

Situational Awareness in Social Settings

Use the same skills as in any social setting (looking for contacts) with an additional focus. Does someone or something seem out of place? “What’s wrong in my right world?” *Have some faith in your intuition.*

Practice surveillance detection, especially when leaving. Remember that ordinary crime occurs around events, as well. Identify safe areas along your route in advance. Ask for security assistance if you’re uncomfortable with the situation. *Have some faith in your intuition.*

Watch for targeting indicators; paralleling, hard focus, forces surrounding, etc.

Stay aware of exit locations. If you will be in a fixed position for a while, e.g., seated at dinner, identify the nearest exit to you, just as on an airliner. Note exits near restrooms immediately upon entering the venue. We tend to be distracted when we need to visit the restroom so it’s best to identify these in advance. Consider non-traditional exits, such as through kitchens or maintenance areas, if necessary.

Beware of the possibility of secondary devices; clear the area completely if there’s an incident. Go back to your hotel or residence immediately, don’t hang around the venue.

Discard unattended drinks. Once it’s been out of your control, get a new one.

If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, don’t ignore it, explore it. Alert others, preferably security, about issues. *Have some faith in your intuition.*

Increase and decrease awareness as the situation requires. E.g., increase awareness when going to or leaving the venue since there will be less security presence outside. Don’t try to be on ‘red alert’ all the time. It’s neither possible nor mentally healthy.

Ditch high heels if you have to move quickly.

Fleeing is preferable to hiding under a table if an incident involving small arms occurs. Gunshot wounds from a distance tend to be survivable. Close range executions are usually fatal. Determine a nearby point that offers cover or concealment and move quickly to it. Assess the situation and then repeat the process to escape.

Note locations of fire extinguishers. They are useful in case someone is on fire following a bomb and also as an improvised weapon. If you are on fire, drop and roll to put it out before running.

Sidenote on using improvised weapons:

There is no need to challenge or warn an active killer!

Get behind him [her], focus your attention on the back of the head and, without warning, smash it as hard as you can with the fire extinguisher or whatever you have. Continue to nail them until they stop moving.

Then run away to safety.

If there is an incident, accept being separated from your party. Leaving the area and finding shelter should be your primary emphasis not looking for others, unless they are small children.

Look for things or people that you may enjoy, as well. The object of terrorism is to change our society for the worse. Don’t let it do that to us.