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# Mind Matters

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## About the concept “Situation Awareness”

The importance of knowing what is going on around you.

Proper Situation Awareness means the capacity to read and understand an on-going situation correctly – to follow it – and to anticipate how it may develop.

Adequate Situation Awareness has been recognised as a critical foundation for successful decision-making, especially in complex and dynamic areas such as shipping and aviation.

In addition, inadequate Situation Awareness has been identified as one of the primary factors in accidents attributed to human error.

There are two main features that are important for Situation Awareness:

- the presence of accessible and reliable information;
- someone to process the information and draw correct conclusions from it.

### An Individual Capacity

The capacity for Situation Awareness is a psychological capacity connected with the individual. Some have a natural capacity for objective and unbiased perception – thus adequate Situation Awareness. Others are more subjective; they might be slow to comprehend, turn a blind eye to vital information, make omissions and even evade perceiving a situation as it is.

### Situation Awareness and Stress

Difficulties in maintaining proper Situation Awareness may be exacerbated in situations that are ominous or involving tension and anxiety, i.e. emotions that create stress. It is well known that stress negatively influences rational and objective perception by making us more subjective.

Closely connected with Situation Awareness are capacities like vigilance and presence of mind. Situation Awareness, vigilance, stress-resistance as well as presence of mind, are among the vital and safety-critical capacities a mariner needs to have.

Such capacities are included in a psychological assessment by Marine Profile.