



AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION

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Compliance Reminder: Situational Awareness

December 15, 2014

What is situational awareness and why is it so important to us as Aircraft Maintenance Technicians (AMTs)? It is defined as simply being aware of your surroundings and the conditions you are in. You must always consider where you are and what's going on around you. This requires a person or a group of people to assess and become aware of relevant factors in their current environment, consider any consequences of these factors, and foresee future implications. This means to be aware of the conditions in your work area and to recognize and address unsafe conditions before they become an issue.

Examples of a lack of situational awareness could be moving aircraft and not acknowledging existing structures or aircraft in area, aircraft not secured during a storm, or tools left in a position where they could easily fall and cause damage or injury if they are disturbed. It could be darkness, noise, or not using your personal protective equipment. The best people to identify problems are the AMTs as they are the ones performing the work and are familiar with the circumstances of each individual event. If the safety concern is beyond their control, they can report the issue to their Safety and Standards Chairman or group member for a remedy.

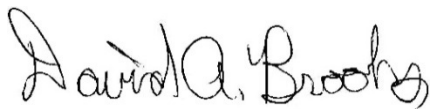
So, what is the best way to address situational awareness? Trust your gut – your instincts will begin to practice situational awareness well before your mind does. This is why you have heard *listen to your gut* or initial instincts as this is the first step of situational awareness. Learn to recognize the situation and then act on any red flags that arise. The workplace environment is the primary area where you will need to focus most of your attention to address situational awareness issues; however, you will also need to practice this at home and on your way to and from work. We want to eliminate unsafe practices which can lead to incidents/accidents. Keep in mind weather conditions, lighting conditions, communication, procedures and work conditions among other factors.

It can be easy to not worry about the workplace, as nothing has happened here before and it is not likely to happen in the future, but we must believe that prevention is the best way to represent safety and to be situationally aware. Starting from the time we leave home in the morning until the time we return, we get so busy because of all the things life throws at us, we sometimes forget about situational awareness. It does no one any good to get injured or killed either on the way to work or responding to a maintenance call at the aircraft. We being human can and do lose touch. It is imperative that we as professionals stop and get a handle on what is actually going on before we throw ourselves in overdrive.

We have all been caught once or twice being in too much of a hurry to get the job done to go put out the next fire. It seems that the simple task, or the task we do all the time, is the one that will come back to bite us. You may know that someone else is working on the aircraft, but has he or she done all the things required making the aircraft safe to work on? Go and check, have they left a door open, or a wrench in the wheel well? Maybe they have lost situational awareness in a way that will adversely

affect you. You owe it to yourself, your passengers, and your family to stop and check on what is really going on.

Situational awareness can never be plateaued, and the AMT on the ground is responsible to combine many elements like safety, legality, and quality. Also remember that dialing 911 might not work at all stations, and some stations have individual safety numbers. You should have these numbers in your phone in case you need them in a hurry. You must recognize situations, and if you are feeling ill -- especially if you are in a position where you work alone or if you see something that requires an emergency contact -- you will have these numbers readily available so you can immediately call for help. Stay involved, recognize potential issues, and be situationally aware. It is better to call and not be needed than to be needed and not call. Protect yourselves and your coworkers. Stay aware and safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David A. Brooks
National Safety & Standards Director