Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents

By James Reason

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Major accidents are rare events due to the many barriers, safeguards and defences developed by modern technologies. But they continue to happen with saddening regularity and their human and financial consequences are all too often unacceptably catastrophic. One of the greatest challenges we face is to develop more effective ways of both understanding and limiting their occurrence. This lucid book presents a set of common principles to further our knowledge of the causes of major accidents in a wide variety of high-technology systems. It also describes tools and techniques for managing the risks of such organizational accidents that go beyond those currently available to system managers and safety professionals. James Reason deals comprehensively with the prevention of major accidents arising from human and organizational causes. He argues that the same general principles and management techniques are appropriate for many different domains. These include banks and insurance companies just as much as nuclear power plants, oil exploration and production companies, chemical process installations and air, sea and rail transport. Its unique combination of principles and practicalities make this seminal book essential reading for all whose daily business is to manage, audit and regulate hazardous technologies of all kinds. It is relevant to those concerned with understanding and controlling human and organizational factors and will also interest academic readers and those working in industrial and government agencies.

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Editorial Review

Review
'...To call James Reason's Managing the Risk of Organizational Accidents an important book would be an understatement, especially to those interested in getting to the root cause of major disasters.' --Incose Insight

The most important characteristic of Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents is that it focuses on the organizational aspects of error, rather than simply focusing on the operator. This is an important shift in the principles of error management in the aviation environment and Professor Reason poses a number of interesting dilemmas for both managers and operators alike…provides some valuable insights into the nature of human performance in complex environments.
Flight Safety, Australia

This book can help get the safety message across to everyone from the CEO down to the receptionist…well written and organized…members at any level of organization would benefit from this work: safety professionals, front line workers, safety theorists, regulators and academics would gain the most. --Security Management

...because of its many similarities between preventing accidents and preventing security breaches, not only will security practitioners improve their understanding of myriad safety issues, but they will also be able to apply many of these concepts to their security duties…well written and organized.
American Society for Industrial Security

For the person who plans to read only one book on safety management in the next ten years, read Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents. For the person who has read every book on safety management in the past ten years, well, you should read this one too. We are in the midst of the 'Age of Reason'.
Focus on Commercial Aviation Safety

The book is well written and thoroughly enjoyable to read…recommended in particular to those who are in charge of regulating risks in industrial organizations and everyday life. --Accident Analysis and Prevention

About the Author
James Reason is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Manchester, England. He is consultant to numerous organizations throughout the world, sought after as a keynote speaker at international conferences and author of several renowned books including Human Error (CUP, 1990).

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