



The System Safety Skeptic: Lessons Learned in Safety Management and Engineering

Terry L. Hardy

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Advanced technologies and increasing automation have forever changed how systems work and how people interact with them. Transportation systems, energy extraction and production systems, medical devices, and manufacturing processes are increasingly complex. With the use of these complex systems comes increased potential for harm to humans, property, and the environment. System safety is a widely accepted management and engineering approach to analyze and address risks in these complex systems. When used correctly, system safety methods can provide tremendous benefits, focusing resources to reduce risk and improve safety. But poor system safety analyses can lead to overconfidence, and can result in a misunderstanding of the potential for harm. The System Safety Skeptic describes critical aspects of the discipline of system safety, including: Safety planning Hazard identification Hazard risk assessment and associated risk decision making Risk reduction and hazard controls Risk reduction verification Hazard tracking and anomaly reporting Safety management and culture Accidents in multiple industries and organizations are used to illustrate potential missteps in the system safety process, including: Failure to plan and implement systematic safety efforts, and failure to plan for emergencies Failure to accurately identify the hazards and what can go wrong Underestimating the chances that an accident could happen Underestimating the worst possible outcomes Overestimating the effectiveness of safeguards Failure to properly verify that safeguards actually work Failure to learn from the past Failure of the organization to adequately manage system safety efforts This book provides hundreds of lessons learned in safety management and engineering, drawing from examples from many industries as well as the author's years of experience in the field. These real-world lessons help foster a healthy

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