

School Safety and Emergency Management

Monthly Minute: Crime Prevention

February 2026

Monthly Minute is a newsletter providing insight and tips on potential threats and hazards brought to you by the Oregon Department of Education.



A school that is well prepared for any emergency should regularly assess their environmental risks and take steps to reduce them—including the risk of criminal activity and the harm it can cause to our students and our facilities. In this edition of the Monthly Minute, we will talk about a little-known acronym that can have a big impact on your school's safety: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, or CPTED. It might sound complex, but CPTED involves some fairly simple concepts that schools can practice to prevent criminal activity.

A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggested that violence

perpetration was lower and perceived safety was higher in schools that did more to incorporate CPTED principles. A simple way to think about CPTED is this: a clean and well-kept property that demonstrates pride of ownership in the community will go a long way toward discouraging criminal activity. Keeping your school well maintained will communicate to others that disruptive or disorderly behavior is not tolerated. Lighting and signage can help deter unwanted behavior, as will prominent security cameras and clean walkways.

CPTED is a practice that requires looking at the whole school environment to find ways to reduce crime and property destruction while promoting pride in the school community. It's not just security cameras and locked doors; it is also keeping buildings and grounds clean and neat. It's making sure to have adequate lighting and good visibility. It's making sure that each school campus sends the message that bad behavior is not acceptable.

A good place to start is with a quick, **30-Minute Safety and Security Site Assessment**. Grab the checklist linked here and conduct a walk around your school grounds paying attention to each of the identified areas. If an item is out of place, or a door requires maintenance, mark it down and make sure it gets fixed.

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This Month... Conduct a Lockdown Drill this month. Be on the lookout for environmental hazards, both inside your school and outside.

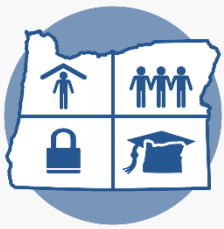
Up Next... March's Monthly Minute will talk about reunification following a disaster. Conduct an Evacuate Drill next month.



Conduct a Lockdown Drill in February.



Evacuate! (A location may be specified)



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Sometimes, no matter how diligent we may be with CPTED principles, criminal activity occurs anyway. Often when we least expect it. Practice your Lockout drill at an inconvenient time this month. It's okay if it's not perfect this time if your school is able to improve the practice for next time.



Lockdown! Locks, lights, out of sight



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The following are some additional and often ignored considerations when applying the concepts of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design:

- Keep the grass cut and the bushes trimmed back—an orderly appearance tends to discourage unwanted behavior and trimmed foliage can reduce hiding spots for criminal activity.
- Ensure dumpsters are in a controlled area.
- Install and maintain lighting around your facilities—particularly in areas you don't want trespassing or vandalism.
- Make sure portables and other remote buildings are secured and that they are visible from the main building;

install screens under portables to limit access.

- Be aware of what is happening on adjacent properties and ensure a clear delineation between those properties and school grounds.
- Routinely check and maintain perimeter fencing.
- Quickly repair broken windows and keep the exterior in good order.

Conducting a comprehensive walkthrough of your school grounds will help you identify where maintenance or cleaning are needed. Routine checks will also help you identify other vulnerabilities.

Connect with the SSEM team for help with safety assessments and for ways to apply CPTED concepts to improve the safety of your whole school community. Check the links below for additional resources.

Contact Information



Scan or click the QR code to visit the School Safety and Emergency Management website with additional school emergency preparedness resources, and to **sign up for the monthly training** and technical assistance sessions.

Resources

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency **K-12 security guide**.

SSEM 30-Minute Site Assessment form.

CDC resources on community and youth violence prevention.

Oregon Emergency Management **local contacts list**.