



Hanover County Safety & Risk Management Communication

Happy Safety & Risk Friday (#SafetyFriday)! This week's short subject discusses the Human Performance Defense of Situational Awareness

Safety & Risk Tip of the Week:

HP Defenses are techniques that when applied deliberately, properly, and consistently help significantly reduce the likelihood that a risk or error could lead to a significant negative event. The fourth of these defenses is situational awareness.

Situational Awareness:

WHAT IS IT?

- It is the practice of staying aware of your surroundings, identifying anomalies and threats & predicting likely outcomes before they happen. The average person thinks they're either "paying attention" or not. Their awareness is either ON or OFF. But pilots, soldiers and many other experts know better. They adjust their Situational Awareness up or down between different levels as needed.

COMMON MISTAKE

- Do not use these 4 levels to describe a job or task. Instead, use them to describe your mental state at any given time. (*Don't say:* This is a Red-level job. *Do say:* I'm at the Red Alert level now.)
- The four levels:

Red Alert – You're aware of an imminent hazard. You've already prepped safe, decisive actions and back up plans. You control the hazard safely. No surprises.

Focused – You notice something, but may not know if it's a hazard. You assess it, then either avoid it, or control it safely. Beware of tunnel vision here.

Scanning – Mental Radar is actively scanning 360° for hazards and anomalies and visualizing likely outcomes. Aim to spend most of your time in this state.

Tuned out - Unaware of surroundings. Mental Radar is off. OK at home, or on brief breaks at work when resting safely outside work zone away from all hazards.

Safety & Risk Quote of the Week:



Safety & Risk Resource Spotlight:

Short subject videos on Situational Awareness:

- [Situational Awareness at Work – YouTube](#)
- [Situational Awareness Test: How good is your Selective Attention - YouTube](#)

Did you know?

Approximately 85 percent of incident reports include a mention of loss of situational awareness.