



Justice

## **NSW CAR PARK GUIDELINES FOR CRIME PREVENTION**

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For use in publicly owned car parks in NSW



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## 1. PURPOSE

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The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline for car park owners and operators to improve the safety and security of their car parks, specifically in relation to the prevention of theft from motor vehicles.

These can be used as a guideline for:

- Routine maintenance
- Minor works
- Upgrades / renewal

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the current Australian Standards and Austroads *Guide to Traffic Management*.

## 2. SUMMARY

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A good car park draws upon Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles of surveillance, access control and space and activity management.

- Natural surveillance is when you can see and be seen by others. Layout, orientation, landscaping, use of security and patrols, and lighting of the car park all contribute to this.
- Access control: defined boundaries and clear delineation of vehicle and pedestrian access increase the time and effort associated with a crime.
- Space and activity management: encourage legitimate use of space and respect for the space.
- Maintenance and general upkeep of the facility: a well-managed facility can contribute to the amenity and lawful use of the car park.

### 3. NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

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#### 3.1 Sightlines

- Configure the layout so cars are parked in grid like rows to allow for good sightlines between vehicles and through the car park. Do this in a way to maximise sightlines from areas with the most pedestrian and vehicular traffic, such as a nearby business or street.
- Trim or remove foliage that is blocking sightlines into and through the car park. Any landscaping should be above head height, below waist height and set back from pedestrian pathways.



Landscaping should not block lines of sight. Photo: DJ

- Remove or block secluded areas or hidden recesses, such as areas under stairs.
- Ensure there is minimal obstruction to lines of sight including vehicles, pillars and concrete columns.

Clear sightlines help to reduce concealment opportunities for offenders. Be mindful that would be perpetrators can hide between vehicles, behind pillars, air conditioner units, bins, etc. Offset sections of the car park can restrict ability to see all cars and areas in the car park. Grid like rows will help to enhance the natural surveillance of the area restricting blocked sightlines.



Minimal obstruction to sightlines. Photo: DJ

### 3.2 Surveillance

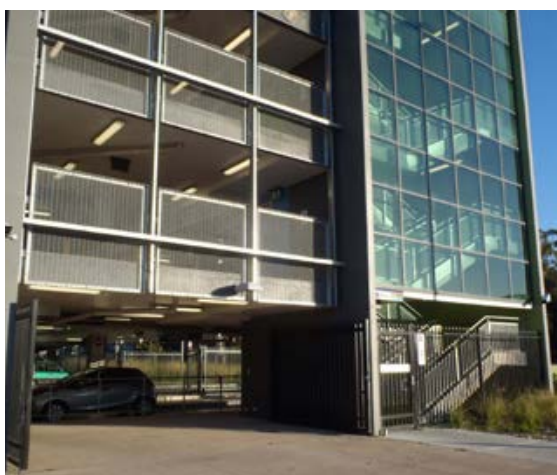
- Provide a mixture of long term and short term parking to enhance natural surveillance where practical.

Vehicles parked in long stay parking are more vulnerable to crime than vehicles in shorter term parking. Short term parking can result in larger numbers of cars entering and exiting the car park, which assists in providing natural surveillance. There are often patrols by rangers on limited parking areas, which also provides semi-formal surveillance of the car park.

- Incorporate additional security for long term parking areas, such as patrols.
- Locate long term parking areas in the most visible location in the car park.
- Incorporate business activity within, or near, the car park, such as a car wash.

Businesses operating within or near the car park can provide guardianship and encourage legitimate activity.

- Ensure facilities, such as public toilets, are monitored, regularly patrolled and located in areas where maximum surveillance is offered.
- Schedule maintenance at the most vulnerable times for offending, as the maintenance staff are a form of surveillance.
- Multi-storey car parks should have open sides rather than solid blank walls.



No solid walls. Photos: DJ

### 3.3 Lighting

(Recommend the engagement of a lighting designer / engineer.)

- Lighting should at least meet minimum requirements under Australian Standards (AS 1158 for external lighting and AS 1680 for interior lighting).
- Light fixtures should be reliable, easy to maintain, able to withstand the elements and vandal resistant.
- Incorporate lighting into a regular maintenance plan so as to ensure lights are working, maintaining lux levels and are not obstructed in any way by signs, landscaping or other objects.
- When selecting and positioning light fixtures, be considerate of glare. Also consider the brightness of the light and effect of passing from light to dark areas.

- White' light is best for natural surveillance as it allows for clarity of vision. Parked cars can be identified by colour and other details, which is important for crime reporting. Direct lighting to the car park so that guardians or passers-by can see inside the area. Ensure the lighting extends to the edges of the parking areas, not just vehicle and pedestrian routes.
- Paint the car park interior white. This can assist lighting to be effective and can save money through lower wattage demand.
- Lights should be bright enough to enable the rear seat of a parked vehicle to be seen before entering and enable the face of a person to be seen 15 metres away.
- Ensure there is sufficient lighting to complement the CCTV system (if in place) so that images are captured.
- Consider the use of sensor lights in certain darker areas.

Lighting plays an important role in preventing crime. It improves visibility and can increase the risk of offender detection. Good levels of lighting are an important factor in reducing the fear of crime. It can change community perception of an area, which can lead to increased usage and facilitates informal surveillance.



Photos: DJ

### 3.4 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

(The use of CCTV can be considered where feasible. To be an effective crime prevention tool, cameras must be monitored.)

- Install a quality, vandal resistant system which staff are thoroughly trained to use.
- Display signage identifying that CCTV is operating.
- Ensure the cameras are installed so as to maximise surveillance opportunities.
- Ensure the camera views are not obstructed by anything such as landscaping or signposts.
- Ensure that cameras are constantly, actively monitored in close proximity to the site. If a crime is occurring this can make it possible for a perpetrator to be apprehended or interrupted.
- Camera feeds should be recorded and stored.

## 4. ACCESS CONTROL

### 4.1 Vehicle access

Vehicle access control helps to reduce the opportunity for unauthorised entry.

- Provide a dedicated singular point of entry and a dedicated singular point of exit to the car park.



Dedicated entry point. Photo: DJ



Visible stairway, open design. Photo: DJ

- Install boom gates, ticketed entry, one-way spikes or other access control devices to regulate vehicle movement.
- Locate entry and exit points in close proximity to guardians in the car park, such as ticket sellers / machines, businesses, or other adjoining properties.
- Provide clear line marking or parking spaces and clearly number or colour-code the parking bays.

This is important for way finding in the car park and reduces the car park users vulnerability.

- Install black or dark green see-through fencing around the perimeter of the car park.

Areas that have clear boundaries and perimeters provide ownership cues which means an area is less likely to be used improperly. Installing a fence around the perimeter of the car park clearly defines the boundary.



Dark coloured, see-through fencing. Photo: DJ

## 4.2 Pedestrian access

- Provide minimal number of pedestrian access / exit points
- Provide clearly marked, open, visible pedestrian access ways within the car park to busy destination points.
- Maintain landscaping along and near pedestrian access ways to ensure clear sightlines. Any landscaping should be above head height, below waist height and set back from pedestrian pathways.

Thefts can be reduced when pedestrian access is limited. Pedestrian paths on the borders can provide undetected entry and escape routes. Deflecting people from using the car park as a thoroughfare can reduce excuse making opportunities for a perpetrator.



Clearly marked pedestrian path. Photo: DJ



Landscaping low for clear sightlines. Photo: DJ

## 4.3 Design

- Delineate the boundary and perimeter of the car park in some way. This could be through low shrubbery or dark coloured, see-through fencing around the perimeter of the car park.
- Implement circular movement of traffic around the car park so that vehicles cannot simply take the shortest route to and from the entry and exit.

Circular movement of traffic provides more constant natural surveillance of the car park.

- Clearly mark the car park with the name and street address.

This is important for the correct and thorough recording of incidents of crime to protect the integrity of crime data and allow for appropriate follow up action.





Car park address clearly stated. Photo: DJ

## 5. SPACE AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

- Clearly number or colour-code the floor levels and parking bays.



Coloured and numbered bays. Photos: DJ

- Ensure a regular maintenance plan is in place including rubbish removal, graffiti removal, repair of light fixtures, maintenance of lux levels, trimming of vegetation and other necessary repairs.

This can provide informal surveillance as the maintenance crew make their way around the car park. Evidence of crime can have a negative impact on the reputation of the car park and people's perception of safety. Evidence of criminal activity may also encourage and foster further criminal activity in the area.

- Where feasible, incorporate business activity within, or near, the car park, such as a car wash.
- All staff should undergo crime awareness training - what is suspicious behaviour and what are the reporting procedures for the location.
- Crime statistics for the car park should be monitored by management and should inform crime prevention initiatives such as the timing and frequency of security patrols.

## 5.1 Signage

- Highly visible (should be able to be seen clearly at night – use reflective material)
- Advise users of installed security measures and where to find them (such as help points or intercom systems)
- Reminds people to secure their vehicle and remove valuables. These signs should be simple to understand – use of images is best.

Information to remind people to protect their belongings can result in them concealing or removing items that may be vulnerable to theft, this reducing the provocation for an offender.



Reminder sign using image. Photo: DJ



Information sign. Photo: DJ

## 6. RESOURCES

The following resources can be used by owners and managers of car parks to determine where the risks of offences occurring in the car park may be. These resources complement the NSW Car Park Guidelines for Crime Prevention.

1. Multi-Storey Car Park Audit (Appendix 1).
2. At Grade Car Park Audit (Appendix 2).