

## INTRODUCTION

In the fast-paced world of the entertainment industry, from film sets to concert stages, it's crucial to maintain safety for all involved. One of the primary ways to ensure safety is by practicing good situational awareness. Being aware of one's surroundings and the potential hazards can be the difference between a successful event and a tragic incident. In this lesson, we will cover what situational awareness is, the different levels of situational awareness, and tips on how to develop your situational awareness skills.



## WHAT SITUATIONAL AWARENESS IS

Situational awareness is being aware of what is happening around you in terms of where you are, who you are with, and what you are doing. It is recognizing and interpreting potential threats and risks in the environment and understanding the implications of those risks.

In the entertainment industry, it is important for everyone on the production team to be aware of what is going on around them because things are very dynamic within the industry. You may be traveling to different countries, building or taking down sets, doing a performance, participating in a live event, and so on. Due to this, your attention can be pulled in multiple directions at once, and while everyone would love to believe they are a multi-tasker, scientists and other experts say that our brains can only truly focus on one task at a time, and when your attention is diverted, it could result in an accident or injury.

## THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AWARENESS

Depending on who you speak with, the levels of situational awareness can range from three to seven levels. For most workplaces, there are four levels of situational awareness that you and coworkers should be aware of. These four levels include:

- Level White (i.e., tuned out)
  - This level means that you are distracted from what is going on around you.
- Level Yellow (i.e., relaxed awareness)
  - This level means that you have a little awareness of what is going on around you, but you are still able to do other tasks, such as having a conversation, driving and listening to music, etc., while still be aware of potential dangers.
- Level Orange (i.e., focused awareness)
  - This level means that you have eliminated distractions to focus on the task you are performing. For example, driving at night during a storm.
- Level Red (i.e., high alert)
  - This level means that you are aware of a situation that needs an immediate response because you could potentially die.

Just as with anything, you want there to be moderation with how aware you are, as you do not want to become paranoid. Many experts recommend that you develop your situational skills to where you can be at level yellow or orange most of the time, while going into levels white and red when they are the appropriate responses.



# ENTERTAINMENT: SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

## DEVELOPING YOUR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS SKILLS

Just as with your acting skills, stunt skills, camera skills, and so on, situational awareness is a skill that you develop over time and something that you will need to consistently work on due to the different environments you may find yourself in.

There are many ways to develop your situational awareness, including:

- If you will be traveling to another country, it is recommended that you conduct some research into the country that you are going to and the local customs there, as what may seem abnormal behavior to us, may be normal in another culture.
- Do NOT work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, as these can change how you perceive the world around you.
  - If you are on prescription medication that could affect how you react to something, such as slower response times, please speak with your supervisor.
- Attend all safety meetings, briefings, and trainings.
- Attend all scheduled rehearsals to familiarize yourself with the environment.
- Have a spatial awareness of the area or location you are working in.
  - For example, make note of where emergency exits are, how much room you and others have to walk in, etc.
- Read and become familiar with the emergency plan and procedures for the production.
  - If you have questions regarding the emergency plan or procedures, please speak with your supervisor or designated contact.
- Take the time to observe your surroundings to identify any hazards or anything else that may be abnormal in the environment.
  - For example, is there uneven terrain, wet floors, cables in walkways, etc.
  - Hazardous conditions, abnormal behaviors, or something that feels wrong should be reported to your supervisor or designated contact.
- Minimize distractions that can take your attention away from your environment and the task that you are performing.
  - For example, putting your cell phone or music device away while walking.
- Monitor yourself for fatigue.
  - Where feasible, you should make sure that you are getting adequate sleep. If you are having trouble with sleep, please speak with your medical provider.
- Maintain active communication with everyone you are working with.
- Utilize spotters where necessary to make sure that you will not hit anyone when moving equipment or other items that may block your vision.
- Do NOT allow yourself to become complacent.
- Remain calm when something unpredictable or dangerous happens.
  - Panicking can reduce your situational awareness.
- Obey all warning and safety signs that may be posted in the area.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, the entertainment industry is fast-paced and very dynamic due to what all is involved with the production of a film, television series, theater production, or live event. Not being aware of your surroundings or being complacent could expose you or others to harm. To help minimize those risks, it is important that you and others on the production team develop and work on your situational awareness skills. If you have questions or concerns about something going on with the production, please speak with your supervisor or designated contact.

