

Freedom From Fear: Safety Awareness for the Trucking Professional



Hello, today I start my personal safety instruction and advice column for the Laredo Motor Carrier Association. I am the President of Michael Mercer Consulting and CEO/Founder of F3Defense. I am a retired police officer and a crime prevention consultant with over 30 years of experience preventing crimes against people, businesses, and properties. I started F3Defense to save lives. The past year has shown a dramatic increase in violence against the motoring public. F3Defense consists of a diverse team of top-level industry professionals with over 60 years combined experience in law enforcement and executive protection, and over 15 years of experience in the trucking industry. Our mission is to help keep you safe during your travels. We understand that you may find yourself in unsafe and unfamiliar cities, towns, and parking locations. You may have to park and layover in high crime or isolated areas. F3Defense was designed to be easily installed by you or if you need you can have your mechanic install the system. The system is foolproof, you pull the trigger on the pepper spray canister and anyone outside your cab will very quickly regret their decision to attack you.

How Truck Drivers (or anyone) Can Prevent An Attack

Prevention is the key to your safety. Prevention, Prevention, Prevention. You wear a seatbelt when you drive or ride in a vehicle. You fly on planes with oxygen masks. You have fire alarms and fire extinguishers. But what precautions do you take for your own personal safety? By the numbers you are 52 times more likely to experience violence than receive a serious injury in a vehicle crash. You are nearly 1,000 times more likely to be killed or maimed in an attack than dying in a plane crash. And, you are 229 times more likely to be violently assaulted than have your house catch on fire. We take so many precautions for everything else. We forget to take the necessary steps to make sure that the most important thing you protect is yourself. If you do not make your personal safety a priority the bad guy will take advantage of your ill preparedness and attack you. Your personal safety is not a convenience, it is something that you need to work at and make it a ritual. You need it to become second nature. It takes many hours of intentional focus on your safety to create muscle memory. This will become second nature. Only through continual practice do we accomplish muscle

memory. I remember back in the olden days when we did not have to wear a seatbelt. When it became mandatory, it was difficult to remember to harness yourself every day. It took concentration, continual practice and maybe even a ticket to get to the point when you no longer thought about latching the belt. This is where you need to be when it comes to your safety. You need to oversee this aspect of your life. Nobody else is responsible for your safety.



Avoidance and Awareness

Time + Distance = Safety. You want to put as much time and space between you and your attacker(s) . In order to accomplish this, you must employ situational awareness in your everyday life. Unfortunately, the attacker has the advantage. He or she knows exactly when the attack is going to happen and to whom. For you to gain an advantage on the predator you must understand the Psychology of the Attacker. I am going to teach you the secret to staying safe. This is the foundation of all self-defense applications. Know the attacker. The Four “T’s”, when you know how an assailant calculates and attacks, you can help prevent it from happening to you or to a loved one. The first “T” is Target, the predator is watching and waiting to look for a soft target. He/she needs to find a person that is “soft”. Someone who is distracted by their phone is a soft target. A person with their earbuds in can be a soft target. You can be a soft target by the way you present yourself to the public. I will explain more later how to be a “Hard” target. The second “T” is Test, the attacker has found a target because he/she is not paying attention to what is happening around them. He/she now needs to watch you to make sure he/she can “take” you. How defenseless do you look to the predator? Are you a big person but never knows what is going on behind them? If the attacker thinks they can take you then they move on to the next T. The next “T” is Trauma. What kind of attack will the assailants use? Will they use a weapon? Will they push you down? Will they threaten you? These are the things that will go through the mind of the attacker. He/she needs to know this because the next “T” is for Take Off. The attackers need to know they can escape without detection. An attack on you without an escape route means the likelihood of being caught. This is not the goal of the assailants.

Now that you know the psychology of an attack, the only way the attack can occur is if you **Never Be A Soft Target**. If you are a hard target the predator will pass you by for an easier victim. Think of it this way, the wild wildebeests in Africa are a delicacy for lions. The wildebeests know that they are low on the food chain, so they do many things to avoid becoming a meal. The lioness needs to hunt and feed the family. They prey on the African plains and have strategies to keep themselves safe. They know the lioness's limitations. They know that if they keep their sick and young and old in the middle of the pack, they are safer. They know that they need to move together as one in order that no one gets isolated. They are aware of their surroundings. The lioness knows that she does not have many chances, so she waits until the group makes a mistake. She does not just jump in the middle of the pack. This would mean possible injury or death to her. There are no veterinarians on the Serengeti, so she needs to plan her attack well. If you know the 4 "T's" you are now safer than you were 15 min ago. But that means nothing unless you use it all the time. Never be a soft target. The bad guy needs to pass the first T of Test before he can move on to the second T. If you stop him at the Target stage, you have it 90% covered.

How we present ourselves in public is what the predators out there will see and usually exaggerate what he or she sees. Soft targets examples would be, walking and texting, head down on your mobile device, distracted driving, shaving at stop lights (yes, I have seen that), having your hands full while coming out of the store. These are all things that a bad guy is looking for. A hard target is a person who walks with confidence and focus. I tell women who take my classes that they should walk as if they were on the fashion runway. Shoulders back and heads up, walking with a purpose. If you can walk with a buddy, bad guys do not like to attack multiple people. Remember that if you put enough time and distance between you and a possible Attacker, you will not be a victim. The first and foremost skill you need to learn is understanding and being aware of your surroundings. By doing this, your mind is now set to prepare yourself physically against an attack. Use the proper tool for the occasion.

Next article will be on the Color Code of Awareness and how your mental toughness can be just an article away. Come back next time for part 2 of Situational Awareness 101.

As always, thank you Maribel and the LMCA for the opportunity to teach safety for your membership. If you are interested in providing the best protection to you, your family. and your truck, please talk to Maribel for your special promo code we have worked out for LMCA so you get the lowest price possible.



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