

Scanning, a few thoughts....

After reading the chat forums and all the varying opinions reference scanning after shooting, I figure I would add a few points.

I will start by saying that Scanning, is seeing and interpreting useful data. In the tactical world, life-saving data. When we scan, we see with a purpose, to gather intel if you will with a hard focus. When we look, we observe in a general fashion with a soft focus to get a picture of the landscape. When we scan, we see what parts of the landscape are a threat.

Three types of people scan. Military, Law Enforcement and tactical civilians. In my simple view, one scanning system should fit all three people.

Pre-Contact Scanning is when someone goes into a potentially dangerous situation and looks for the abnormal and where they can be attacked from.

The soldier going in on a raid, the LE officer responding to a high risk call, the civilian moving toward gunfire or screaming.

All should go in with their head up and eyes open. Look for what is out of place first. The abnormal if you will. When I was going through Jumpmaster School, you learned to inspect jumpers and their equipment by practicing on perfect/no gig jumpers. Then they would add major or minor problems. If you had a scanning sequence and knew what was right, something wrong would jump out at you. Another important point was that hands followed eyes and this applies to guns/muzzles as well.

When rolling in, look at where human beings can shoot at you from. If you get in close, where you can be jumped or personally attacked. Know that you have to look at open doors twice as much as a closed one, because closed doors telegraph-they open/move. Closed doors signal movement. Open doors allow a threat to pop out without warning.

Scanning also applies to looking for cover or at least concealment when approaching suspected threats. This includes potential threats to your well-being when making tactical approaches. Deploying around moving cars and traffic, means you can get run over. Around helicopters means that you can run into a tail or main rotor blade. Look before you leap is a common term we us teaching student to see where they are going first, instead of doing it on the fly.

Contact Scanning is looking at your threat, the foreground and background and adjusting your shot accordingly. You are responsible for the bullet leaving your weapon until it stops. You alone are responsible for changing the angle. You can move right, left, up or down to change the path of the bullet. This may follow on with five body/one head, two body, one head or three rapid shots followed by more scanning.

Post Incident Scanning is when the threat acts accordingly to your gunfire. Normally I teach to start scanning once the threat falls out of your front sight. This means I did enough damage or broke the bad person's spine so they can no longer stand.

When the threat falls, I straighten my trigger finger and scan right and left, no more than 45 degrees for additional targets. I then look at the threat on the ground to see if I need to service them again. Did they fall with a gun in their hand, are they trying to employ it or are they reaching for it. Again, scanning for important data.

If the threat on the ground is no longer a threat, I start my 270 scan to my rear areas.

The goal is to break target lock and continually scan and sense the battlefield for potential and active threats and address them accordingly. I prefer to always see my battlefield as many are a multiple-opponent battlefields. If it turns out to be a single opponent, nothing is lost.

Scanning with weapons

Using the civilian model, I don't teach to spin with a weapon. Too many problems come to mind. First, you are not in uniform and it is difficult for someone coming in after the fact to make sure you are a good guy.

I teach to bring the pistol to a high ready or the rifle to a low ready when facing forward and when you are looking back to ensure it is not perceived as a threat.

I teach civilian students to reconceal after they make the shot (s). They don't know who is around them and a concealed weapon holder or an off duty police officer. They don't know at what point people watching the tactical problem entered the equation. They may not have seen what happened and see you as a threat.

Using your many senses in your scanning system is like watching an Action Flick on a TV to the front and then having a TV on to your rear with the news on. You can see the TV to your front, but you listen to the TV to the rear. If you do a total hard focus to the front, you lose what is happening in 270 degrees around you. Do I pick up a hard focus or just see human form?

Certain noises/alerts draw your attention to the rear to the news TV with a "Just In" news flash. Routine news does not draw your attention, but rather specific "stimulus." Gunfire, people moving around, etc. If you hear or sense it, you look. Tail rotor, light vehicle, heavy armor moving close. Is it AK fire behind your or M4 style weapons? Knowing the sound of an AK might indicate bad guys are in your rear and you need to watch more.

Conclusion:

During this Post Contact Phase, you are seeing how your battlefield has changed and reprioritizing your targets. This is critical in the LE and military world.

I use a three shot rule in fast moving combat. I shoot three rapid, aim shots on a threat and then drop my weapon down to check my battlefield. Why? Everything changes with every shot you make and hard focus on. Friendlies, hostages, enemy. You must be aware of this and continually reset your OODA loop. You must scan to see what has changed and act/move accordingly.

Static action or fast moving assaults with single and multiple opponents-Which do you prepare for and which scanning system will work in both situations?

About the Author

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