**Safety, Reliability and Risk Management.
Second edition.**

by Sue Cox and Robin Tait

Butterworth Heinemann, London, 1998, ISBN 0-7506-4016-2
(325 pages, £40.00)

Reviewed by Clive Smallman

As might be expected of a second edition, this is a solid treatment of an established yet rapidly evolving subject. As the cover claims, it should be easily read by the interested non-specialist, yet practitioners too will find it a ready source of the 'basic' tools of the health and safety profession. So, what we have here is what language specialists call a primer, supplying much of the grammar and vocabulary needed to get into health and safety. The underlying grammar of systems theory is well presented in summary form, and then well used to structure the rest of the text.

At first glance the scope looks to be too ambitious, but a tight (rarely terse) style keeps everything moving along without getting bogged down in too much detail. Instead, the reader gets an informed summary of the key issues and techniques, and is given directions on where to find out more. Taking in reliability, human factors, technology risks, harm, risk, quantitative and qualitative approaches to risk management, health and safety management and communication, the book concludes with a view on key issues.

Criticising a second edition is always difficult, since the authors must be largely right in order for the publishers to ask them back again, and indeed they seem to be. The addition of chapter 15 on 'Risk Management and Communication' by Judith Petts is excellent, and better still it fits nicely with the overall style. However, I was a little disappointed in chapter eight, 'Programmable Electronic Systems', which to me is not only superfluous but dated in its view of artificial intelligence. I also feel that chapters nine and ten need reorganising to improve the flow and perhaps tighten up the delivery. However, these are quibbles and might be addressed in future reissues. If you are looking for a reliable (pardon the pun) treatment of reliability and health and safety, this is the book for you.

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