# Situational awareness safety moment and toolbox talk

29 CFR 1926.200, 1926.601, 1926.1424, 1926.21, 1910.178, 1926.416

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

**Opening question**

**Without turning around, can you name everything that is moving behind you right now?**

## Why it matters

Jobsites change all day. Equipment moves, crews shift, materials pile up and the weather turns. Situational awareness means noticing those changes, understanding what they mean for you, and thinking ahead to what could happen next. When we lose track of what is around us, we can walk into danger without ever seeing it.

## Key points

### 1 Notice, understand, think ahead

Situational awareness has three steps. First, notice what is around you: people, equipment, edges, loads and surfaces. Second, understand what it means for you, like a truck backing toward your work area. Third, think ahead about what could happen next and what you will do about it.

### 2 Scan before you start and when things change

Walk your area at the start of the shift and look up, down and all around. Look for what changed since yesterday: new holes, moved barricades, overhead work, new crews or wet surfaces. Scan again after breaks and whenever something new shows up. Read the signs, too: on construction sites, required safety signs must be visible at all times when work is being performed and removed or covered promptly when the hazard no longer exists (29 CFR 1926.200(a)).

29 CFR 1926.200(a)

### 3 Watch moving equipment and blind spots

Never walk behind a backing vehicle, and make eye contact with the operator before you get close. On off-highway jobsites, a truck or other motor vehicle with an obstructed view to the rear may be used only if it has a reverse signal alarm audible above the surrounding noise, or if it backs up only when an observer signals that it is safe (29 CFR 1926.601(b)(4)). In warehouses and plants, forklift drivers must slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and other places where vision is obstructed (29 CFR 1910.178(n)(4)).

29 CFR 1926.601(b)(4)

### 4 Stay out of the line of fire

Know where you would be if something moved, swung, fell or let go. No one may stand or pass under the elevated portion of a forklift, whether it is loaded or empty (29 CFR 1910.178(m)(2)). Around cranes, swing radius hazard areas must be marked with control lines, warning lines, railings or similar barriers, or with warning signs and high-visibility markings where barriers are not feasible (29 CFR 1926.1424(a)(2)(ii)). Stay outside them unless your job puts you there.

29 CFR 1926.1424(a)(2)(ii)

### 5 Cut the distractions

Phones, earbuds, rushing, fatigue and stress all pull your attention away from the work. Put the phone away when you walk through an active area or run equipment. If you are worn out or your mind is somewhere else, tell your lead and take a minute to reset.

### 6 Speak up and keep training

If you see a coworker heading into danger, warn them right away, and expect them to do the same for you. OSHA has no specific standard for situational awareness, but the general duty to train still applies. In construction, the employer must instruct each employee in the recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions and the regulations that apply to their work environment (29 CFR 1926.21(b)(2)).

29 CFR 1926.21(b)(2)

## Scenario

Picture this: A worker walks back from the parking area while reading a text. A loader is backing up to dump a bucket, and its backup alarm blends into the noise of a nearby saw. A coworker sees the worker step into the loader's path. What should the coworker do right now, and what could the worker have done differently?

## Crew discussion

1. What changed on this site since yesterday that could catch someone off guard?
2. Where are the blind spots and swing zones on this job today?
3. What distracts you most at work, and how can we cut it down?
4. How should we warn each other when someone is about to walk into danger?

**Bottom line** **Keep your head up, notice what is changing, and stay one step ahead of the hazard.**

**Free to share and adapt** for non-commercial use under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0). Credit: ToolboxKits, toolboxkits.com/topics/situational-awareness/

# Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Situational awareness / Conciencia situacional

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

| # | Name<br>Nombre | Signature<br>Firma | Company<br>Empresa | Date<br>Fecha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | |
| 13 | | | | |
| 14 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | |
| 16 | | | | |
| 17 | | | | |
| 18 | | | | |
| 19 | | | | |
| 20 | | | | |

Trainer signature / Firma del instructor _____ Time / Hora _____

ToolboxKits by ALC Media LLC. Not affiliated with OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. Not legal advice.