



MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

DRILL OF THE MONTH

Throughout 2026 we will be running a Drill of the Month in each edition of the newsletter. The goal is help motivate folks to get to the range and actually shoot their defensive weapons, and to have some fun in the process. Each month we'll post a drill or a short course of fire. You are encouraged to go to the range, shoot the drill, and then post your thoughts and a photo of your target on the Rangemaster Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rangemaster/> .

Baseline Assessment Drill

We use this drill frequently to measure individual skill level, and periodically check to see if we are gaining, maintaining, or losing skill. As the name implies, it identifies a baseline which can be used to track progress or to identify skill sets which need more work.

Use a B-8 repair center, FBI-IP-1 bullseye, or the bullseye on an LTT-1 target, scored as printed. This drill is intended to be shot cold, from concealed carry. If using a full size B-8, nothing further out than the 7 ring counts as a hit.

5 yards Draw and fire 5 rounds in 5 seconds, using both hands.

5 yards Start gun in hand, at Ready, in dominant hand only. Fire 3 rounds in 3 seconds.

5 yards Start gun in hand, at Ready, in non-dominant hand only. Fire 2 rounds in 3 seconds.

7 yards Start gun in hand, loaded with 3 rounds only. Fire 3 rounds, conduct an empty gun reload, and fire 3 more rounds, all in 10 seconds.

10 yards Start gun in hand, at Ready. Fire 4 rounds in 4 seconds.

20 rounds total. Possible score = 200



Practice on Informal Ranges?

If you are going to shoot your firearms on property not designed and maintained as a firing range, you are going to have to take precautions. Here are a few things to consider.

Is there an adequate backstop? A tree-line is **NOT** suitable as a backstop, no matter how thickly or densely wooded it appears to you. There is space between those trees and bullets will invariably find those openings.

Is there a safe place to handle weapons administratively? That space should include a bullet proof backstop, just like the firing area.

Is your berm/backstop adequate? Your berm or backstop must be capable of safely containing whatever type of ammunition you will be firing. There should be no large rocks or pieces of metal in the back-stop, as these can cause bounce-backs, or ricochets.

Is the berm tall enough to prevent a round from going over it? At typical shooting distances, if the muzzle is above the top of the berm, that round will travel quite a distance. A pistol bullet fired at that angle will travel a mile or a bit more. A centerfire rifle round fired at that angle may fly two miles. So, you need to know what is on the other side of that berm for quite a distance.

Remember that YOU will be held accountable for the final resting place of every bullet you launch. Here are three cases that illustrate the results of not paying heed to these issues.

[Woman killed by stray bullet fired by neighbor who got gun as Christmas gift, authorities say](#)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shannon%27s_law_\(Arizona\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shannon%27s_law_(Arizona))

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/sheriff-woman-killed-armed-neighbor-190043207.html>

On a Related Note

Here are two cases that highlight the need for higher skill with your sidearm. In both cases, police officers fired at a suspect but their bullets struck and killed innocent bystanders. In both cases the officers were charged with manslaughter and were prosecuted. If the system will do this to police officers, it sure as Hell will do it to an armed citizen.

A lot of people have this goofy notion that if you are involved in a shooting, there will be YOU, THE BAD GUY, and NO ONE ELSE for at least a mile in any direction. What nonsense! You are, by far, the most likely to need that gun in an urban area, on the parking lot of a convenience store, a gas station, a shopping center, or some place

similar. There may be anywhere from a half dozen to literally hundreds of non-involved people around. You are not going to be excused from responsibility/accountability for your rounds just because someone else (the BG) is doing something bad. He will be held accountable for his actions. You will be held accountable for yours. Train accordingly.

[Four Miami-Dade police officers indicted for 2019 shootout that left UPS driver and passerby dead - CBS Miami](#)

<https://www.essence.com/news/fanta-bility-murder-plea/>



Minimum Standards?

By Jeff Gonzales

Jeff is a decorated former Navy SEAL and has been in the private training community since the 1990's. I have had the pleasure of training with him and he is a regular presenter at Tac Con.

Something that has been on my mind for a while, like years. I've had so many conversations over the years on this subject, but everyone of them continues to reinforce my original opinion, make it special.

The problem with marksmanship qualification is that there is no single, universal standard by which everyone is measured. Nearly every department or agency has its own criteria for determining who is qualified to carry a deadly force option such as a handgun. The problem goes deeper: there is also no consistent approach to training that truly reflects the realities and consequences of deadly force. In many places, qualifications are mistakenly treated as training. The best system I've seen required quarterly qualification for all personnel. While this seems like a good idea, logistical challenges grow rapidly as the number of participating personnel increases.

There is no simple solution, but I strongly believe in rewarding excellence. If organizations place such importance on meeting minimum standards, they should also recognize and reward those who exceed them. That is how culture changes, and how a mindset develops where the minimum standard is no longer acceptable.

Here's how such a system could work. Whatever the training pipeline looks like, it should end with a demonstration of skill. This

would be stage one—the minimum standard. After completing intensive training, the individual demonstrates their newly learned skills and is acknowledged through graduation and acceptance into their peer group.

At whatever interval qualifications occur—quarterly, biannually, or annually—the new officer must continue to demonstrate the same skills to the same standard with their originally issued equipment in order to remain qualified. This is where things become interesting. The culture should encourage individuals to do more. Those who want to excel should be recognized for their achievements and supported through appropriate logistical resources. After their first year, personnel who continue to meet standards would be eligible to advance to the next tier. In addition to their original issued firearm, they would gain access to an approved list of additional firearms, available if they improve their qualification score. For example, if the minimum standard is 70% and they improve to 80%, they could select from the approved list, though they would be responsible for supporting their new equipment choice, including duty gear.

If they continue to qualify at 80% or above, they retain the privilege of carrying their approved choice. If they fail to maintain that higher standard, they revert to their original issued equipment and must start the process over. The final tier would be set at 90%. At this level, those who qualify could carry any approved firearm within authorized caliber, manufacturer, and capacity limits. Continued performance at 90% maintains this privilege; failure resets them to the original issue.

The culture created by this system is one of “specialized achievement” and meaningful incentive. It only takes a few visible successes for the culture to begin shifting. Yes, there will be challenges; some people may feel left out or discouraged. But when lives are at stake, these issues can be managed through mentorship and professional guidance. Those who want to excel will need to train more, and while organizations may not mandate it, they should support it with range time and ammunition. Clear parameters would be needed to provide structure and prevent abuse, but excellence should be encouraged, not suppressed.

Additional incentives, such as increased pay or formal recognition, could further reinforce the culture. Ultimately, those who want to excel will thrive in this environment, and those who do not will naturally fall behind. Minimum standards may remain weak or imperfect—that is a separate discussion. The purpose of this proposal is to focus on people. This is a human issue that can only be solved by building a culture of excellence—one that people want to join, are proud to belong to, and are inspired to strengthen from within.

Editor’s Note- The Los Angeles Police Department has been doing this for decades, back to the 1960’s. They re-qualify with their handguns four times per year, and in each session they get an opportunity to shoot “the Bonus Course”. That is a very demanding course and a score of 385 or above out of 400 gets you an award. You get a cash bonus added to your check, which was a fairly decent amount in 1960’s dollars, and you get a special medal to wear on your uniform. This has helped LAPD maintain a culture of excellence.

Situational Awareness: Space, Time, and the Self

This was written by Jim Shanahan. Jim retired from the US Army, then continued working as a government contract trainer. He has been a private sector trainer now for several years. He is a Grand Master in USPSA, a Master in IDPA, and a Rangemaster certified Professional Pistolcraft Instructor. Pay heed.

Most conversations about situational awareness stop at “*pay attention.*” That’s about as useful as telling a new shooter to “*slow down.*” It sounds like advice, but it provides no structure, no process, and no way to improve.

Situational awareness is not a mindset.
It’s not a personality trait.
And it is definitely not a color-coded mental state.

Situational awareness is a **skill** that must be built deliberately, tested honestly, and maintained intentionally. That skill is rooted in the interaction of three elements:

1. **Spatial Awareness** – understanding where you are in relation to the environment
2. **Time Awareness** – understanding how fast things are unfolding and how quickly you must act
3. **Self-Awareness** – understanding your abilities, limitations, behavior, and how you influence the other two

Situational awareness lives at the intersection of **space, time, and the individual**. Miss one, and the other two collapse.

1. Spatial Awareness: The Map You Carry in Your Head

Spatial awareness is your internal map of the world around you. It’s not just seeing, it’s understanding where you are, where threats could come from, and what options exist at any given moment.

When you walk into a room, drive into a parking lot, or stand in line at a store, your performance in a critical incident depends on your ability to answer a few fundamental questions:

1. Where am I in this environment?
2. What around me matters? (exits, cover, obstacles, crowds, escape routes)
3. What could enter this environment? (people, vehicles, angles, exposures)
4. How does this terrain help or hurt me?

You'll notice these questions closely resemble the **Decision Engine**. That's not accidental. Spatial awareness feeds the Engine with usable information.

Think of spatial awareness as a constantly updating 3-D model in your head. It determines:

- Where you can move
- How you can move
- What movement will cost you
- What movement will buy you time

If you don't know where you are, you don't know what you can do.

2. Time Awareness: Most People See Space—Few See Time

Time awareness is what separates the passive observer from the deliberate responder.

Most people see *events*.

Trained people see *timelines*.

You are not reacting to what is happening right now you are reacting to what will happen next. Time awareness includes:

- How quickly a threat is developing
- How long you have before advantage disappears
- Where you sit inside another person's timeline
- How your actions compress or expand that timeline

Every violent encounter is governed by tempo. Criminals thrive on stealing time from victims. Victims lose because they don't realize time is being taken from them.

This is why hesitation kills. Not because of fear, because of math.

If you misjudge time, it doesn't matter how good your shooting is or how well you understand the environment. You will always be late.

Your awareness of time determines:

- When you move
- When you act
- When you draw
- When you communicate
- When you disengage

A person who understands time has initiative.

A person who does not is always reacting and reacting could be losing.

3. Self-Awareness: You Are the Variable

The final pillar is the one most often ignored and the one that makes everything else work.

If spatial awareness defines *where* you can move, and time awareness defines *when* you must move, self-awareness determines whether you are capable of moving correctly at all.

Self-awareness includes:

- Your actual skill level
- Your physical limitations
- Injury, fatigue, or stress
- Emotional reactivity
- Conditioning under pressure
- Decision-making speed
- Your ability to accept reality as it unfolds

You can't evaluate space if you don't understand what you're capable of inside it. You can't manage a timeline if you don't understand the timeline of your own performance.

Ask yourself:

- How fast can I clear a cover garment?
- How quickly can I draw *right now*?
- How far can I move in one second?
- How long does it take me to recognize, decide, and act?
- What does my performance look like when stressed, tired, or distracted?

If you don't know these answers, you have no way to know whether the time you *think* you have is real or imaginary.

Self-awareness is the lens that turns space and time into action.
Without it, situational awareness is theoretical.
With it, situational awareness becomes operational.

Situational Awareness Is Not Passive

Situational awareness is not “being alert.”

It is not scanning.

It is not paranoia.

It is the ability to:

1. Perceive what is happening
2. Interpret what it means
3. Predict what is likely to happen next
4. Position yourself to influence the outcome
5. Perform actions aligned with space, time, and capability

This is proactive, not reactive.

It is movement, not mindfulness.

Situational awareness is not about noticing danger, it's about placing yourself in a position to act early and decisively.

Why Many People Get Situational Awareness Wrong

People misunderstand situational awareness because they treat it as:

- A personality trait (“be more aware”)
- A moral value (“don't be a victim”)

- A slogan (“stay in condition yellow”)
- A policing habit (“scan and assess”)

None of these create action.

True situational awareness is a **cycle**, not a command:

See - Understand - Decide - Act - Update

That cycle runs continuously as space, time, and your own condition change.

A Practical Example: Space, Time, and Self in Action

You’re walking toward your car in a parking lot at night.

Spatial Awareness

You notice the lighting, blind corners, vehicles, a person sitting in a car two rows over, and the gap behind your vehicle where someone could approach unseen.

Time Awareness

You observe someone walking diagonally through the lot. Their path intersects yours in about five seconds. You estimate how long it will take you to reach your car, unlock it, and get inside.

Self-Awareness

Your hands are full. Your keys aren’t out. Your draw speed is compromised. You’re tired and mentally slow from a long day.

The Interaction

You change speed. Adjust your path. Free a hand. Prep your keys early. You reposition to maintain distance and shift the timeline in your favor.

That is situational awareness in action—not scanning, not fear, but deliberate environmental management based on space, time, and self.

The Bottom Line

Situational awareness is not a slogan.

It is the skill of managing:

- Where you are
- When events are unfolding
- Who you are in that moment

It determines whether you see danger early, whether you move correctly, and whether you act in time.

If you want better situational awareness, improve:

- Your understanding of environments
- Your recognition of timelines
- Your honesty about your own performance
- Your ability to move, decide, and act deliberately

Situational awareness is not about watching the world.
It's about understanding **your place in it**.

And in any critical incident, on duty, off duty, or in everyday life, that understanding is what buys time, creates opportunity, and saves lives.

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

April 9 One Day Shotgun Xenia, OH (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eaec6f02127913e33f5ea>

April 10-11 Advanced Instructor Xenia, OH (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb089f02127913e341fb6>

April 10-12 Firearms Instructor, Tucson, Arizona (John Hearne)
Pima Pistol Club

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/68b0e9268ceed808a22b1b32>

April 18-19 Advanced SGN Instructor Apache, NC (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/68b1eb178ceed808a24b8df>

May 8-10 Professional Pistolcraft Instructor, Boondocks Jackson, Mississippi (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb26cf02127913e344008>

June 5-7, Instructor Course, Patriot, Eastaboga, AL (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb5c6f02127913e3490f7>

June 13-14 Advanced Instructor, Patriot, Eastaboga, AL (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb6cef02127913e34aacf>

June 19-21 Shotgun Instructor, Buford, GA (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb7ecf02127913e34c541>

July 17-19 Instructor Course, Shreveport, LA (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb90af02127913e34e5c3>

