

What is situational awareness and why does it matter?

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway
Fire Chief (ret.)
Situational Awareness Matters!
SAMatters.com



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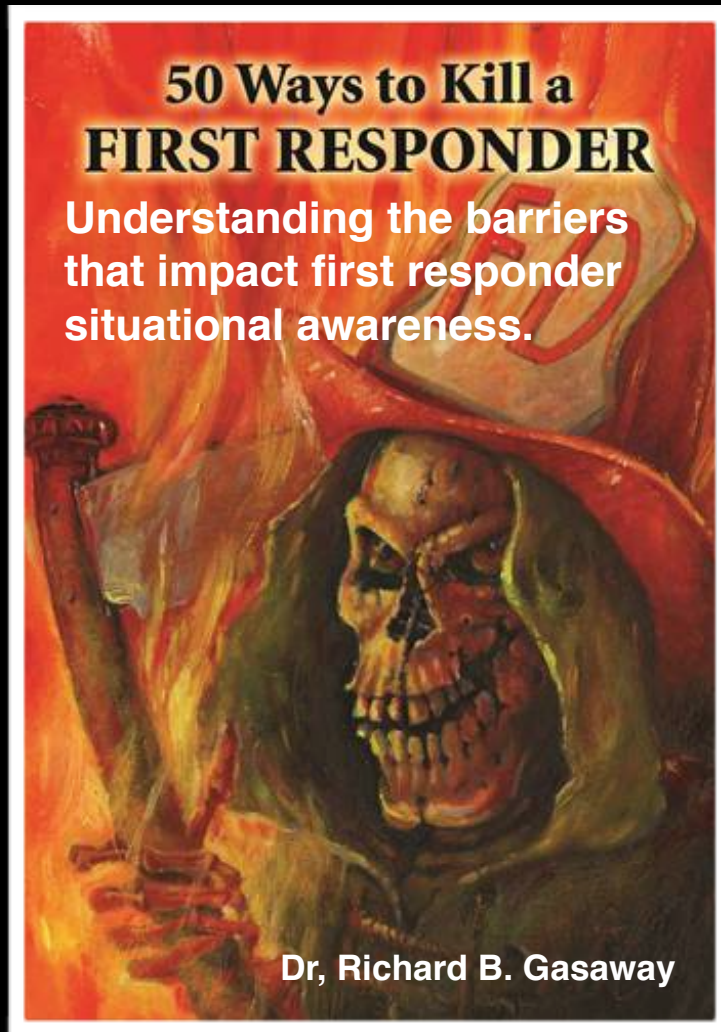


If you are interested in
hosting a program
please contact
Dr. Gasaway at

www.SAMatters.com

Phone: 612-548-4424

rich@RichGasaway.com



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

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



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**Situational
Awareness
Matters!**

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?”



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Visual

Audible

Smell

Taste

Sensation



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The Situational Awareness Development Process

Understanding

**Making sense out of what is:
Seen, heard, felt, tasted & smelled**

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



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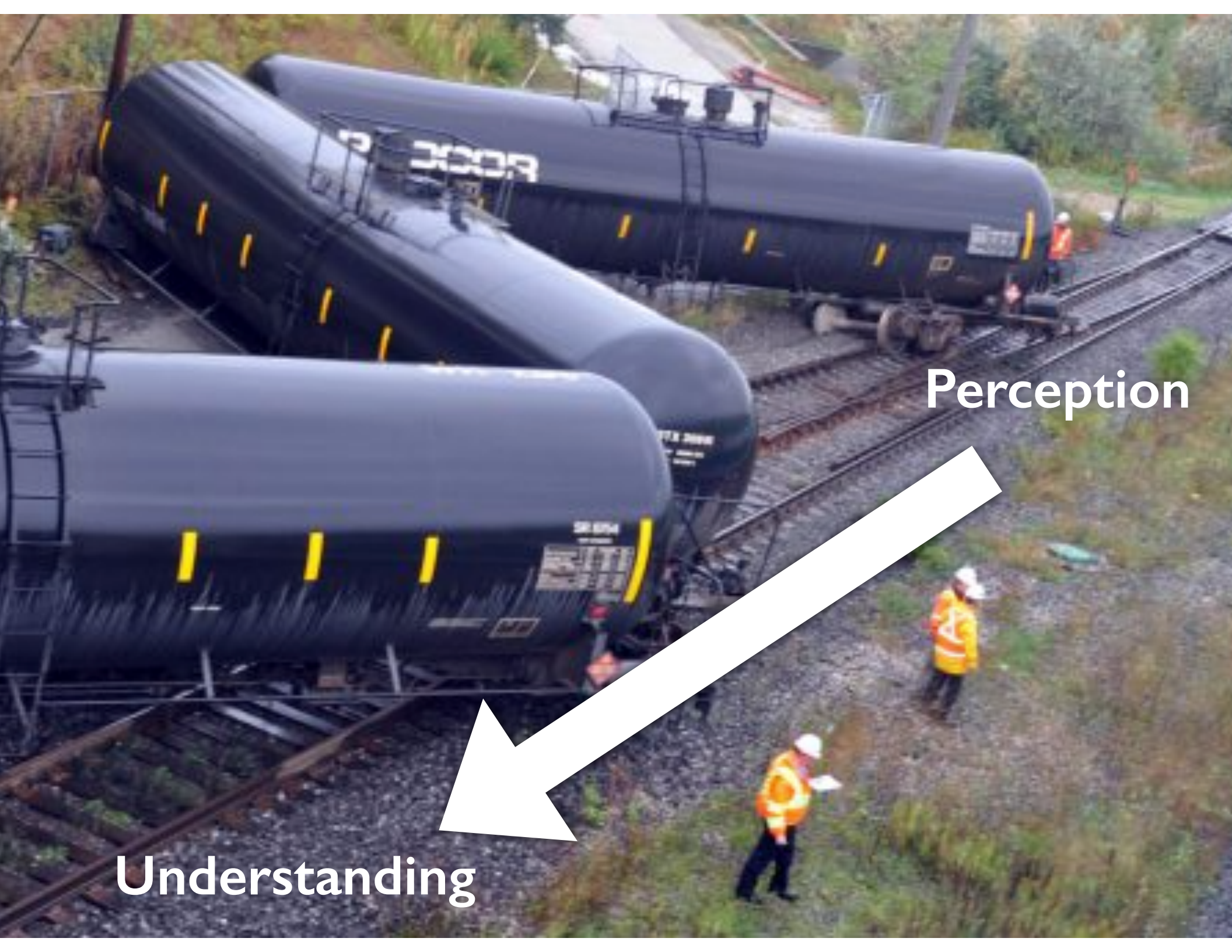
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It seems so easy...

See... and understand.

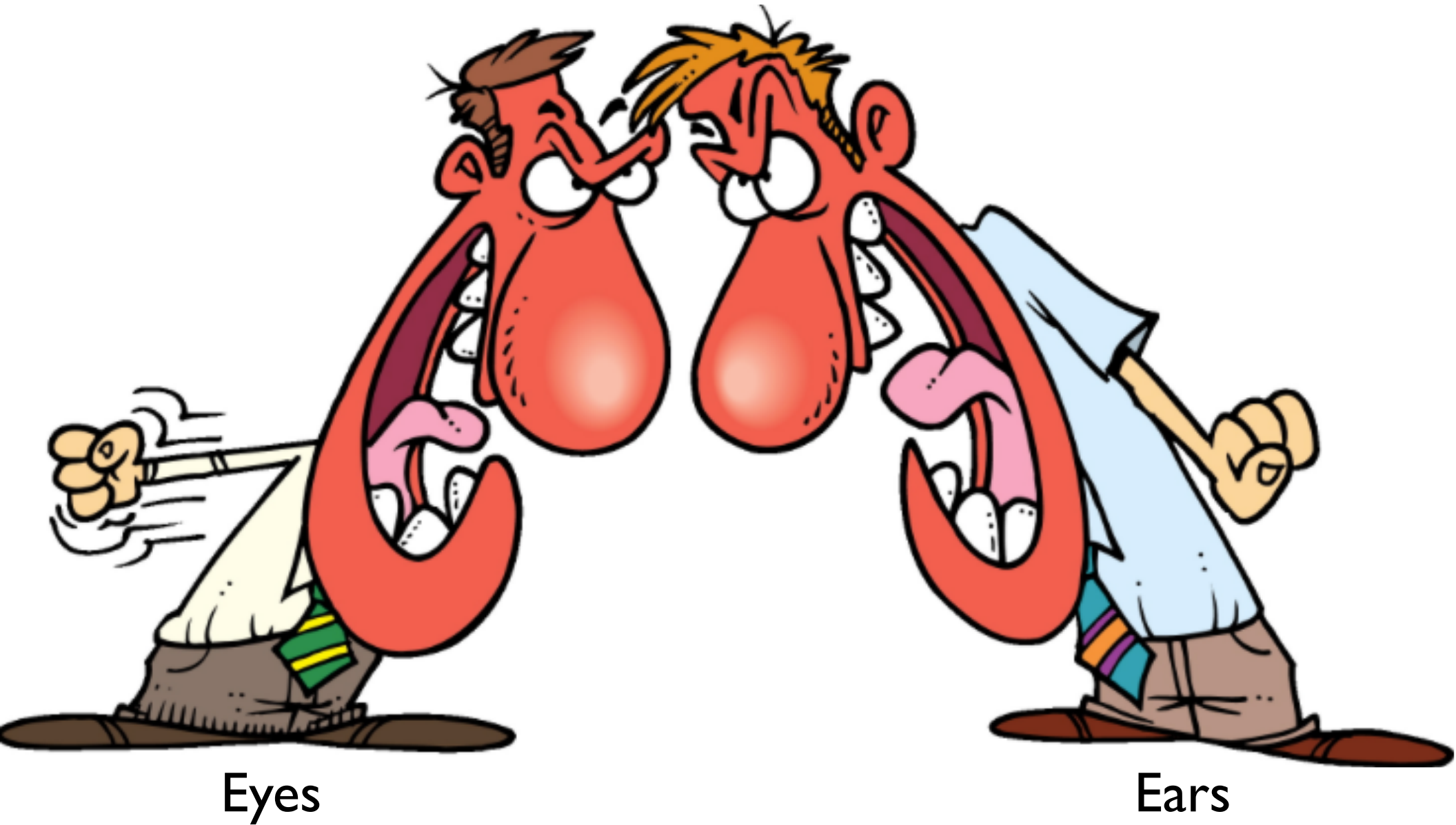
Hear... and understand.



Perception

Understanding

Sensory Conflict



Eyes

Ears



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Where in your brain
do you develop
your understanding?



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Magic

Screen

It truly is your

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There are puzzle pieces you cannot see or hear.



Negative Clues & Cues

Only experts can comprehend
the meaning of the
missing information.



Memory Recall



Can trigger the 6th sense.



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Intuition



Pattern Matching

Tacit Knowledge



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A man with a confused expression, scratching his head with his right hand. He is looking upwards and to the left. The background is a solid light gray.

Intuition:

Knowing...

Without knowing...

How you know.



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Your Red Flag Warning System

Intuition



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There are some problems with intuition:

It is hard to understand the origin of intuition.

It is easy to dismiss or distrust intuition.

It is hard to justify decisions without facts & data.

Intuition can be wrong.



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The Situational Awareness Development Process

Prediction

Anticipating future events before they happen.

- Run 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.
- Setting Expectations
 - Can we change the outcome?



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Your Mind's Eye



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MAGIC Etch A Sketch® SCREEN

Sensory inputs
+
Visual imagery
+
Memory Search
+
Forecasting

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Situational Awareness Barriers

Anything that blocks:



- Perception
- Understanding
- Prediction



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Pre-Arrival Lens



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Urgency



Over Confidence



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Complacency



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Confabulation



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Multitasking



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Short-Term Memory Overload



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Time Distortion



Auditory Exclusion



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Task Fixation (Attentional)



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Mission/goal Myopia (Psychological)



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Barriers can steal away your Situational Awareness



**There are over
100 SA barriers.**



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Handout of today's program...

On an index card write down your

Name

Email Address

(Please: Write neatly)

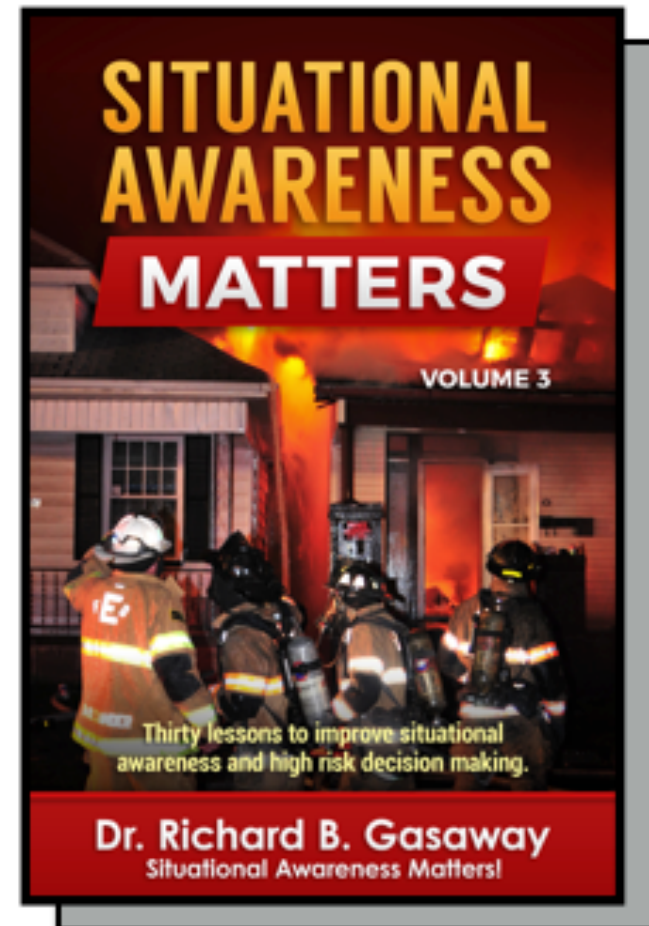
If you have a business card...

“HO”

“FU”



Books



Situational Awareness Matters!



Helping responders see the bad things coming...
in time to avoid bad outcomes.

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