What is situational awareness?

And why does it matter?

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This program is available as a 3 part DVD series.

If you are interested in purchasing it:

Click the “store” link on the SAMatters.com website
The Academy is suited for individuals and teams working in high-stress, high-consequence environments.

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

For more information, visit: SAMatters.com
Situational awareness

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
The Situational Awareness Development Process

Perception

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

• Pay attention…
• Keep your head on a swivel…
• Look up, down, and all around…
• Actively listening…
• Size-up

➢ “What’s happening right now?”
The Situational Awareness Development Process

Understanding

Making sense out of what you:
See, hear, feel, taste & smell

• Comprehension
• Moment of clarity

➤ “What does all this mean?”
➤ “Is this what I expected?”
It seems so easy...

See... and understand.

Hear... and understand.
Perception

Understanding
Where in your brain do you develop your understanding?
There are puzzle pieces you cannot see or hear.

Only experts can comprehend the meaning of the missing information.

Negative Clues & Cues
Memory Recall

Can trigger the 6th sense.
Intuition

Pattern Matching

Tacit Knowledge
Intuition:

Knowing…

Without knowing…

How you know.
Your Red Flag Warning System

Intuition
There are some problems with intuition:

- It is easy to dismiss or distrust intuition.
- It is hard to justify decisions based on “feelings” (without facts & data).
- Intuition can be wrong.
The Situational Awareness Development Process

Prediction

Anticipating future events before they happen.

– Run “what if” options in your head
  – Forecasting
  – Projections

– 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
The Situational Awareness Development Process

**Prediction**

Anticipating future events before they happen.

- Setting Expectations
  - Can we change the outcome?
  - Are the conditions right?
  - Do we have the right resources... here... now?
  - Can we operate faster than conditions are changing?
  - How much time do we have?
Imagination

Your Mind’s Eye
Sensory inputs
+ Visual imagery
+ Memory Search
+ Forecasting
Situational Awareness barriers block:

- Perception
- Understanding
- Prediction
Pre-Arrival Lens
CONSIDER

Say to yourself... “Maybe…”

Conduct an original size-up to to improve the accuracy of your situational awareness.

Avoid making premature decisions based on assumed information.

Have dispatch remind the first-arriving units to conduct a size up.
Urgency
Avoid taking shortcuts, especially those related to SA and decision making.

Avoid the mindset: “There’s no time to waste!”
Over Confidence
Complacency
CONSIDER

Avoid “created” risk.

Learn from near-miss events.

Never let your guard down.
Multitasking
Realize as you alternate attention, understand information can be lost.

Prioritize & delegate
Short-Term Memory Overload
Respect your short-term memory limits.

Focus on the most important information.

Use memory aids: (checklists and worksheets).
Time Distortion
CONSIDER THIS

Keep track of the passage of time.

Elapsed time notifications:
The faster the incident conditions are changing, the shorter the timeframe for ETNs.
Auditory Exclusion
Determine what radio traffic is: Critical, essential, non-essential.

Use standardized terms & phrases.

Communications training and practice.
Tunnel Vision
Tunnel Vision is a rare phenomenon.

Once it happens, you cannot control it.

Breathing technique.

Stress inoculation.
Task Fixation
Task fixation is extremely common.

You can control it.

Meta-awareness.

Mindfulness.
Mission/goal Myopia
Can be taught in training and reinforced in culture.

Mindset and behavior can be changed through teaching, coaching, practice and mentoring.

Teach the process of decision making.
Sensory Conflict
Mind Drift
Your brain evolved and is adapted for survival.

The brain has primal “trip wires” that sense danger.
Change Blindness
Sensory domination
Confabulation
Be aware that in the absence of facts, the brain can make up its own reality.

Be alert for differing “Perceptions of reality.”
FEAR

Failure
Consequence
Embarrassment
Ridicule
Communications Issues
Lack of Shared Mental Models
Barriers can steal away your Situational Awareness

And there are more than 100 of them!
Helping first responders see the bad things coming... in time to avoid bad outcomes.