Flawed Situational Awareness

The stealth killer of wildland firefighters.

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Situational Awareness Matters!
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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
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, being 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?”
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?”

The Situational Awareness Development Process
It seems so easy...

See... and understand.

Hear... and understand.
Sensory Conflict

Eyes

Ears
Where in your brain do you develop your understanding?
It truly is your Magic Screen.
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.
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 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.
The Situational Awareness Development Process

Prediction

Anticipating future events before they happen.
– Run options in your head
  – Forecasting
  – Projections
– Begin... with the end in mind
– Mental models
The Situational Awareness Development Process

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
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 resources?
  - Can we operate faster than conditions are changing?
  - How much time do we have?
Sensory inputs
+ Visual imagery
+ Memory Search
+ Forecasting
Case study
Be thinking about...

Perception

Understanding

Prediction
Situational Awareness Barriers

Anything that blocks:

- Perception
- Understanding
- Prediction
Pre-Arrival Lens
Conducting an original size-up to improve the accuracy of your situational awareness.

Avoiding premature decisions based on assumed information.
Urgency
Avoiding shortcuts, especially those related to SA and decision making.

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

Avoiding “created” risk.

No celebrating near-miss events.

Never letting your guard down.
Confabulation
Being aware that in the absence of facts, your brain can make up its own reality.

Being alert for differing "Perceptions of reality."
Multitasking
As you alternate attention, understand information can be lost.

Writing things down.

Sensory domination can dull other senses.
Respecting your short-term memory limits.

Learning & practicing memorization techniques.

Using memory aids: (checklists and worksheets).
Time Distortion
Keeping track of the passage of time.

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

Using standardized terms & phrases.

Using a cadence.
Task Fixation (Attentional)
The bad news is: It is extremely common.

The good news is: You can control it.

Meta-awareness.

Mindfulness.
Mission Myopia
The bad news is:
This is taught and reinforced in our training and our culture.

The good news is:
Behavior can be changed through teaching, coaching, practice and mentoring.

Teach the process of decision making.
Automatic Performance (robotic action)
Skill set is a combination of education and training.

Cognitive and kinesthetic go together.

Teach and practice how to:

Think - Decide - Act
Barriers can steal away your Situational Awareness

And there are more than 100 of them!
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

Volume 1

Fifty lessons to improve situational awareness and high risk decision making.

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway
Situational Awareness Matters!

Volume 2

Thirty lessons to improve situational awareness and high risk decision making.

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway
Situational Awareness Matters!

Volume 3

Thirty lessons to improve situational awareness and high risk decision making.

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Situational Awareness Matters!
SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

"The ability to perceive and understand what is happening in your environment (as the context of how things are changing) and then be able to make accurate predictions of future events... in time to avoid bad consequences." — Dr. Richard H. Gasaway

Flawed situational awareness is one of the leading contributing factors to first responder near-miss and casualty events. To learn more about each factor in situational awareness, visit http://www.SAframework.com.

FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE

@RichGasaway
I am on a mission...
Helping wildland firefighters see the bad things coming... in time to avoid bad outcomes.

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