To make sound and timely decisions, fire leaders assess the situation, seek out relevant information, weigh options, make judgments, and initiate action as required to create a positive outcome within inevitable time constraints.

Consciously or subconsciously, people go through this cycle every time they make a decision. How well perception matches reality is called **Situation Awareness**. If one’s situation awareness is high, he or she has an accurate perception of reality.

**Recognition** means that a person determines that something needs to be done, that the environment must be changed in some way.

**Option Selection** involves understanding the factors and risks associated with various courses of action.

At the **Decision Point**, the best option is selected.

**Action** means acting on the selected option then returning to the situation awareness cycle—perceiving and gathering information—to assess the results of the action.

A better understanding of the decision-making cycle enables people to consciously step through the processes to make sure they gather appropriate information, weigh options, and ultimately make the best decision within time constraints.

**Discussion Points**
- What influences option selection?
- What do you do when a poor decision is made?
- Do you always have enough time to make the decision?

**References:**
- Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program
- Leading In the Wildland Fire Service

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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