

PERSONAL AWARENESS

Cooper's Level of Awareness

Situational awareness gives us the ability to recognize a situation before it becomes dangerous to us. There are levels of awareness that range from “completely oblivious” to one’s surroundings, to being “prepared and ready” to execute a plan.

These levels have been broken down into Colors as follows:

CONDITION WHITE – “White” is the lowest level of awareness. In Condition White, one is “unaware” of their surroundings. They are not alert of what is happening around them. This state can be characterized as “daydreaming” or “pre-occupied.”

“I never saw him coming”

“He came out of nowhere”

“I had no idea he was there”

These are common comments from people “living in White” who ended up in a bad situation.

CONDITION YELLOW – Represents a state of “relaxed alert” of general awareness. One has no specific focal point but is generally “aware” of one’s surroundings. You are aware of people, vehicles, you’re looking around, and when necessary, can avoid “walking into” problematic situation. This is where people should live, mentally.

“I saw those two men talking across the street”

“I saw the man standing between the two cars in the parking lot”

Generally aware of one’s surroundings, but nothing that raises the hair on the back of your neck.

CONDITION ORANGE – This is a heightened state of alertness with a specific focal point. You notice a situation is or may occur, whether it be specifically to you, or near you. You begin to formulate possible responses to deal with the potential danger. An example of this is when you realize that a threat is indeed following you or advancing toward you.

“I saw the man following me in the store”

“I saw the man leering at me in the parking lot”

The difference between Yellow and Orange, in Yellow, you are generally aware of your environment, while in Orange, you are focused on a specific person, situation, or event.

CONDITION RED – In Red, you are ready to fight! You may or may not be actually fight. The point is that you are mentally prepared for a conflict, and thus could physically respond if the situation demands. It is physically and mentally exhausting to be in Condition Red, as it demands that you be 100% dedicated to the danger at hand.

The man that was leering at me in the parking lot is now following me to my car!

The goal is to maintain a Condition Yellow in your daily life. Being in Yellow allows you to be aware of your surroundings and better protect yourself from threats. For some, this could take some conscious effort in the beginning, but will shortly become second nature.

The method used to help with this can be learned from playing life games. What color was the car you parked next to? How many people were sitting at the table across from you? What was that person wearing? Or carrying?

Avoiding Hostage Situations can largely be prevented from situational awareness. The person living in “White” will more than likely end up in a hostage situation that the person living in Yellow and moving into condition Orange.

Do not assume just because you are not a high-ranking or prominent person that you are exempt from attacks or become a hostage. Some victims of previous attacks were chosen because other, more attractive, potential targets took precautions that eliminated them from consideration.

1 TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

Historically, most attacks, especially abductions, occur in mornings within 400 meters of the victim’s residence or place of employment. This is because both locations are within what is considered zones of high predictability. Departure time for work is usually predictable and routes to and from residence to work are generally limited.

- Vary the times and routes of your travel
- Whenever possible, park your car in a secure area. When no secure parking is available, vary your parking space so that the route between your car and office is varied.
- Check the area before exiting the vehicle.
- Always check the vehicle inside and out, before entering it.
- Avoid remote areas or areas where traffic can be easily blocked.
- Know the location of safe areas along your route (i.e. police, hospital, military, government or public facilities.)
- Consider installing a vehicle alarm.
- Always keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Have your telephone in the vehicle.
- Drive defensively, keeping alert to your surroundings and leaving adequate space around your vehicle for emergency maneuvering.
- If danger is suspected, report it using your telephone, and drive immediately to the nearest safe-haven.
- If there is shooting, lower yourself in the vehicle so that you present less of a target and depart the area as rapidly as possible. Most rounds will pass through the body of an unarmed vehicle, but they may be deflected, and their velocity and penetrating power will be reduced.

2 HOME SECURITY

Even if a victim is taken at home or office, a ruse is often used to gain entry. Assaulter have appeared in a variety of uniforms such as police, delivery services, or repair people. They may even carry authentic looking identification.

- Ideally, the residence should have a secure perimeter, a lockable garage, and adequate exterior lighting.
- Be alert to persons disguised as public utility crews, road workers, vendors etc.
- Select a safe room that will provide the family with temporary protection until help can arrive. The room should have a telephone, sturdy door with a lock and an emergency exit.

- Develop a family emergency escape plan.
- If an intruder is detected, move the family to the safe room and call for assistance. Remain in the safe room until help arrives unless you are forced to abandon it through your emergency exit and escape route.
- Consider installing an intrusion alarm.

3 OFFICE SECURITY

All employees should be alert to people disguised as public utility crews, road workers, vendors etc. who might station themselves near the office to observe activities and gather information.

All employees should watch for parked or abandoned vehicles near the entrance or walls of the office building.

They should provide the license number and description of occupants to Mission Security.

Employees should take seriously the responsibility for escorting visitors and be careful about whom they bring into the building.

Become familiar with all emergency plans. Know the appropriate action to take when alarms are activated. Know all escape routes and the location of safe havens and emergency equipment.

4 DETECTING SURVEILLANCE

The purpose of surveillance is to determine the vulnerability of the potential target based upon the security precautions that the individual takes and the most suitable time, location, and method of attack. Detecting and “burning” surveillance can discourage an attacker into choosing an easier target. Detecting surveillance requires a fairly constant state of alertness and must become a habit. A good sense of what is normal and what is unusual in your surroundings could be more important than any other type of security precaution you may take. There are three forms of surveillance: Stationary, foot, and vehicular.

4.1 Stationary surveillance

Is most commonly used by terrorist organizations. Stationary surveillance seek a position that permits them to observe the residence or office clearly without being observed or suspected. Stationary surveillance is sometimes conducted from a rented apartment.

Teams use a van with windows on the side or back that permit observation from the interior. Many times the surveillance vehicle will have the name of a store or utility company on the side to provide the pretext for its being in the area. The driver may park and walk away, leaving the surveillance team inside. Other methods surveillance uses to provide cover for their actions are automotive repairs, door to door sales, utility repair crews, lovers in a park, walking a dog, sitting in a café. Women and children are often used to give a greater appearance of innocence.

Stationary surveillance indicators:

- Parked cars with people in them
- Cars with mirrors that are larger than normal
- People seen in area more frequently than usual
- People who seem dressed inappropriately
- Workers who seem to accomplish nothing

4.2 Foot Surveillance

May be undertaken by one or more individuals. One-person foot surveillance is complicated and fairly easy to detect. The surveillance must remain relatively close to the target to avoid losing him or her. Two-person foot surveillance allows the surveillance to periodically change position so that if the target spots one of them, one will be soon out of sight, leading the target to think that he or she was mistaken. Foot surveillance with three or more people is the most sophisticated and most difficult to spot. A common technique is for one person to remain close enough behind the target to respond to any sudden moves. A second surveillance remains behind the first. A third travels on the opposite side of the street parallel or slightly behind the target. Some common methods for detecting surveillance are:

- stopping abruptly and looking to the rear
- suddenly reversing your course
- stopping abruptly after turning a corner
- watching reflections in shop windows
- entering a building and leaving immediately by another exit
- walking slowly, then rapidly at intervals
- dropping a piece of paper to see if anyone retrieves it
- boarding or exiting a bus or subway just before it departs
- making sudden turns while walking around the block
- While taking these actions, look for people who are taken by surprise, react inappropriately, suddenly change direction, or give a signal to someone else. Surveillance do not normally look directly at their target; however, they may do so if they are surprised or unaware that you are watching them. Other signs of foot surveillance are:
- personnel carrying shopping bag or other container for a change of clothes or disguise.
- where use of a disguise is suspected, pay particular attention to shoes, and slacks or skirts. These items are less easier to change

4.3 Vehicle Surveillance

Foot surveillance is often used in conjunction with vehicle surveillance since it is likely that the target will use a combination of foot and vehicle transportation. Vehicles used in transportation are usually inconspicuous in appearance and of subdued color. The distance between a surveillance vehicle and the target will vary depending on the speed at which the vehicles are travelling and the amount of traffic. In most cases however, surveillance will try to keep one or two vehicles between themselves and the target.

Sometimes it will be necessary for surveillance to break traffic regulations to avoid losing you. As with foot surveillance, vehicle surveillance may be undertaken using only one vehicle or using two or more vehicles. One-vehicle surveillance suffers from the same drawbacks as one-person foot surveillance. The target has to be kept in view at all times and followed by the same vehicle.

4.4 Vehicle Surveillance indicators:

- vehicle making movements corresponding with your own
- vehicle behind you running a red light
- vehicle making illegal U-turn
- excessive speeding

- sudden changes of lanes
- vehicle turning off onto side streets, then turning and then turning back to resume tail

4.5 Common methods for detecting vehicle surveillance:

- making a u turn where it is safe to do so
- going through a traffic light just as it is turning red
- stopping just beyond a curve or hill
- circling around a block

In each case, watch for the reactions of any vehicles that you may suspect. Any vehicles that make unusual maneuvers should be carefully noted. Pay particular attention to motorcycles or motor bikes, since in many parts of the world they seem to be favored by surveillance because they move easily through heavy traffic.