

**Risk Communication—A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks.** Regina E. Lundgren. Battelle Press, Columbus, Ohio, USA. 1994. pp. xii + 175. Price: \$29.95. (ISBN: 0-935470-76-X)

Risk is an inevitable part of life. Earthquakes, flash floods, tornadoes, oil spills, nuclear plant meltdowns, chemical factory accidents, spread of AIDS through needles, cigarette smoking, and a host of other risks need to be managed. Risk communication is an integral part of the science of risk assessment and the process of risk management. A risk communicator should not only convey a clear message to those who are affected but also persuade them to act in a manner that would minimize the loss and suffering.

This handbook, claims the author, is 'an all-purpose book on risk communication' aimed at 'those who face the challenge of communicating environmental, safety, and health risks', including writers and editors, scientists, engineers

and health care professionals, organization representatives involved in risk management decision making and students of risk communication.

While the literature on business-related risk management is considerably large, if not vast, that on communicating risk relating to environment, safety and health is yet to build up. The field itself is rather new, less than ten years old.

The author has divided risk communication along functional lines, distinguishing between care communication, crisis communication and consensus communication.

The book is divided into five parts. Part I provides background information necessary to understand the basic theories and practices; Part II tells how to plan communication; Part III gives in-depth information on different types of risk messages (written, oral, visual, audience interactive, and computer-based applications) and shows with examples how these differ from one another; Part IV deals with evaluation of risk communication; and Part V provides a list of ref-

erences and glossary. Each part is divided into sections which are self-contained. Wherever necessary, the author has provided a chapter summary and a check list. There are five figures, 20 tables and an index.

Throughout, the author has adopted a simple and straightforward style characteristic of an introductory level textbook. She has also emphasized the risk communicator's and his organization's need to be trustworthy, credible and fair, both because it is ethical and because it is the only way to ensure successful communication.

This is a practical book that will be found useful by the middle and low-level officials who have to actually perform the tasks of designing and carrying out risk communication campaigns.

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