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By: James Dean

Situational Awareness

Editor: Emily Hanson

Intermountain Power Service Corporation



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Situational awareness involves being aware of what is happening around you, taking everything into account, and adjusting your behavior to reduce the risk of injury to you, your family, or your co-workers.

Everyone is unique, and each situational awareness is developed by personal experiences and education. This must be taken into account when working with others who may not have the same experiences and education to develop situational awareness. Those with this knowledge use situational awareness to make decisions and train others on job assignments. However, it is important to remember that decisions should be made based on real-time conditions and experience, not just past exposures.

The **SLAM** technique is one effective situational awareness tool used throughout industry and the U.S. military. Those who follow this technique will improve their situational awareness and increase overall safety.

STOP

Stop the task and think. Look at each step. Ask:

- Is this a new task?
- Has the task changed?
- When was the last time I did this task?
- Do I feel comfortable doing this task?
- If not, do I need training?

LOOK

Look before, during, and after the completion of the task. Always:

- Inspect the work area for potential hazards.
- Identify the hazards for each step of the job/task.
- Evaluate what to do about them; complete a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) or work plan.

ASSESS

- Is everyone equipped to perform the task safely?
- Check that everyone has the correct knowledge, skills, training, and tools.
- What else is needed to perform the task safely?
- Encourage those involved to ask for help.
- No one should perform a task until he/she has been trained properly.

MANAGE

Managers should take appropriate action to eliminate or minimize any hazards on-site by:

- Ensuring the proper equipment is used and well-maintained.
- Thinking about the task just completed and asking, "What went well? What did not go well?"

- Did anything unexpected happen?
- How can everyone involved better prepare and plan in the future?

Human error is the single largest contributor to injuries in the workplace and accounts for as many as 80—90 percent of serious injuries and accidents. IPSC is dedicated to safety and has several programs and tools available to help employees be safe and develop better situational awareness. The job safety analysis form, or JSA, can be found on OnBase under document retrieval. The JSA can be used to discuss a job or assignment and make a plan in advance of the work being performed. This is where previous experience and situational awareness come into play as the potential hazards are identified and mitigation is discussed. This form helps employees develop a guide for the work ahead and determine what safety equipment and assistance will be needed.

IPSC employees are encouraged to fill out Safety Suggestion forms when hazards are encountered in the workplace. These suggestions are reviewed by the Central Safety Committee. A Safety Suggestion can be changed to an Action Item and rejected or sent to Staff for approval before being implemented. Many Safety Suggestions have been implemented over the years, making IPSC a safer facility for everyone.

Participating in the VOLTS observation program will also help develop situational awareness and shared knowledge among employees. The observer may point out potential hazards or issues with routine tasks or job assignments not noticed by the employee. The employee being observed also has the opportunity to explain why the job or task is being performed in a particular way. These observations serve two purposes; the observer is more aware of potential hazards, and the employee is sharing knowledge with the observer. Observations should include good communication and both parties coming away with a better understanding of the work process and job hazard evaluation.

It is important for everyone to be aware of his/her surroundings and the potential hazards they face each day at work and at home. We should always be looking out for our own safety as well as those around us. We may only get one chance to make the right choice.



**SITUATIONAL
AWARENESS**
It's paramount to your personal safety.