



Curb Appeal: It's More Than Just Another Pretty Face

The sun is out and your property is no longer hidden, and due to your busy schedule during the fall and winter months, your property may have become a magnet for crime or suspicious activity. It's time to ask yourself, "Is my properties exterior appearance inviting to criminals, deadbeats or other unsavory characters?"

Unfortunately, many landlords surrender a majority of the control of their properties exterior upkeep to tenants. However, a Landlord is obligated to make sure the aesthetic and physical nature of the property is attractive to honest renters and unattractive to dishonest tenants. Landlords can do their part by taking on a few housekeeping items to help prevent crime from happening at the apartment or rental home, and to keep the neighborhood a desirable place to live.

The idea is simple; natural surveillance. Natural surveillance, a term coined by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, known as CPTED (pronounced "Sep Ted"); a field of knowledge developed to demonstrate that the architecture of some buildings deters crime while that of others encourages it. This concept includes exterior illumination, landscaping, and general property repairs. Replace any missing or burnt out light bulbs. Install motion-detecting fixtures if none exist. Trim all shrubs to allow visibility from both inside and outside the unit and in such a way as to not promote humans to hide behind them. Prune any tree branches

hanging below 6'. Clear the property paths of any debris to the entrance of the home and install a stone walkway or something similar to deter wandering. Make it clear to visitors where they are expected to enter the property from and have a freshly painted front door to welcome them. Maintain the fence in good repair; address graffiti immediately, replace broken sections as needed, keep pets in but leave gaps to maintain visibility to assist in preventing crime. Make sure address numbers are clearly posted for potential renters to easily find the home as well as for emergency vehicles. "No Trespassing" signage is agreeably unattractive, but that's the point of them! Simple signage is virtually effortless yet loudly conveys to others that you mean business in maintaining your real estate investment.

Taking care of these basics will make at least a psychological impression that someone cares. Crime is less likely to occur if criminals feel like they may be seen. Protect against neighborhood decay. Remember, your investment property is an extension of you.

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