

Eye on Safety – February 2025

Take 5 for Safety – Situational Awareness

“Situational awareness” is the ability to be aware of your surroundings, understand what’s happening, and respond to potential threats. It’s a key skill for safety and effective decision-making. So being aware of your surroundings is the difference between an uneventful day and a life-changing injury. We have had a number of incidents recently where this was a significant factor.

How to practice situational awareness

“**TAKE 5**” before starting a task – especially if unfamiliar or non-routine:

1. **STOP & THINK** about the task to be done
2. **IDENTIFY** the hazards involved in the task and in your surroundings
3. **ASSESS** the level of risk involved and damage that could result
4. **CONTROL** the hazards by using safer methods and precautions.
5. **PROCEED** with doing the job safely IF you can control the hazards & limit risk

The last of these is critical – proceed only IF you can do so without unreasonable risk. Sometimes the best course of action if you cannot reasonably control the hazards is

- Delay the task until you can control the risk
- Call on someone that is equipped or experienced that can do the task safely

No task at KYTC is so urgent that you should risk injury to you or others to get it done right now! It’s not a coincidence that KYTC’s Daily Job Safety Briefing concept follows the basic process above, and that is why we urge every team to conduct them for each day or new job.

Tips for every day

- Be mindful and present in the moment – be attentive to your surroundings.
- Be observant of people and activities around you.
- Don’t assume that “it” can’t happen to you or won’t happen today.
- Limit distractions, especially in higher-risk environments
- Look for your “way out” if something unintended occurs
- If you don’t know how or don’t have the right tools for the task – ask for help.
- Watch out for risk factors that can impair situational awareness: Fatigue, stressful situations, time pressures, poorly defined instructions, distractions, unfamiliar task, or environment.
- As reflected in KYTC’s values: put Safety first in all decision making!