

Intelligent Risk Taking



Rich Gasaway
Situational Awareness Matters!

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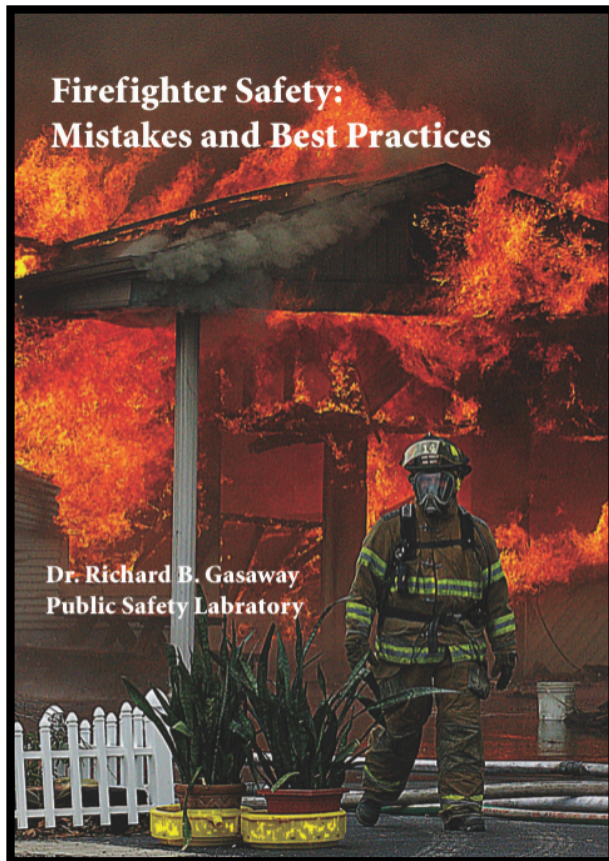
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This program is based on the highly acclaimed DVD

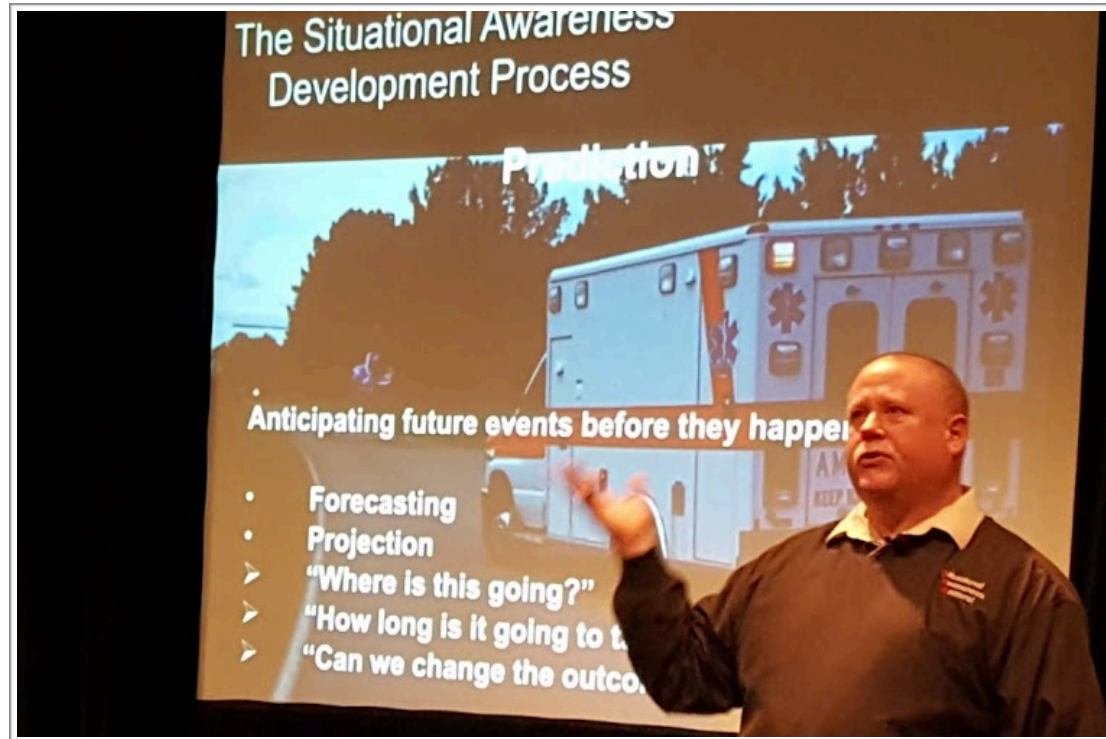
Firefighter Safety: Mistakes & Best Practices



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**If you are interested in hosting a
safety or leadership program for your
department, association or conference,
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Two kinds of risk:

Assumed Risk

Created Risk

The gamble...

Performing high-risk activities without proper staffing and equipment.

When the firefighters died...

It often happened within 7-9 minutes of arrival and there were less than 8 members on the scene.

**Where were the firefighters
when they died?**

**What were they
trying to accomplish?**

What killed them?

Flashover

Collapse

Improving your odds:

- Situational awareness.
- Know how to read the smoke and fire.
- Know how to read buildings.
- Pay attention for the signs of flashover and collapse.

The gamble...

**The person in-charge
performs hands-on activities.**

When the firefighters died...

The person who was supposed to be in-charge was
performing firefighting duties instead.

This is a tough call for the first-arriving officer.

Improving your odds:

- Ensure someone watches the big picture.
- Ensure entry crews have experienced leadership.
- Consider how long you will be operating without an exterior commander.

The gamble...

No one on-scene is designated to serve as the incident commander.

When the firefighters died...

Oftentimes there was no one was designated as being in-charge, coordinating all of the activities.

Improving your odds:

- Ensure company officers have training, experience and confidence to serve as the initial commander.
- Be cautious about delegating command to an apparatus operator.
- Don't assumed the next-in officer will take command.

The gamble...

A 360-degree size-up is not completed.

When the firefighters died...

The first arriving crew failed to complete a walk around the structure and missed critical indicators.

Improving your odds:

- Conduct a size-up prior to developing and implementing an action plan.
- Communicate your size-up to other responding companies.
- Pay attention to how fast your windows of opportunity are closing.

The gamble...

Offensive tactics used on defensive fires.

When the firefighters died...

They were often engaged in offensive operations
when the strategy should have been
defensive operations.

Improving your odds:

- Train on “no-go” tactics.
- Include decision making in training evolutions.
- Teach and discuss how to overcome fear-driven decisions & silent compliance.

The gamble...

Fighting large fires without enough water.

When the firefighters died...

They often did not have an adequate water supply or the size of their hose lines were too small to overwhelm the fire.

Improving your odds:

- Don't bring small fire habits to large fires.
- Conserving water can cause problems.
- Teach and practice hose line selection and deployment.

The gamble...

Missed or misunderstood communications.

When the firefighters died...

Often times their updates and maydays were not heard or were not understood.

Improving your odds:

- Teach (and practice) how to communicate by radio.
- Understand the pitfalls of too much radio traffic.
- Practice full-loop communications.

The gamble...

**Departments that do not have
SOPs/SOGs for high-risk activities.**

When the firefighters died...

Many times the department did not have a
common set of procedures to guide operations.
They had no playbook.

Improving your odds:

- Develop and train to a plan for high-risk high-consequence activities.
- Minimize freelance (Independent action)
- Ensure company activities are coordinated.

The gamble...

Taking shortcuts in training.

When the firefighters died...

It was often attributed to inadequate training or the training officer(s) took shortcuts when leading training sessions.

Improving your odds:

- Teach officers critical thinking and dynamic decision making skills.
- Conduct training under high-stress, realistic conditions.
- Conduct multiple company drills (and include commanders).

The gamble...

Failing to learn from
near-miss, injury and fatality events.

When the firefighters died...

The catastrophe was linked to persistent mistakes the department had been making for a long period of time.

Improving your odds:

- Be a student of near-miss, injury and fatality reports.
- Do not celebrate inappropriate risk taking.
- Watch out for complacency and over-confidence.

Take SMART risks.

Size-up

Think

Decide

Predict

Act

Handout

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SITUATIONAL **A**WARENESS **M**ATTERS!

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**Helping first responder see the bad things coming...
in time to avoid bad outcomes.**