SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Defensive Driving Skills
Applied to Everyday Life
Situational Awareness Definitions

• Aviation Industry Definition
  – “Continuous extraction of environmental information, integration of this information with previous knowledge to form a coherent mental picture, and the use of that picture in directing further perception and anticipating future events” (Dominguez, 1994)

• Simple Definition
  – Knowing what is going on around you
Levels of Situational Awareness

1. Awareness of information
   – Using your human senses to make direct and indirect observations
   – Communicating (verbally and nonverbally)
   – Making the distinction between relevant and irrelevant information

2. Comprehension of its meaning

3. Anticipation
Awareness

- Scan for information
- Think about what you are seeing
  - You see new things all the time
- Make anticipatory decisions
  - Defensive driving applied to everyday life
Scanning Strategy

• Highest priority object first

• Use your peripheral vision (wide focus tracking) for tracking identified objects
  – Keep object(s) in focus as you scan other areas

• Use your concentrated focus to identify new objects
  – Think about what you are looking for
  – Think about what you are seeing
Comprehension

• Keep thinking during an incident
  – Use your senses
  – What is going on around you?

• Constantly identify options
  – Pro and cons
  – Compare as many possible variables

• Think about what you see in terms of safety and threats
Know Your Surroundings

• Always know where you are, inside and outside
  – Avenues of escape
  – Places of shelter
  – Potential hazards

• Memorize
  – Recognize sights and sounds foreign to your environment

• Visualize
Factors Affecting Loss of Awareness

• Tunnel vision
  – Not scanning
• Fixation or preoccupation
  – Work
  – Headphones
  – Cell phones
  – Texting
• Dynamic Situations
  – Inflexible response to fluid situation
Out

- Figure it Out
- Get Out
- Hide Out
- Call Out
- Keep Out
- Spread Out
- Take Out
- Help Out
Emergency Notification System

- Components
  - Your Senses
  - Your Intuition
  - Your Instinct
Survival Sequence

- Denial
- Deliberation
- Decision
- Action
Survival Sequence

- Denial
  - Denial can cause delay
  - Don’t be embarrassed
  - We need to quickly move to deliberation
- Deliberation
- Decision
- Action
Controlled Breathing

Inhale 4 Seconds
Hold 4 Seconds
Exhale 4 Seconds
Hold 4 Seconds
Inhale 4 Seconds
OODA Loop

- **Observe**
  - Scan your environment to gather information

- **Orient**
  - Synthesize data into information
  - Comprehend

- **Decide**
  - Consider options
  - Hypothesis

- **Act**
  - Test
  - Evaluate action
Figure it Out

- What is happening
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Where
  - How

- Why comes later

- Use your senses

- What are your options

- Don’t deny
Get Out

• If can get out to a safe area, do so
  – Get out fast
  – Don’t wait for others to validate your decision
  – Leave your belongings behind

• The best way to survive an active shooter situation
  – Don’t be where the threat is
  – Don’t go where you can be seen
Get Out

• When
  – Directed to Evacuate
  – Can Do So Safely
  – Violent Threat
  – HazMat Release Inside
  – Fire Alarm
Hide Out

• If you can’t get out, then find a place to hide out
  – Hidden from the shooter’s view
  – Protection should the shooter fire in your direction

• If possible, avoid places that might trap you or restrict your options of movement
Hide Out

• When
  – Cannot Safely Get Out
  – Directed to Shelter-in-Place
  – HazMat Release Outside
  – Tornado
  – Lightning
Call Out

• When you get out, immediately call out
  – Do not assume that someone else has called
  – Dial 911
  – Calmly and quickly tell them where you are and what’s occurring
    • Include the name of the shooter(s), if known
    • Number of shooter(s)
    • Description of the shooter(s)
    • Location of the shooter(s)
    • Number and types of weapons carried by the shooter(s)
  – Be persistent when calling since the phone lines may be jammed with other calls
• Keep out the shooter
  – A room that can be locked with plenty of things to hide behind is best
  – Blockade the door with heavy furniture (even if the door can be locked)
  – If the shooter is nearby, just lock door and be silent
  – Turn out the lights
  – Turn off any radios or other noise-producing sources
  – Silence your cell phone or pager
• As soon as you have the opportunity, and without attracting the shooter’s attention, call 911
Spread Out

• Spreading out will give you options and make it harder for the shooter if he does get into your hiding place

• Quietly talk about what you’ll do if the shooter enters

• Keep calm
  – You can have an effect on others
Take Out

• No other options
• Do whatever is necessary to stop the threat
  – Distract
  – Swarm
  – Use a hard object as a weapon, the bigger the object the better
• Only you can decide the right thing to do
• There is risk in any decision
Help Out

• Whatever action you’re taking, whether it’s get out or hide out and keep out, you should help out where you can
  – Help others escape as you go
  – Help prevent others from entering the danger zone
• Help injured, if possible
• Help set tone by remaining calm
  – Demonstrating calmness can have a contagious effect on others; it will help them to remain focused on survival
Look For

• Doors
  – Lockable from inside
  – No glass around door

• Rooms
  – Objects suitable for barricades
  – Objects suitable for cover
  – Windows for exiting
  – Objects for breaking windows

• Upper floors
  – Height above ground
  – Fire escapes
  – Multiple interior stairways

• Tools for defense
The term “panic” is often used when discussing evacuation and shelter-in-place movements. Post-event research has shown that in most cases people do not panic, and, instead, will try to help others. Most people will behave normally and make rational decisions during the incident. People will look to each other for information, validation, guidance, and assistance. Communication is KEY!
Group Behavior

• Group characteristics that are a concern when evacuating or sheltering-in-place are:
  – Context of group
  – Age
  – Physical Agility
  – Mental Agility
  – Physical Size
  – Relationships among group members
Group Behavior

- Advantage: groups tend to move in blocks, which can impose order on movement
- Disadvantage: large group movements can cause obstructions at choke points
- The larger the group, the more difficult it is to make a decision on whether to evacuate in response to a threat
- Once a group decides on a course of action, members of the group will try to convince other groups to engage in the same course of action
- Groups will try to move together, which could result in intergroup competition as faster groups try to move around slower groups
Group Behavior

• In the past, social ties help us survive emergencies

• We are shifting to technology reliance, which only works some of the time (Ripley, 2008)
Group Behavior

• Reality
  – Generally, no panic
  – Quiet
  – Submissive
  – Obedient
  – Considerate

• Dangers
  – Groupthink
  – Peer pressure
  – Corroboration
  – Slow to react
  – Too little, too late
Verbal Commands

D E E R

Direct ("Keep Moving")

Encourage ("You’re doing well"/ "Help your neighbor")

Example (Lead by example and Demeanor)

Redirect (Safest or open route—Keep Moving)
Risk Formula

- Rational Formula

\[
\text{Risk} = \text{Probability} \times \text{Consequence}
\]
Risk Formula

• Realistic Formula

Risk = Probability X Consequence X Dread/Optimism
Dread Formula

- Ripley, 2008

\[
\text{Dread} = \text{Uncontrollability} + \text{Unfamiliarity} + \\
\text{Imaginability} + \text{Suffering} + \\
\text{Scale of Destruction} + \text{Unfairness}
\]
Probable Threats

- Fire
- Weather
- Auto accident
- Trip/fall
Resources

• Emergency Management Institute
  – IS-907 Active Shooter What You Can Do
    http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is907.asp

• UNL Emergency Management
  – Shots Fired on Campus: When Lightning Strikes
    http://emergency.unl.edu/shotsfired/
References


Frederick Gardy
Assistant Police Chief
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department
402-472-4467
fgardy2@unl.edu