



# LEAD Time

Making Sound and Timely Decisions  
*Leadership Category*

The cornerstone of good decision making is good situation awareness. Leaders can increase their decision space by attaining and maintaining good situation awareness. Decision space is simply the amount of time that a decision maker has for considering options before reaching a required decision point.

## Situation Awareness Cycle

**Situation Awareness** is depicted as a cycle because the situation and people's perceptions are constantly changing. This internal cycle continues as long as people are awake. Everyone starts with an initial perception of any given situation and then continuously updates it with new information. People gather information through both **observation**, which includes input from the senses, and **communication**, which includes face-to-face conversation, written communication, and radio or telephone exchanges.

Simply paying attention is an important part of maintaining good situation awareness, but even more important is determining what to pay attention to. All perceptions are subject to filtering and focusing: people constantly filter information and shift focus. People also produce a lot of internal inputs such as thoughts about what to do next, stress, memories of similar experiences, fear.

Those with more experience in an environment often can more easily filter out distractions and unimportant details and focus on the most salient information.

### Discussion Points

- What does situation awareness mean?
- What are the actions that influence situation awareness?
- Is it possible to lose situation awareness?
- Does your situation awareness match reality consistently?

### References:

[Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program](#)  
[Leading In the Wildland Fire Service](#)

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**Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.**

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