vulnerable to graffiti vandalism and other crimes by ensuring good sightlines throughout an area. Vegetation and landscaping should be maintained to facilitate surveillance. Shrubbery and trees should be lower than 60cm or have crowns higher than 1.8 metres. Blind spots and sharp corners should be minimised and gathering areas should be located in areas that offer natural surveillance and access control.

Appropriate lighting

Lighting in well used areas may deter offenders by increasing the risk of apprehension. Lighting should be uniform and not create glare. It should also be placed at a height and location to reduce graffiti vandalism. In some cases additional lighting may actually attract graffiti vandalism in isolated or remote locations as it provides lighting for the offender to see their work. Lighting that works on motion detectors may increase the chances of detection and further deter graffiti vandalism in these locations.

Natural surveillance and formal observation

Areas with a high risk of graffiti vandalism should be visible from roads, footpaths and neighbouring buildings. Landscaping should be designed to enhance sightlines. This will allow users of a space to see what is happening around them. Formal observation involves

the use of techniques such as the placement of a reception desk in a location that facilitates surveillance. Other examples include rostering parks maintenance staff to tend to an area at vulnerable times (such as after school), or requesting neighbouring businesses/residents to call police if there is suspicious activity.

The use of CCTV to prevent graffiti vandalism is a complex decision. The independent evaluation of the NSW Guidelines on the Implementation of CCTV in Public Spaces concluded that CCTV may be effective in some situations, but the lack of systematic evaluations does not allow firm conclusions about effectiveness, or the specific circumstances in which CCTV has been most effective. Also, balanced against reports of effectiveness must be potential drawbacks of CCTV, such as privacy issues, community expectations of police response to crimes heightened beyond the capacity to deliver, crime displacement and CCTV schemes themselves becoming the target for vandalism.



ACCESS CONTROL

Access control is used to deny offenders access to locations prone to graffiti vandalism and guide legitimate users safely through the environment. Access control can be comprised of physical barriers that prevent access, or symbolic barriers that indicate that access is restricted – this means that people in the controlled area are seen by others to be breaking the rules for that area.

Controlling access to areas

Ensure there are clear transitional zones from public to semi-public, to private space such as a change in level, a garden bed or a change in paving. Fences, rails, and other barriers can be used to discourage or deny access. Limit access to roofs and higher stories by moving bins and other items away from walls and covering drainpipes to prevent offenders from scaling them.

Controlling access to ‘canvases’

If graffiti ‘canvases’ cannot be altered to reduce attractiveness for graffiti vandals, landscaping should cover them. Good advice is necessary to ensure that the vegetation will not damage the building by attaching to walls or by root invasion. Landscaping should be both high enough to cover accessible parts of the wall and wide enough to deter access. Natives and other plants, which are uncomfortable to be close to, may improve access control. Pebbles and other ground covers can be used in areas where the creation of noise will alert

a response. Care should be taken to ensure that these items are not used to further vandalise areas by being used as projectiles. Community art, especially mosaics may be useful when landscaping is not an appropriate solution. Mosaics provide a bright and colourful surface which is textured to prevent graffiti vandalism and is relatively easy to clean if it does occur.

Controlling graffiti tools

NSW has legislation that discourages theft of spraycans by determining rules for display and that controls access to spraycans by people under the age of 18. All retailers that stock spraycans, including hardware and discount shops should abide by this legislation. Additionally, individuals can help to prevent access to spray paints by ensuring that any cans stored on their property are secured against theft and disposed of carefully.

TERRITORIALITY



Using physical features and activities to express ownership and control of the environment is called 'territoriality'. It can be used to promote pride in the environment and discourage offending behaviour.

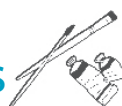
Safe and well used spaces

Areas that are well designed, safe and enjoyable will be highly used by the community. This creates a vibrant area that is less susceptible to graffiti vandalism. Activity generators such as cafés, play equipment and public art will encourage legitimate use. Signage and clear pathways can be used to remove excuses for being in restricted areas.

Increasing reporting of graffiti vandalism

In areas with high levels of territoriality, suspicious behaviour (such as people accessing rooftops) will be obvious and more likely to be reported. Reporting graffiti vandalism to the police will help local police to better plan their patrols and use of resources. Reporting the graffiti vandalism to the property owner allows them to be aware of the crime and remove it as soon as possible.

GRAFFITI RESISTANT MATERIALS



Planners, builders and architects can play a vital role in reducing graffiti vandalism by designing places that are attractive, foster a sense of ownership, have excellent sightlines and are comprised of graffiti resistant materials.

Material

Construction and design materials used in areas vulnerable to graffiti vandalism should be easy to clean. Porous materials should be sealed or an anti-graffiti

coating used. Options include: vitreous-enamel panels or glazed ceramic tiles from which graffiti washes off; wired glass that can be cleaned with scrapers; polyester film over glass; plastic laminates, which make for easier cleaning; and signs with surfaces resistant to marker pens and spray paint.

Texture

The texture of potential canvases can reduce attractiveness as a surface for graffiti vandalism. By incorporating open form designs the size of available canvas is reduced and surveillance may be increased. Pool style fencing, steel mesh and latticework are examples of this. Irregular texture finishes such as roughly rendered brick can deter graffiti vandalism when used in combination with other strategies, however maintenance can be more difficult.

Surface colour

Although graffiti vandalism can occur on any coloured surface, the application of light coloured paint over a dark colour is more difficult and expensive for the offender and easier to effectively paint over. The use of standard colours will provide for more effective and rapid maintenance.

MAINTENANCE



Ongoing maintenance allows the continued use of areas for their intended purpose and maintains the effectiveness of other measures. Maintenance may include regular tree trimming to preserve surveillance, routinely monitoring locations prone to graffiti vandalism, implementing rapid removal policies and ensuring access control mechanisms are functioning. This approach directly addresses the motives of many offenders by reducing the notoriety associated with graffiti vandalism's visibility.

Conducting publicity campaigns

On their own, publicity campaigns are of limited effectiveness. Programs that focus on issues of reporting and removing graffiti vandalism, or highlight the activity as a crime may have some impact on the activities of the broader community. Publicity of anti-graffiti vandalism measures and successes may improve the perception of an area and provide a deterrent to offenders. Care should be taken to avoid glorifying graffiti vandalism or creating a sense of retribution in vandals, which may lead to an increase in graffiti vandalism.

Community education

Contact your local police crime prevention officer (CPO) who can provide you with the current strategies that police are undertaking in their area. The CPO can also undertake community education if the need arises.



Contact us: