CrewSigned

Situational Awareness Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Situational awareness means knowing what is going on around you, understanding what it means, and thinking ahead about what could happen next. On a job site things change all day long. Equipment moves, loads swing, other trades show up, holes get dug and covered. The people who get hurt are often the ones who were focused on their own task and did not see the hazard coming.

Being struck by something and getting caught between things are two of the leading causes of deaths in construction. Think of a worker who steps behind a backing truck, gets pinned between a machine and a wall, or walks under a load. In many of those cases the hazard was there to see, but nobody saw it in time.

Start each day by taking a look. Before you start work, walk your area. What is different from yesterday? Where is the equipment working today? Are there new openings, new trenches, overhead work or traffic? If you have been away for a few days, assume things have changed.

Keep your head up and look around. Glance up for overhead work and loads, look down for holes and trip hazards, and look behind you before you step back. Every few minutes, lift your eyes from your work and check what has changed.

Know where the blind spots are. Operators of trucks, loaders, excavators and forklifts cannot see everything. If you cannot see the operator's eyes, assume they cannot see you. Make eye contact and get a signal before you walk near a machine. Stay out of swing areas and never walk between a moving machine and something solid.

Limit distractions. Phones, earbuds, rushing and daydreaming all pull your attention away. Keep your phone put away while you work, and do not wear earbuds on site unless they are approved hearing protection.

Pay attention to yourself too. Fatigue, stress, hunger and heat all make it harder to notice things. If you feel your attention slipping, take a short break.

Finally, speak up. If you see a coworker about to walk into danger, call out. If you notice a new hazard, tell the crew. Awareness works best when we share it.

Discussion questions

1. What changed on this site since yesterday that could catch someone off guard today?
2. Where are you most likely to end up in a blind spot of a machine or vehicle on this job?
3. What distracts you most during the day, and how do you get your focus back?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1926.21, Safety training and education
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.21

SOURCES

OSHA Construction Focus Four Training: https://www.osha.gov/training/outreach/construction/focus-four
Job Hazard Analysis (OSHA 3071): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3071.pdf
OSHA Construction Industry: https://www.osha.gov/construction

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Situational Awareness Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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