**Increase Personal Safety through Situational Awareness”**

**Simply put, situational awareness is the act of paying attention to what’s currently going on around you,**

**understanding how it affects you, and using that information to make decisions and take action if needed.**

**Maintaining situational awareness is an active process. As you walk down the street, your situation constantly**

**changes; you pass different people, different doorways, cross streets, etc.**

**These are all changes in your situation and each presents a potential safety issue.**

**Everyone is different;** **some people are naturally more or less aware of their surroundings than others. However,**

**there are some common factors that cause awareness problems for many people.**

**The most common thing that reduces aware is distraction.**

**Examples that we see every day include**:

• **Talking or texting on a smart phone**

**• Walking around listening to music on ear phones**

**• Daydreaming**

**Maintaining good awareness of your surroundings helps you stay safe**.

**A lack of situational awareness affects your personal safety in two broad categories:**

**1. Accidents**

**2. Crime**

**Any time you’re not paying attention to what’s going on around you, you’re more susceptible to being a victim of**

**an accident or a crime. If you’re not paying attention, you won’t have the information you need to avoid a**

**worsening situation. When you’re not paying attention to your surroundings, you’re more likely to stray into a**

**dangerous situation. When that happens, you may not be able to react in time to avoid harm.**

**Lack of awareness increases your risk of becoming a crime victim. You are more likely to be robbed or worse.**

**People who are unaware are easy victims. Criminals will choose them over people who look like they are aware of**

**the situation.**

**Situational awareness is a choice**.

**You must choose to take the actions necessary to become and stay aware of your surroundings.**

**Once you do this for a while, it will become second nature.**

**The following actions will get you started.**

**• Look at the people around you and what they’re doing. Don’t be rude and stare; just see who’s around,**

**where they are in relation to you, and what they may be doing.**

**• Note the “normal” level of noise and activity for wherever you happen to be so you can tell when**

**something abnormal may be happening. Your office, your neighbourhood, and the local corner store all have**

**a certain amount of activity that typically takes place. This is known as a “baseline”. If those places are**

**much busier or much quieter than the baseline, this could be an early sign that something is happening that**

**you should be aware of.**

**• If you’re uncomfortable about a situation, pay attention to that feeling. You may have picked up some**

**subtle clues about your surroundings without consciously recognizing them.**

**• Be aware of where you are and how to get somewhere else. That includes alternate exits and the quickest**

**way out of where you are. If something bad starts happening, you don’t want to have to start searching for**

**an exit.**

**• Don’t get overly involved with your smart phone in public. The smart phone is probably the single most**

**destructive thing to situational awareness. While you’re staring at your screen, you have no idea what is**

**happening around you. Any time I must use my phone in public, I get out of the crowd, stand somewhere**

**with my back to a wall, and look at my surroundings every 5-15 seconds.**

**• Understand the fact that bad things sometimes happen and can, in fact, happen to you. Ignorance or denial**

**of this can make it difficult for you to recognize a bad situation when it starts to develop. That will slow**

**down your response and limit your options.**

**Jeff Cooper, a Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel during the Korean War, came up with a color-coded system to**

**describe a person’s state of awareness of their surroundings. This system is frequently used as an aid in security**

**training as it provides a set of standard definitions that may be referred to.**

**Condition White**: **Oblivious to your surroundings. Walking with your head down, never looking around, perhaps**

**engrossed in a smart phone. A person in Condition White won’t know there’s a problem until they're in the middle**

**of it.**

**Condition Yellow**: **A relaxed state of general alertness. You’re head is up and looking around taking note of your**

**surroundings. If there’s trouble, you’ll see it coming.**

**Condition Orange**: **You’re aware of and focused on a specific situation that may be a threat such as angry yelling**

**nearby or an unusual smell of smoke in the air. You may feel the effects of adrenaline starting to flow.**

**Condition Red**: **You’re in “fight or flight” mode. There is an immediate threat that you must either confront or**

**escape. Adrenaline is flowing and preparing your body for action.**

**Which Condition Is Best?**

**Condition Yellow (**a **relaxed state of general alertness) is where you want to be when you’re in public. Being alert**

**and aware of what’s going on around you can help you avoid situations that lead to Orange and Red. At the very**

**least, you won’t be surprised by them.**

**People who spend their lives in Condition White often think that people in Condition Yellow are paranoid.**

**Situational awareness is paying attention to what’s happening around you so you can make intelligent decisions and**

**take action if needed.**

**Being afraid for no reason is not the same as being aware of your surroundings.**

**Situational awareness is a state of mind that you can reach and maintain with a little practice. It can help you have**

**the information you need to make decisions and take action to stay safe.**

**It’s your first line of defense against accidents and crime.**

**Ref: http:///Situational-Awareness-Increase-Personal-Safety-Through-Awareness-of-Your-Surroundings**

**“Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character.” Albert Einstein**