



INTRODUCTION

When on a movie set, television set, concert stage, or theatre stage, the space where actors, props, camera crew, and so on can be limited or even chaotic. Due to this, it is important for everyone involved in the production staff to be aware of their surroundings, including how close everything is in relation to themselves. This lesson will go over what spatial awareness is and why it is important, how you can improve spatial awareness, and how you practice spatial awareness in the workplace.

SPATIAL AWARENESS AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

What is spatial awareness? Simply put, spatial awareness is your ability to be aware of objects in a space and your body's position in relation to them. This awareness is important for work because:

- It gives context to the location of an object
- Informs you of how objects and people move throughout the environment
- Allows you to maintain personal space between yourself and others

Additionally, spatial awareness can also affect basic skills, such as:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics

If you have any spatial awareness deficits that may be due to a medical condition, please speak with your physician or medical provider.



IMPROVING SPATIAL AWARENESS

While we develop spatial awareness from a young age, there are things that we can do as adults that can help us as well. You can help improve your spatial awareness by:

- Practicing new hobbies such as photography and drawing
- Playing video games such as those that are in first person or puzzle games
- Playing games such as chess, puzzles, etc.
- Staying active

SPATIAL AWARENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Spatial awareness is important in every aspect of our lives, especially at work. When on a production set or stage, injuries can occur from one or more of the following:

- Slipping on wet surfaces, props, etc.
- Tripping over wires, cords, people, and other items that may be found on the set or stage
- Falling from the edge of the set or stage, from heights, and so on
- Bumping into objects
- Bumping into people
- Accidentally striking other people when participating in choreographed movements, such as fight scenes, action scenes, dances, and so on
- When performing stunts
- Moving cameras around the set or stage

Before Working on a Set or Stage

Since there may be only so much room for everyone to work with, it is important that everyone in the production does their part to pay attention to the space and where they are within it. This attention to detail can start during pre-production and rehearsals, which may include one or more of the following:

- Conducting a hazard analysis to identify any hazardous conditions that may arise due to props, equipment, and so on.
- Becoming knowledgeable about the emergency protocols for the production.
- Making sure that sets and/or stage set ups are done in a way that will allow everyone involved to move as freely and safely as the space for the scene or set will allow.
- Becoming familiar with the environment you will be working in.
- Participating in rehearsals and drills so that you become familiar with how movements or scenes are going to play out.
 - If you have questions about something during the rehearsals, please speak with your supervisor or designated contact.
 - Depending on the product, certain “marks” may be laid out or placed for performers to know where they should be during certain times of the performance.
 - Additionally, reviewing visual playbacks of the rehearsal should be done when they are provided to help performers and crew make adjustments as needed.
- Practicing mental visualization of scenes, dances, or other actions when not on the set or stage.
- Becoming familiar with how props you will be holding or using feels.

When Performing on a Set or Stage

When performing on a set or stage, production staff may do the following to help with their spatial awareness:

- Maintain good communication between all staff involved with the performance.
- Where provided, be aware of place markers.
- Be aware of how quick body movements are when performing choreographed movements.
- Be aware of the placement of props and equipment.
- Where applicable, be aware of cameras and equipment as they move throughout the space.
- Where applicable, be aware of other people’s location within the space.



ENTERTAINMENT: AWARENESS OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS (SPATIAL)

CONCLUSION

To review, spatial awareness is an important skill that everyone needs to navigate the world around them. It is a skill that develops from a young age and continues to improve as experience is gained. Lack of spatial awareness on film sets or entertainment stages can be dangerous due to the amount of people, props, and equipment that are used. Additionally, some areas on sets or stages can be small, so having everything in one place can make it difficult to safely move around if you are not paying attention to your surroundings. When working in tight quarters, there should be plenty of good communication between everyone, and production staff should have a basic idea of how people and equipment will be moving throughout the production.

