

## PREPAREDNESS/SURVIVAL CLASS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS COLOR CODE

On September 11, 2001, 19 Islamic terrorists from the extremist group al Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third plane hit the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane, probably headed for the U.S. Capitol or the White House, was forced down some brave passengers and crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. After the terrorist attack the Bush administration in March 2002 came up with the Department of Homeland Security Advisory System, a five-color scheme known as the terrorism alert system which measured the threat level of potential attacks. From that point on, our country had its proverbial "head on a swivel" and every day had one of these colors as follows:

**Red** - the highest level, meant *severe risk of terrorist attack*

**Orange** - meant *high risk*

**Yellow** - meant *elevated risk*

**Blue** - meant *guarded risk*

**Green** - the lowest level, meant *low risk of terrorist attack*

I have also heard of an Army color-coding system for road conditions:

**Road Condition Green** is the default: normal driving conditions, roads are clear and dry

**Road Condition Amber** represents mild to severe conditions, alerting drivers to exercise more caution. Roads are wet or have snow or icy areas.

**Road Condition Red** represents very hazardous conditions, Roads are covered with ice or hard-packed snow. Heavy precipitation and/or high winds are limiting visibility.

**Road Condition Black** represents the most severe road conditions considered extremely hazardous to dangerous. Roads are covered with hard-packed snow or ice and possibly are unplowed. Heavy snowfall and/or high winds causing zero visibility are occurring or expected.

So what about a color-coded system for situational awareness in your everyday life. I liked the one used by John Lovell on his Warrior Poet Society channel. It is simple and easy to remember.

It starts with **Condition White** (or Green could be used) – it is the lowest level. You are basically "switched off" and unaware of anything going on around you. You are probably safe at home with the doors locked and not ready for anything. You could be tired, fatigued, stressed, etc. Everyone needs to shift into neutral and decompress from time to time or you will burn yourself out.

Next is **Condition Yellow** – you are aware of something while being calm and relaxed. You probably notice that something is not quite right or a little out of place. You are alerted to your surroundings, the people who occupy it and their body language. Facial expressions and the look in someone's eyes can also tell you a lot. You're alert (paying attention) but not paranoid. In this state it is difficult to surprise you and it's the level you should be in when you are "out and about."

The next level we go to is **Condition Orange** – it is a heightened state of awareness. You sense something is definitely not right. This is the time to evaluate the situation and formulate a plan in your head. Evasion and diffusion from the potential threat works best here before everything escalates to the next and final level.

You hit **Condition Red** – the threat is imminent and the fight is on! You are taking decisive and immediate action to defend yourself. You have to decide how much force to use to stop the threat. Recognizing attack rituals and set-ups will help avoid ever getting to this level and so will proper profiling of people – yes that's politically incorrect, but I'm not a politician. Note: You are the most vulnerable when you are traveling or transitioning from one place to another; like leaving home for work, leaving work going to your car in the parking lot, waiting for the bus at a stop, waiting for a plane in the airport terminal or next train on the subway. Greer Preparedness Reports – April 2021