

## Situational Awareness in the Workplace

### Introduction:

Have you ever experienced feelings of danger before an incident occurred?

The ability to perceive or to have an understanding of what is happening around you is a concept known as situational awareness. Situational awareness is defined as “having an accurate perception of one’s surroundings, with the capacity to understand and appropriately respond to threats to one’s personal safety.” Understanding the impact of actions and events on your wellbeing is essential for real-time decision making. Trusting your intuition or “gut feeling” can help you avoid a potentially dangerous situation that can lead to injury or death.

### Discussion Points:

- What is situational awareness?
- Why is situational awareness important?
- What are some ways to improve situational awareness?

### Discussion:

Situational awareness in the workplace is an important concept related to health and safety. It is important for a company to provide training for all employees on this concept, and the impact it has on the overall operation of business involving production, employee roles and responsibilities, and a safe work environment. Workers protecting themselves from potential hazards and injury requires situational awareness which includes three key factors: perception, comprehension, and anticipation. We’ve all heard the phrase “Be aware of your surroundings.” Having situational awareness allows a worker the ability to make choices and take appropriate action during an emergency event. When someone lacks awareness or does not pay attention to their surroundings they are more likely to experience a dangerous situation. One pitfall that many workers allow themselves to fall into is “distracted vision” where they are unknowingly distracted by irrelevant objects or events. Do not allow your focus to drift away from your work by engaging in social media, reading emails, or listening to music that becomes a distraction. Instead, continuously watch what is going on around you, get in the habit of using your peripheral vision and scanning your field of vision or what is in front of you by only moving your eyes, not your head.

Workers should learn to be observant while performing their tasks and still focus on what is important to achieve success. It is important that all workers be aware of their surroundings and potential hazards. In doing so, they are looking out for their own safety as well as that of their coworkers. Improving situational awareness in the workplace involves practicing safety measures and leads to progressively achieving task performance.

As always, stay safe out there!

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