

Do you see what I hear?

Situational Awareness for
Communications Professionals

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SAMatters

ONLINE ACADEMY



**13 courses covering situational awareness
from A-Z and everything in between.**

**The Academy is suited for individuals and teams working in
high-stress, high-consequence environments.**

**For more information, visit:
SAMatters.com**

Situational awareness

The ability to **perceive** AND **understand**
what is happening around you
(in context to how time is passing)
and then, in turn, be able to accurately
predict future events...
in time to avoid bad outcomes

Perception

Using the senses to capture information...
(clues and cues) about the current situation

- “I pay attention.”
- “I keep my head on a swivel.”
- “I look up, down, and all around.”
- “I actively listen.”
- “I conduct a size-up.”
- What’s happening right now?

Understanding

Making sense out of what is:

Seen, heard, felt, tasted & smelled

- **Comprehension**
- **Moment of clarity**
- **“What does this mean?”**
- **“Is this what I expected?”**

Sensory Conflict

Where in your brain
do you develop
your understanding?

Memory Recall

Can trigger the 6th sense.

Intuition:

Knowing...

Without

knowing...

How you know.

Prediction

Anticipating future events before they happen.

- Running mental “what if” options
 - Forecasting
 - Projections
- Begin... with the end in mind

Prediction

Anticipating future events before they happen.

- Where is this event headed?**
 - How long is it going to take to get there?**
 - Every event unfolds at a certain pace (speed)**
 - Keeping track of the passage of time.**

The ability to perceive AND understand
what is happening in your environment

(in context to how time is passing)

and then, in turn, be able to accurately
predict future events...

in time to avoid bad outcomes

Prediction

Anticipating future events before they happen.

- Setting Expectations**

- Can we change the outcome?**

- Are the conditions right?**

- Do we have the resources?**

- Can we operate faster than conditions are changing?**

- How much time do we have?**

Your Mind's Eye

Sensory inputs
+
Visual imagery
+
Memory Search
+
Forecasting

Situational Awareness Barriers

Anything that blocks:

- Perception
- Understanding
- Prediction

The 9-1-1 caller's words paint a picture of what is happening on the mind of the communications professional.

The first
“awareness”
a responder
develops about
the call comes from
the words shared by
the communications
professional.

Pre-Arrival Lens

Confirmation Bias

A responder may only see
what they expect to see...
and sometimes nothing more.

The brain can be VERY stubborn.

Multitasking

Confabulation

Short-Term Memory Overload

Time Distortion

Auditory Exclusion & Sensory Domination

Tunneled Hearing

Best Practices
to consider for improving:
Communications Professionals
and Responder
Situational Awareness

Your agency may not be able
or may not want to implement
some of these recommendations.

Prioritize based on what will give
you the greatest benefit.

Implement slowly, with a plan.

Coordinate implementation with
your response agencies.

Some of the recommendations
are for you to do, individually.

CONSIDER

Shared Situational Awareness

Talk slowly and calmly.

Don't just throw paint
on the canvas.

The words you use
and how you say
them are important.

CONSIDER

Transferring Understanding:

Information:
Volume
Complexity
Detailed

CONSIDER

As a general rule:

In high-stress,
time compressed situations...
MORE information is **NOT** better.

CONSIDER

Full communications loop

- **Connect**
 - The sender captures the receiver's attention.
- **Convey**
 - Sender states the message.
- **Clarify**
 - The receiver repeats the message.
- **Confirm**
 - The sender affirms the receiver understood or corrects the misunderstanding.

CONSIDER

Remind responders
to complete a size-up.

CONSIDER

Respect the limits of your
short-term memory.

Document it.

Use memory aids:
(checklists and worksheets).

CONSIDER

Manage your stress:

- Breathing Technique
- Stress Inoculation
- Stress Transference

CONSIDER

In the multitasking environment

Writing it down.

WARNING!
Sensory domination.

CONSIDER

In the absence of facts
or
when there is
conflicting information...

Your brain can write
its own script.

CONSIDER

Time
Distortion

Elapsed Time
Notifications

Example:
10 minute ETN

CONSIDER

- Joint Training sessions (realistic).
- Ride-Alongs for communications professionals
- Sit-ins for first responders.

CONSIDER

- Consider providing field support during incidents.
- Consider having responders can provide Communications Center support during incidents.

CONSIDER

Align communications center SOPs
with response agency SOPs.

Communications Professional Overload

Team approach

- Working in tandem - good
- Alternating or relieving - DANGER!

Telephone call taker - radio operator disconnect

- The call taker filters information.
- Under stress, critical information can be forgotten (or simply not shared).

Sensory Overload

- The good news is: You don't have to process the visual incident scene information.
- The bad news is: You have to read a LOT! Reading is a slow form of information processing and knowledge transfer.

CONSIDER

Auditory Exclusion & Sensory Domination.

Listen for lack of acknowledgment of critical radio traffic.

It should be assumed that if it is not acknowledged, it was not heard.

Accountability Checks

- Tracking:
 - Crew Sizes
 - Crew Locations
 - Crew Tasks
 - Progress Reports

CONSIDER

The communications center and the agencies you serve benefit from having a mutually understand of:

- What each agency does.
- What each does not do.
- How each does it.
- How each can support the other.

CONSIDER

How to be supportive is
NOT an intuitive skill set.

If not taught, the understanding
may come from TV and movies.

Or confabulated.

QA and QI Process

- Conduct post-incident debriefings.
- Ask for feedback from the agencies you serve on how you can improve.
- Provide same feedback to agencies you serve

The outcome of high-risk, high consequence incidents depends heavily on communications professionals and responders developing and maintaining shared situational awareness.



"The ability to perceive and understand what is happening in your environment (in the context of how time is passing) and then be able to make accurate predictions of future events... in time to avoid bad outcomes." - Dr. Richard B. Glasgow

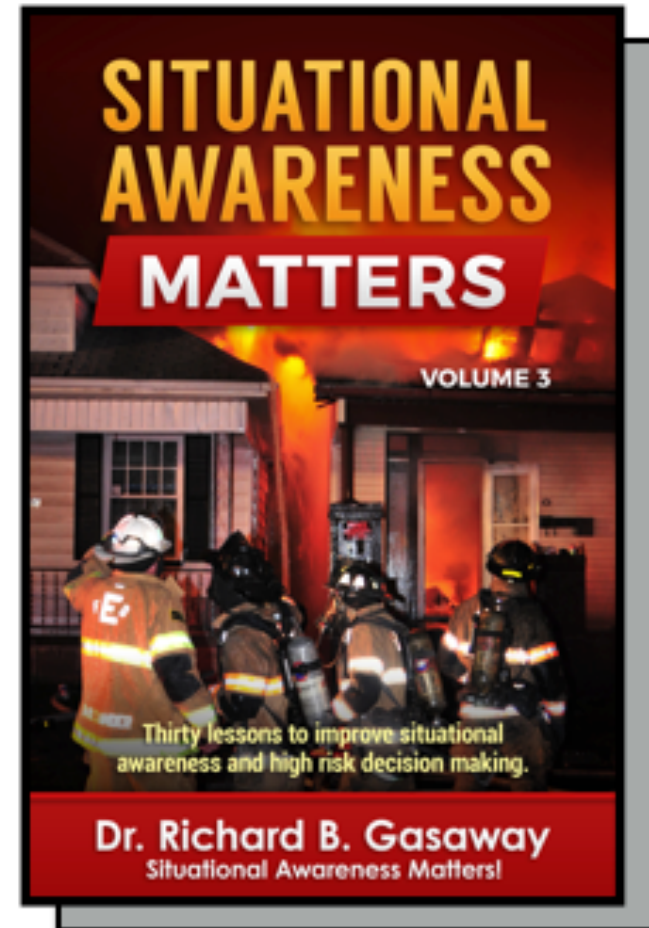
Human Factors		Physical/Environmental		Crew/Support		Team/Task		Situational Awareness													
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Flawed situational awareness is one of the leading contributing factors to first responder near-miss and casualty events. To learn more about each barrier to situational awareness, visit <http://www.SAMatters.com/training>



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SITUATIONAL AWARENESS MATTERS!

Helping all members of the first responder community
see the bad things coming...
in time to avoid bad outcomes.

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