



# Tip *of the* Week

## Situational Awareness and Personal Security



### Tips to improve your situational awareness

Have you ever observed a group of police officers enter a café or coffee shop and take a seat at a table? To an outside observer the brief game of musical chairs that takes place as the officers select a chair and take a seat can be downright comical because it appears they all want the same seat at the table. This happens

for a good reason and we can learn something from this behavior.

Police officers by training and the nature of their work have a heightened sense of situational awareness. Their safety and sometimes their lives can depend on being aware of what is taking place around them. There is always one best chair to select at the table – the one with a view to the door and the widest perspective of the room. This seat gives the officer the best opportunity for situational awareness.

As civilians it is not necessary that we always select the table in the corner and the seat facing the door, but we can apply what police officers know about situational awareness to our day-to-day activities and greatly enhance our personal security.

#### Here are 10 tips to improve your situational awareness:

- 1. Have a plan** – When entering a public building, take note of entrances and exits. Be prepared to avoid a developing threat by evacuating if possible. Know your escape routes.
- 2. Don't place yourself in a vulnerable position** – If possible, take a seat away from main entry doors and within easy proximity to an evacuation route.
- 3. Identify areas of refuge** – Upon entering a building, identify potential locations where you can take cover if you are unable to evacuate during an attack.

**4. Select secure parking** – Choose parking locations near your destination and avoid dark or isolated areas.

**5. Focus on your surroundings** – Be aware of who is near you. Most threats come from people, so look around you and see who is nearby. Avoid people that appear threatening.

**6. Pay attention** – Walk with your head up and avoid reading texts or listening to music while you walk. Giving the appearance of being distracted makes you a logical target for criminals.

**7. Look directly at a threat** – If you feel threatened by someone, often looking directly at the individual communicates that you will not be an easy victim. Remember, criminals want easy victims.

**8. Take immediate action** – If threatened, do not be frozen by fear. A moment's hesitation can be the difference between becoming a victim or successfully averting an attack or avoiding an attacker.

**9. Avoid routine** – Change your route and schedule from time to time. Routine behavior not only makes you predictable and thus an easy target for criminals, but it also invites complacency and diminished situational awareness.

**10. Commit to Action** – Once you perceive a threat you are generally afforded three courses of action: You can flee or evacuate, you can seek cover, or you can fight as a last resort. Only you can decide the most appropriate course of action for your situation. Once you decide on a course of action, commit to your course of action as if your life depends on it-because it just might.



Enhanced situational awareness is portable and improves your security everywhere you go. Heightening your awareness may be the simplest and easiest thing you can do to dramatically improve your personal security.

Call **1-800 421-0614** or visit us at [www.rampartgroup.com](http://www.rampartgroup.com) for further ideas on protection and security. Thanks for reading!



**Kathy Leodler**  
Chief Executive Officer  
[kathy.l@rampartgroup.com](mailto:kathy.l@rampartgroup.com)  
(360) 981-2703



**Paul Leodler**  
Executive Vice President  
[paul.l@rampartgroup.com](mailto:paul.l@rampartgroup.com)  
(360) 981-3397