

HSSE MOMENT: Situational Awareness

1. What is Situational Awareness

Situational awareness is being aware of what is happening around you in terms of where you are, where you are supposed to be, and whether anyone or anything around you is a threat to your health and safety.

This practice of actively monitoring your surroundings in the workplace helps to identify threats before they occur and have time to react.

2. Why is Situational Awareness Important

It is important that everyone is aware of their surroundings, the potential hazards they face, and potentially how serious they are. The temporary loss or lack of situational awareness is a casual factor in many industrial accidents.

Often there is so much "going on" in your working environment, or you become so absorbed in your own thoughts, that you fail to spot those things that could pose a serious threat to your health and safety.

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3. Ways to Improve Situational Awareness

Get in the habit of regularly pausing to make a quick mental assessment of your working environment. When doing so, consider the following questions:

- a) Is there anything around you that poses a threat to your health and safety, and if so, to what extent?
- b) Is the threat big enough that you should stop working?
- c) Is there anything you can do to safely reduce that threat in order to carry on working safely?

If you see something unsafe or spot a hazard, don't walk by. Take responsibility to deal with it and intervene respectfully.

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4. What is the SLAM Technique?

S - STOP



Engage your mind before your hands. Look at the task at hand.

L - LOOK



Look at your workplace and find the hazards to you and your colleagues. Report any hazards immediately to your supervisor.

A - ASSESS



Assess the effects that the hazards have on you, the people you work with, equipment, procedures, pressures, and the environment. Ask yourself if you have the knowledge, training, and tools to do the task safely. Do this with your supervisor.

M - MANAGE



If you feel unsafe, stop working. Tell your supervisor and workmates. Tell your supervisor what actions you think are necessary to make the situation better.