

Program Descriptions

Flawed Situational Awareness: The Stealth Killer of First Responders

This program shares the powerful findings of Dr. Gasaway's extensive research on issues related to first responder decision making and flawed situational awareness. In his review of hundreds of near-miss reports, case studies, line-of-duty death reports and videos he continually found himself being frustrated because there were so many clues, indicators and signs that the incident was going to end in disaster.

Yet, for some reason, personnel operating at the incident scene – from company officers to incident commanders – could not see it coming. Or if they did see it coming, they did nothing to alter their course.

In his research to understand why first responders were (seemingly) blind and deaf to what was happening right in front of them, Dr. Gasaway uncovered and investigated over one hundred barriers that can destroy situational awareness and flaw decision making.

This program focuses on some of the most pervasive situational awareness barriers first responders will face while operating in stress-filled, dynamically-changing environments.

Barriers to be explored and discussed will include:

- o Pre-arrival lens
- o Staffing issues
- o Complacency
- o Miscommunications
- o Overload
- o Task saturation
- o Mind drift
- o Human factors
- o Technology
- o Command support
- o Culture
- o Mission Myopia
- o Normalization of deviance
- o Overconfidence
- o Peer and supervisor pressure
- o Task fixation
- o Confabulation
- o Cognitive biases
- o The curse of knowledge
- o Command location
- o Fear-driven decisions
- o ... and more

Firefighter Safety: Mistakes and best practices

This program looks at a summary of 10 common mistakes and 10 best practices discovered from the presenter's extensive evaluation of more than 500 near-miss reports and line-of-duty casualty investigations. Improve your understanding of what's killing firefighters at incident scenes and how to improve fireground safety.

During this fast-paced program we will look at the role staffing, communications, command activities, size-up, strategy, standardized procedures, training, near-miss events and post incident evaluations play in best practices and common mistakes.

Rich Gasaway Biography

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway is widely considered a trusted authority on human factors, situational awareness and the high-risk decision making processes used in high-stress, high consequence work environments. He served 33 years on the front lines as a firefighter, EMT, Paramedic, company officer, training officer, fire chief and emergency incident commander. His doctoral research included the study of cognitive neuroscience to understand how human factors flaw situational awareness and impact high risk decision making under stress.

As the President of Situational Awareness Matters, Dr. Gasaway leads a team of expert instructors and thought leaders who train and consult worldwide. Dr. Gasaway has authored 7 books on situational awareness and high-risk decision making and his training programs have been delivered to more than 100,000 participants worldwide.

Hundreds of public safety agencies have relied on the Situational Awareness Matters team to help improve their emergency scene safety and high-risk decision making, including the New York City Fire Department's Incident Management Team and first responders from England, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

As a result of his work, fire chiefs, operations chiefs and safety officers often share with him their personnel make better decisions at high-stress, high-consequence, time compressed emergency scenes.