



**Situational Awareness for  
the Code Enforcement  
Official**

**1 Hour**

www.alertems.com 9/18/2025

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**Rich Nower**  
**Lieutenant - Utica Fire**  
New York State CEO



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED  
Fire Department  
CHIEF  
QUAVIVA

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**Rich Nower**  
**Lieutenant – Utica Fire**  
 New York State CEO

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- 19-year Member of the Utica Fire Department
- New York State BSI since 2006
- New York State CEO Since 2018
- New York State BSI instructor
- Author of 12 (and growing) authorized Continuing Education classes for Code enforcement
- New York State EMS Certified Instructor Coordinator
- Presenter at the FASNY EMS Conference, New York State Chiefs show, and numerous Codes conferences
- Secondary Social Studies teacher by trade
- Bachelor of Arts from Keuka College
- Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of San Diego

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**Enabling Terminal Objective**

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**The Code Enforcement Professional will utilize critical reasoning skills to assess potentially hazardous situations during their duties as a Code Enforcement professional, thereby reducing injuries to code professionals.**

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**Enabling Cognitive Objectives**

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**Objective # 1**

The Code Enforcement Professional will analyze real-world news events involving code enforcement officers to identify and understand the dangers and risks they may encounter in the field. This presentation aims to raise awareness, encourage situational preparedness, and promote safety best practices in the profession.

**Objective # 2**

The Code Enforcement Professional will break down and discuss line-of-duty deaths of code enforcement officials that occurred as a result of performing code enforcement duties. This presentation on situational awareness aims to foster critical reflection, enhance field safety practices, and reinforce the importance of vigilance and preparedness in potentially hazardous situations.

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## Enabling Cognitive Objectives

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**Objective # 3**

The Code Enforcement Professional will define situational awareness and explain its relevance to code enforcement duties. The professional will be able to recognize how maintaining situational awareness can enhance safety and decision-making during field operations.

**Objective # 4**

Explain Cooper's Color Code of situational awareness and apply it to identify personal readiness levels and environmental cues that indicate the need to escalate or de-escalate one's state of alertness during code enforcement or fire service operations."

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## Enabling Cognitive Objectives

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**Objective # 5**

Describe the steps of the OODA Loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) and apply them to improve situational awareness, decision-making, and response during dynamic code enforcement or fire service operations."

**Objective # 6**

"Identify key kinesic cues (body language, facial expressions, and gestures) and apply them to enhance situational awareness and decision-making during code enforcement or fire service operations."

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## Enabling Cognitive Objectives

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**Objective # 7**

By the end of this training, participants will be able to identify and apply Jeff Cooper's Color Codes of Awareness (White, Yellow, Orange, Red) to effectively assess their personal alertness levels, recognize potential threats in various environments, and adjust their situational awareness and readiness accordingly to enhance personal and professional safety.

**Objective # 8**

By the end of this session, participants will be able to explain how the evolution of technology has introduced new risks and challenges for code enforcement professionals, identify specific technological threats they may encounter on the job, and develop strategies to mitigate these dangers while maintaining safety and effectiveness.

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## Enabling Affective Objectives

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**Objective # 1**

By the end of this training, participants will demonstrate a heightened sense of awareness and appreciation for the risks faced by code enforcement officials, valuing the importance of vigilance, personal safety, and proactive risk management in their daily duties.

**Objective # 2**

By the end of this training, participants will value the importance of maintaining vigilance, confident body language, and proactive safety habits to reduce personal risk, demonstrating a committed mindset to not becoming a victim while performing their duties as code enforcement professionals.

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## Enabling Psychomotor Objectives

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**Objective # 1**

- Reserved for future use

**Objective # 2**

- Reserved for future use

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## INTRODUCTION

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**August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Augusta, Gorgia**

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**Augusta code officer was reportedly ambushed after posting a "condemned" sign**



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**CODE INSPECTIONS  
LINE OF DUTY DEATHS**

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**Jacqueline Summer Beard**  
State of Alabama  
Environmental Supervisor  
EOW: April 29, 2022

23

- **Jacqueline Beard was an Environmental Supervisor with the State of Alabama's Public Health Department.**
- **She had been an employee there for nearly 17 years.**
- **She went to investigate a woman who was attacked by a pack of dogs in Red Bay.**
- **By 6 pm, Franklin County Deputies were called about a suspicious vehicle.**
- **They discovered Jacqueline deceased from a severe dog attack.**
- **The owner of the dogs has been arrested for manslaughter and is held without bail.**



**Alabama Department of Public Health stated, "Summer was known to her coworkers as an exceptional person. She was a tremendous team worker and was loved by those who knew her."**

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**Dennis Catanyag**  
County of Sacramento, CA  
Environmental Health Inspector  
EOW: January 14, 2021

24

**Dennis, 46, was stabbed to death while he was on the job inspecting restaurants. The suspect was an employee at the restaurant, which just passed the inspection. Dennis was in his vehicle when the suspect opened the car door and began stabbing him. Another person was stabbed multiple times and is expected to survive. Dennis has been with the Sacramento County Environmental Health Division for 15 years.**



**"He was a model employee who was dedicated to his family and his job. He had a passion for public service and the health and safety of people in the community. He was very well-liked by his colleagues, who enjoyed his lively personality and respected his professional integrity," stated the County Executive.**

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**INTRODUCTION TO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**

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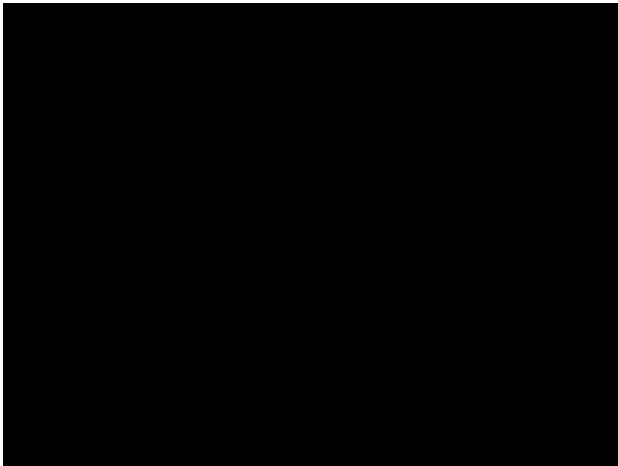
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**Napoleon Bonaparte**  
"Master of Situational Awareness"

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**"The battlefield is a scene of constant chaos. The winner will be the one who controls the chaos, both his own and the enemy's."**

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**What is Situational Awareness?**

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**What is Situational Awareness?**

**What is your definition of Situational Awareness?**

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**What is Situational Awareness?**

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**What is Situational Awareness?**

- In simple terms, situational awareness means understanding what is going on around you
- It implies gathering the right information
  - (all that is needed, but not too much),
  - being able to analyze it,
    - and making projections based on the analysis.

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**Situational Awareness**  
**Korean War – First Reference**  
Recognize, interpret, anticipate

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**“The accurate perception and understanding of all factors and conditions within the four fundamental risk elements that affect safety, before, during, and after the flight”**




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## Atlanta abortion clinic bombings

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- **Rudolph confessed to three other bombings:**
  - abortion clinic in the Atlanta suburb of Sandy Springs on January 16, 1997
  - of the Otherside Lounge of Atlanta, a lesbian bar
    - February 21, 1997, injuring five;
  - an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, on January 29, 1998,
    - killing Birmingham police officer Robert Sanderson, who was off-duty but working as security in uniform, and critically injuring nurse Emily Lyons.
- **Rudolph's bombs contained nails, which acted as shrapnel.**

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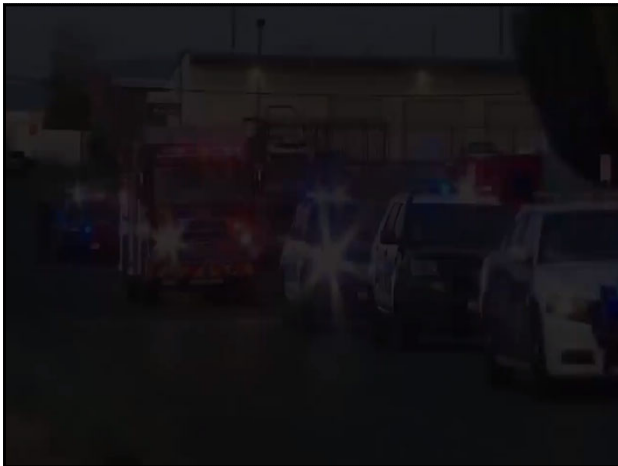
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## Definition What does it mean to you?

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- **What is it?**
  - What is your definition of Situational Awareness?
- **Not a code enforcement definition for Situational awareness**
- **Professional practice**

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## What is the definition of situational awareness?

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- Ifsa 7 – Perception of the surrounding environment and the ability to anticipate future events
- FEMA - the ability to share information and knowledge to create a common understanding of the situation for the entire community
- The US Coast Guard – “the ability to identify, process, and comprehend the critical elements of information about what is happening to the team with regards to the mission.”
- OSHA - the ability to identify, process, comprehend, and respond to important information about your environment



**SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**

*“The ability to perceive and understand what is happening in your environment in the context of how time is passing and then be able to make accurate predictions of future events. “We have to avoid our blindness.” – Dr. ScottH. Sherry*

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## Situational Awareness Observe

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- **The first step involves scanning for:**
  - visual
  - auditory
  - other sensory cues
- **identifying potential risks and accurately understanding the present situation.**



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## Situational Awareness mental model of the situation

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- **cues gathered during the observation phase.**
- **It helps in understanding the:**
  - nature,
  - intensity
  - potential behavior of people or dangers of the code situation
- **The key difference here is that assessment considers the situation as a whole, as opposed to simply the factors that are immediately observable.**



**WHAT IS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**

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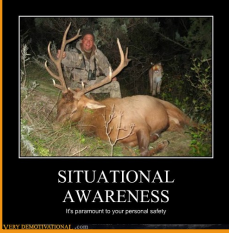
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**Situational Awareness Anticipate** 43

- should predict what could happen next if there's no intervention.
- This could involve forecasting the potential spread of the fire, the structural stability of the scene, and more.
- This allows fire crews to be better prepared for any number of potential outcomes.



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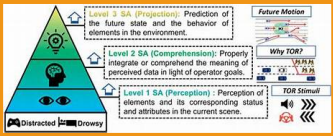
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**Situational Awareness Prepare to use Predictions** 44

**Prepare: Use your predictions to prepare your team for effective action. This could involve devising strategies, assigning roles, or determining the next course of action in order to respond to your predictions.**



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**Situational Awareness Act** 45

**After deciding, the next step is to put those decisions into action. This could involve initiating a rescue operation, fire control measures, or any other necessary steps.**



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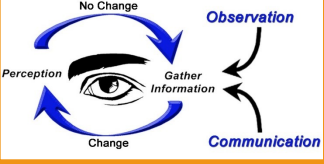


## Situational Awareness Ways to improve

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**Effective Communication**

- Lack of effective communication can cause people to be hurt or killed. It is imperative that effective two-way communication is in effect throughout the incident



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## Situational Awareness Ways to improve

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**4. Active and Responsible Leadership**

- The professionalism and effectiveness of the crew go a long way in achieving the goals of an incident, but poor leadership can destroy the hard work of even the best crew. Leadership must be active and responsible, especially when it comes to ensuring the safety of the crews working for them on an incident.
- These are just four principles that are very important in ensuring that situational awareness is maintained; however, there are many factors that must be understood and practiced to effectively improve the situational awareness of firefighters and paramedics.

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**JOHNNY & ROY  
SITUATIONAL AWARENESS  
CASE STUDY**

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**Season 6, Episode 17  
Emergency**

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**Situational Awareness  
Emergency**

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- 2 car MVA
- MVA vs officer
- Concerns?
- Older cars
- How did they do in MVAs?
- Safety options



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## Situational Awareness Emergency!

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- **What stands out of place so far?**
- **Safety concerns**
- **Stabilization**
- **No safety gear**
- **Wires and batteries**
- **Better ways to get into cars today?**
- **How would we do it differently today?**
- **How many patients do you have?**



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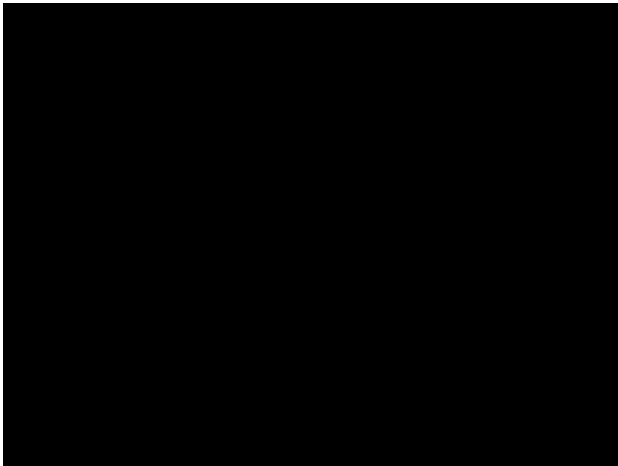
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## Situational Awareness Emergency!

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- **What stands out of place so far?**
- **Safety concerns with how they are cutting the window out?**
- **How about how they are getting the cop out?**



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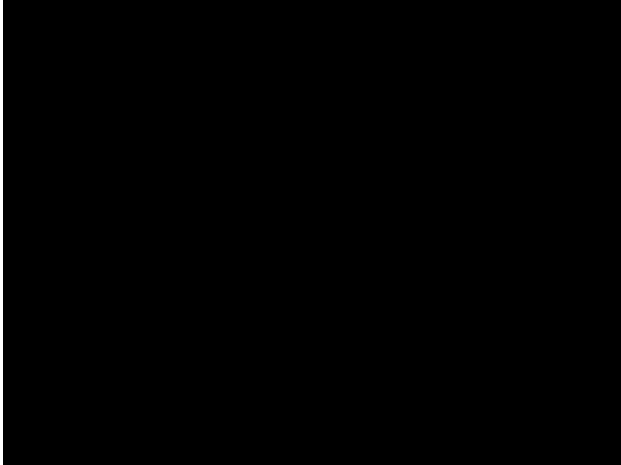
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**Situational Awareness  
Emergency!**

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- Are you just getting the officer out of the car?
- Neck or back concerns?
- Is he alert and oriented?
- Can he sign off?



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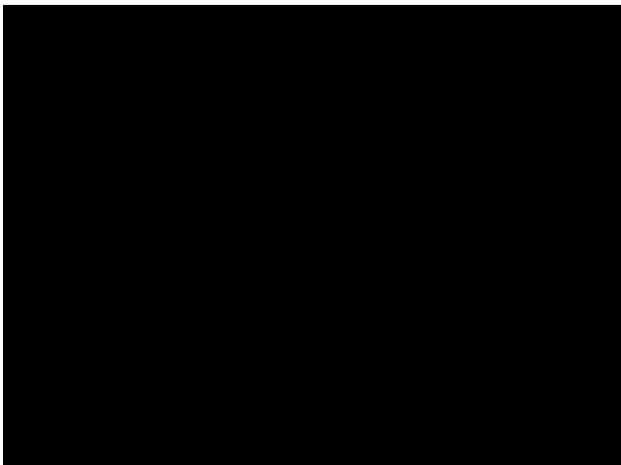
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**Situational Awareness  
Emergency!**

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- **Officer Vince looks a little out of it.**
- **Scene size up?**
  - Communications?
  - Posture
  - Body language
- **Safety concerns?**



Woodruff Howard aka Police Officer Vince Jenkins

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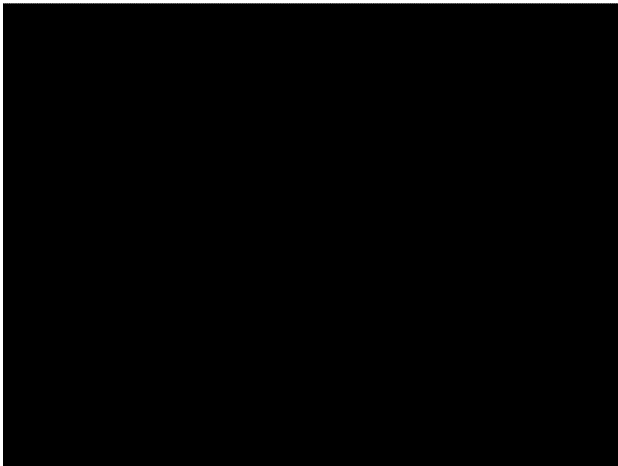
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**Situational Awareness  
Emergency!**

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- **How did this happen?**
- **Did you see it coming?**
- **Were you concerned about his weapon?**



Woodruff Howard aka Police Officer Vince Jenkins

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**UNDERSTANDING THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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**Situational Awareness**

- **Bad people do bad things**
- **Create a mental foundation of alertness**



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**LTC Dave Grossman On Killing**



If you have no capacity for violence then you are a healthy productive citizen: a sheep. If you have a capacity for violence and no empathy for your fellow citizens, then you have defined an aggressive sociopath—a wolf. But what if you have a capacity for violence, and a deep love for your fellow citizens?

- LTC Dave Grossman

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**LTC Dave Grossman  
On Killing**

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- **Applying to Code enforcement**
  - **Sheep:** Inspector enters an unsecured vacant building alone, doesn't notice signs of squatting, or a person watching from a corner.
  - **Wolf:** Squatter waiting inside sees a chance to assault or intimidate the inspector.
  - **Sheepdog:** Inspector notices graffiti, fresh tracks, and possible movement. Calls law enforcement for a joint entry.

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**World War II  
Winters/Egan/Basilone**

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**Look at the Inventions of the last 30 years** 67


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**Look at the Inventions of the last 30 years** 68





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**Situational Awareness Vulnerable vs Capable** 69

Vulnerable	Capable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>How we live</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk into a hostile environment unaware               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(like the Idaho ambush).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Miss obvious hazards during inspections               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(like the Hard Rock Hotel's undersized beams).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Mindset &amp; Behaviors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-plan based on dispatch/intel.</li> <li>Notice discrepancies (e.g., a hostile crowd forming, a vacant building's structural sag).</li> <li>Adjust their actions (call for police backup, stage apparatus away from potential collapse).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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## Vulnerable

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- **Expectations of values, ethics, and morals**
- **Complacency**
- **Vulnerable to technology**
- **Planning without contingencies**






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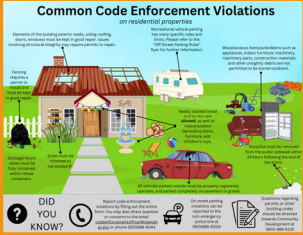
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## Capable

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- **No Expectations of values, ethics, and morals**
- **No Complacency**
- **Leverage of technology**
- **Planning with contingencies**



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## Contingency plans in code enforcement

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**Situational Awareness + Contingency Example**  
Imagine inspecting a building in a high-crime area:

1. **Yellow (Relaxed Alert)**
  1. Pre-plan: check property records, call dispatch with your location.
  2. Park vehicle for easy exit.
2. **Orange (Potential Threat)**
  1. See hostile occupants or suspicious behavior.
  2. Stay outside, call for police backup.
3. **Red (Immediate Action)**
  1. Occupant advances aggressively—retreat to vehicle, call 911.
4. **Contingency Plan Activates**
  1. Police escort arrives; inspection rescheduled under safer conditions.



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## 6 Colors of awareness

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<b>WHITE</b>	Unaware and unprepared. "Tuned out."
<b>YELLOW</b>	Relaxed, prepared, and aware. Good situational awareness.
<b>ORANGE</b>	Specifically identified interest/focus/threat. Ready to act. Wargaming possible reactions.
<b>RED</b>	Action time. You're on "high alert." Actively engaged in emergency response.
<b>BLACK</b>	Panicked, frozen, in shock. Breakdown of mental and physical performance.

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## Applying Coopers Color code To code enforcement

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**How It Supports Situational Awareness in Code Enforcement**

1.  **Avoid "White" during inspections:**
  1. Inspectors can't afford complacency—entering unknown structures, dealing with resistant occupants, or hazardous sites demands baseline awareness.
2.  **Stay in "Yellow" as default:**
  1. Be relaxed but keep scanning for safety issues, fire code violations, or unusual behaviors from property owners.
3.  **"Orange" and "Red" for high-risk situations:**
  1. If you spot aggressive behavior, illegal occupancy, or dangerous structural defects, move to heightened alert and prepare for action (document, call backup, evacuate).
4.  **Use "Grey" post-incident:**
  1. After a hostile encounter or unsafe discovery, debrief, reset mentally, and plan adjustments for next time.

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## 5 Senses Sight/Hearing/smell/touch/taste

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- **Sight**
  - **Role: Primary sense for scanning the environment and noticing hazards.**
- **Hearing**
  - **Role: Detects sounds that may indicate danger or changes in the environment.**
- **Smell**
  - **Role: Alerts you to unseen hazards or violations.**
- **Touch**
  - **Role: Helps confirm environmental conditions and detect hazards.**
- **Taste**
  - **Taste (Gustatory) (Rare but relevant)**

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**Baseline vs abnormalities** 76

- **Baseline: What we know**
- **Abnormalities: What is not normal**



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**Behavior Analysis** 77

- **Non-verbal communications**
- **Atmospherics**
  - **Collective attitudes, moods, and behaviors**



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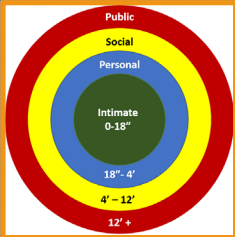
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**proxemics** 78

the branch of knowledge that deals with the amount of space that people feel it necessary to set between themselves and others.



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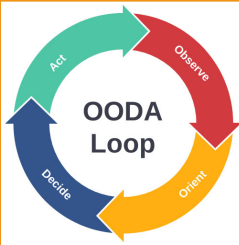
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## OODA loop

### Situational Awareness

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**Observe**  
What is the current situation? What is the reason you want to change? How bad do you want to change?

**Orient**  
What are you currently at relative to where you want to go? How far is it to your destination?

**Decide**  
What is the exact path you are going to take? How are you going to handle challenges and setbacks?

**Act**  
What's the approach and method you will take to implement the decision? What is your action plan?

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## Kinesics

### the study of body language

80

**• Dominant/submissive behaviors**

- Uncomfortable/comfortable
- Interested/uninterested
- Facial expressions
- Leakage
- Clusters
- Substance-induced and mental impairment



Closed body and closed attitude      Open body and open attitude

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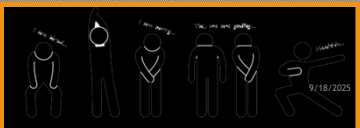


## Kinesics

### the study of body language

81

**The subcategories of kinesics that primarily communicate emotions and future intentions are called "affect displays" and "regulators" within the study of body language; "affect displays" directly express emotions through facial expressions and body movements, while "regulators" signal the pace and flow of communication, often indicating a shift in topic or desire to speak or listen, which can indirectly convey future intentions.**



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## Improving Observation

82

**Specific things we can do to improve our situational awareness by enhancing our ability to observe our environment**




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## How to improve observation skills

83

- **Positioning**
  - Observation of key areas
  - Angling
  - High ground
  - Taking the low ground
  - Entering/exiting "5-second pause."
  - Light vs dark
  - Check your six
  - Reflections
- **Reduce distractions**
- **Observation game**
- **What If Game (Visualizing the what if)**

EFFECTIVE CASE BUILDING IN CODE ENFORCEMENT



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## Visualizing the "what if"

84

- **The body will not go where it has not been**
- **Situational awareness is about identifying and avoiding potentially dangerous situations**

**WHAT IF?**





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**UNDERSTANDING THREATS** 85

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**Understanding threats explained** 86

- **A threat is anything natural or human-related that poses a danger to us or others**
- **Common threats**
  - Statically speaking you are more likely to die of an extreme weather event than killed by a criminal or a terrorist
  - Weather and natural disaster
- **Human-related threats**
  - Fire, motor vehicle, accidents, falls, accidental poisoning



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**The Human Threat** 87

- **Potential Human Threats:**
  - Verbal hostility (raised voices, threats)
  - Physical aggression (clenched fists, aggressive stance)
  - Passive resistance (avoiding eye contact, refusal to cooperate)
- **Behavioral Indicators to Watch:**
  - Tense or closed body language (crossed arms, jaw tightening)
  - Restlessness or pacing
  - Frequent scanning of surroundings or exits
  - Changes in tone or speech patterns (abrupt, defensive)



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## The human threat explained Maslow's hierarchy of needs

88

- **Abraham Maslow**
  - Hierarchy of needs
- **Focus on behavior**
- **Uniquely human violence**
- **Violence – human-related behavioral threat**
  - The dance
  - Group dance
  - Territoriality
- **Behavior correction**



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

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## Criminal violence vs Process Predators

89

- **Criminal violence**
  - Resource predators
- **Process predators**
  - Come after your property

EFFECTIVE  
CASE BUILDING  
IN CODE  
ENFORCEMENT



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## Understanding the criminal threat

90

- **The criminal threat aspects:**
  - **The 5 W's**
    - What, when, who, Where,
  - **Street crime**
  - **Criminal characteristics**
    - Hustlers
    - predators



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## Criminal behavior

91

- **Crime is a process**
  - **Target selection**
  - **Surveillance**
  - **Planning**
  - **Approach**
  - **execution**



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## Criminal behavior explained

92

- **Behavioral cues**
  - **Actions contained within an overall behavioral model that are observable and discernable as to their mental, physiological, and or emotional source**
- **Criminal intents**
  - **If a criminal intends to commit a crime, his/her actions will become more predictable and more recognizable to someone who is aware of that process**
- **Event model**
  - **Invitation stage**
  - **Confrontation stage**
  - **Altercation (attack) stage**



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## Pre-incident indicators

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**Recognizing a potential threat before it manifests into an attack can save your life**



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## Pre-incident indicators

94

- **Plotting behavior**
  - Surveillance
  - Probing
- **Pre-attack behaviors**
  - Inexplicable presence
  - Target glancing
  - Correlation or sudden change in status
  - Hidden hands
  - Guarding
  - Inappropriate behavior
  - Predatorial movement
  - Unsolicited attacks
  - baiting



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## Imminent attack behavior

95

- **Application in Code Enforcement:**
  - During inspections or enforcement interactions, watch for these cues, especially when delivering citations or orders.
  - Maintain a safe reactionary gap (usually about an arm's length or more).
- **Position yourself near exits and keep communication devices accessible.**
- **If imminent attack behaviors are observed, attempt verbal de-escalation but be prepared to disengage and call for backup.**

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## Signs of imminent attack behavior

96

- Avoiding eye contact
- Chest puff
- Rocking motion/agitation
- Averting the face
- Boxer's stance/bladed stance
- Clenching fists/body tension
- Excessive eye movement
- Thousand-yard stare/empty stare
- "checking six"
- circling



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**CRIMINAL BEHAVIORS**

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97



**Victim selection & Characteristics**

98

- **Victim selection and characteristics**
  - Who is a potential victim?
  - Why do we become victims?
- **Victim profile**
- **Risk vs Reward**
- **The Grayson/Stein study 1981**
  - **Significance: much of the predator/prey selection process is subconscious. It may be evolutionary,**
- **Four factors affect predation:**
  - **Risk, defense, value, awareness**

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**The Grayson/Stein study 1981**

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**That Grayson and Stein Study**

"From a practical perspective the Grayson and Stein study shows that walking upright, in a natural/fluid manner, without an exaggerated stride-length is one way to lessen your chances of appearing on a predator's radar."  
-Gershon Ben Keren

"That Grayson and Stein Study", April 11, 2022. www.kravmagahlog.com

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### Four ways to avoid victim selection

101

- Avoid known victim behaviors (non-verbal signals)
- Avoid fringe and transitional areas – and if you can't raise your awareness level
- Reduce your perceived value (no displays of wealth, jewelry, etc)
- Increase your situational awareness
- Situational awareness is the key



Be aware of your surroundings...

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### Strategic thinking

102

- **Strategic thinking is the deliberate process of assessing:**
  - variables
  - anticipating outcomes
  - planning effective responses.



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## Human responses to threats explained

103

**Basic instincts**

- Freeze
- Flight
- fight

**Autonomic nervous system: chemical dump**

- Effects of adrenaline
- Effects of cortisol
- Tunnel vision
- Auditory exclusion
- Loss of dexterity
- Reduction of cognitive ability
- Tachypsychia
  - Tachypsychia is the altered perception of time during stressful or emotional situations, such as time slowing down or speeding up

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## Maintain control

104

- Control starts with mindset
- Active observation
- Maintain positioning and proxemics
- Control the environment when possible
- Constantly reassess
- Have a contingency plans



The Importance of Situational Awareness in High-Risk Workplaces

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## Four stages of competence

105

- Originated in the 1970s by Noel Burch
- Designed to describe how people move through different levels of training
- From ignorance to mastery

<b>UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE</b> <small>You are unaware of the skill and your lack of proficiency</small>	<b>UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE</b> <small>Performing the skill becomes automatic</small>
<b>CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE</b> <small>You are aware of the skill but not yet proficient</small>	<b>CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE</b> <small>You are able to use the skill, but only with effort</small>

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## The four stages of competence

106

- **Four stages of competence**
  - Unconscious incompetence
  - Conscious incompetence
  - Conscious competence
  - Unconscious competence
- Practice
- Consistency
- Tactical breathing



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## Contingency Planning

107

- **Contingency planning is a methodical way of incorporating supplies, routes, and thinking in order to avoid and/or escape potentially dangerous situations and events**
- **There is an unofficial rule of preparedness planning**

- **The list**
  - Weapons
  - Medical supplies
  - Water & food
  - Cash
  - High-lumen flashlight
  - Electronic supplies
  - Multitool
  - Clothing
  - EDC – everyday carry

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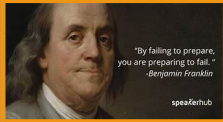
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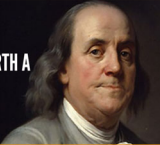


## Contingency Planning

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"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."  
- Benjamin Franklin  
speaKerHub



**AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND IN CURE**  
Benjamin Franklin

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**GRAY MAN THEORY**

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**Gray Man theory**

110

- **In the gray**
  - Our best weapons are our awareness level and observation skills, specifically, our "aura" of awareness will register with predators and our actions will make us more difficult to target
- **Predators "in the Gray"**
  - Avoid anything that will increase your "victim" status
- **Blending in**
  - Accomplished without any outward signs of stress or "anomalous" behaviors (staying within the baseline of your environment).

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**Three critical elements**

111

- **Appearance**
- **Behavior**
- **Situational awareness**



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## Gray Man Theory

112

Yes, reading can be considered a method to improve situational awareness. as it allows you to gain information about different environments and situations helping you to better understand and anticipate potential outcomes, which is a key component of situational awareness.

Gray Man Tactics:  
How To Hide In Plain Sight



www.TheBugOutBagGuide.com

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

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## Know your environment

114

- **Know Your Environment**
  - Understand the neighborhood, property history, and individuals involved.
  - Identify potential threats or hazards before approaching a scene.

CODE ENFORCEMENT



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## Establish a baseline

115

- **Establish a Baseline**
  - **Observe what "normal" looks like in each situation.**
  - **Compare behavior and surroundings against this baseline to spot abnormalities**



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## Observe Behavior and Body Language

116

- **Observe Behavior and Body Language**
  - **Watch for pre-attack indicators: clenched fists, pacing, glancing at exits, concealed hands.**
  - **Trust your instincts—if something feels off, it often is.**



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## Maintain a Tactical Position

117

- **Maintain a Tactical Position**
  - **Always keep an exit route in mind.**
  - **Avoid turning your back, getting boxed in, or standing too close to others.**



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## Use all Five Senses

118

- **Use All Five Senses**
  - **Sight:** watch for body language and environmental cues.
  - **Hearing:** listen for tone, aggression, or movement.
  - **Smell:** identify signs of drugs, chemicals, or smoke.
  - **Touch:** safely test surfaces or structures when needed.
  - **Intuition:** your internal alarm system.



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## Control your Presence

119

- **Control Your Presence**
  - **Project calm confidence; avoid appearing aggressive or fearful.**
  - **Use verbal de-escalation and neutral body language to reduce tension.**



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## Stay in condition Yellow

120

- **Stay in Condition Yellow**
  - **From Cooper's color code: relaxed but alert.**
  - **Constantly scan for threats, exits, or changes in behavior.**



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## Limit Distractions

121

- **Limit Distractions**
  - Avoid being on your phone or overly focused on paperwork.
  - Stay engaged with the surroundings at all times.



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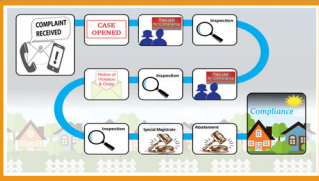
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## Have a Contingency Plan

122

- **Have a Contingency Plan**
  - Mentally rehearse "what if" scenarios (e.g., if someone becomes hostile).
  - Know when to disengage and call for backup.



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## Continuously Reassess

123

- **Continuously Reassess**
  - Situational awareness is not one moment—it's a continuous process.
  - Re-evaluate people, behaviors, and environment as the situation evolves.



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**CLOSING**

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**Closing**

125

- **Historical events**
- **Local news events**
- **Line of duty deaths**
  - 1. Jacqueline Summer Beard
  - 2. Dennis Catanyag
  - 3. Charles "Chip" Case
  - 4. Michael Tripus
  - 5. Jill Robinson

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**Closing**

126

- **i. Napoleon Bonaparte**
- **ii. What is situational awareness**
- **iii. Historical event: Eric Rudolph**
- **iv. Case study: Emergency**

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**Closing**

127

- **Understanding the assessment process**
  - 1. Evolution of technology – threats to code enforcement
  - 2. Vulnerable vs capable
  - 3. Cooper's Color codes of awareness
  - 4. OODA loop of Situational Awareness
  - 5. Kinesics of body language
- **Understanding threats**
  - 1. Human threats
  - 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs
  - 3. Criminal violence vs predators
  - 4. Criminal behaviors
  - 5. The Grayson and Stein Study
  - 6. 4 stages planning

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*LEADERSHIP  
THOUGHTS*

128

**General John  
Burford**

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**General John Burford  
Gettysburg July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863**

129

- **Buford's Key Observations:**
  - **Strategic Terrain:**
    - Buford recognized the high ground south of Gettysburg—Cemetery Hill, Culp's Hill, and Cemetery Ridge—as the key terrain that must be held for Union success.
    - He understood that whoever held the high ground would control the battlefield.
  - **Enemy Movement:**
    - Through skilled reconnaissance, Buford determined that Confederate infantry under General Heth was approaching from the west.
    - Buford accurately assessed that a major engagement was imminent and the Union Army needed to hold the area until reinforcements arrived.

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**General John Buford  
Gettysburg July 1st, 1863**

130

**Time and Space:**

- Buford knew he was outnumbered but chose to delay the enemy with dismounted cavalry tactics—fighting as infantry from strong defensive positions.
- He bought crucial hours for Union infantry under General John Reynolds to arrive and establish a defensive line.



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**General John Buford  
Gettysburg July 1st, 1863**

131

**Lessons in Situational Awareness:**

- General Buford's actions are a textbook example of situational awareness in a high-stakes environment:
- **Observe:** He understood the terrain and enemy movement.
- **Orient:** He processed battlefield information quickly.
- **Decide:** He committed to a defensive stand, knowing he was outnumbered.
- **Act:** He delayed the enemy just long enough for victory to become possible.



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**General John Buford  
Gettysburg July 1st, 1863**

132

**Application to Fire Service & Code Enforcement:**

- Like Buford, you may be first on scene—what you do in the first few minutes can determine outcomes.
- Terrain, people, behavior, and time are all part of your situational picture.
- Leadership isn't always about force—sometimes it's about timing, positioning, and clarity under pressure.

Leadership Lesson:  
"Leaders must see what others don't, decide before others will, and act while others hesitate."— Inspired by General John Buford



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**Resources**

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**Resources**

135

- 2020 New York State Fire Code
- IFSTA Essentials of Fire Fighting 7, Fire Protection Publications Oklahoma State University. 2018
- <https://www.hazmatuniversity.com/news/dot-hazard-class-reviewing-the-9-hazard-classes>
- <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/hazmat/fusion-center/transportation-commodities/dot-hazard-classification-system>
- <https://www.osha.com/blog/dot-hazard-classes>

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## Resources

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- **Emergency**
  - **Season 6, Episode 17**
- OODA loop
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqSZ-oubcsY>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paQZjrzkd8>
- Proxemics
- [youtube.com/watch?v=pw3FZ3xOBVo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pw3FZ3xOBVo)
- x

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**Final Slide - Situational Awareness**  
 Last updated - September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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