



# Decision-Making in High Risk Organizations Under Stress Conditions

*Anthony J. Spurgin, David W. Stupples*

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This book discusses management decision-making under accident conditions as a vehicle to confirm the importance of clear decision-making guided by a systems approach on how an organization functions related to the role of managers, operators, and the operation of the plant. The book shows how to effectively assess the reliability of an organization particularly those organizations responsible for critical infrastructure. The authors have used Stafford Beer's cybernetic model as a basis to model the behavior and reliability of such organizations. A series of case studies are used to draw conclusions not only how training, experience, and education can improve the strategy and response of management to reduce the probability of an economic or social disaster, but also draw attention to the fact that managers need to be made aware of the consequences of their decisions.

Poor management decisions made under stress conditions can lead to the collapse of an organization together with its underlying business, possibly linked to a social disaster with loss of life. Some technology-ignorant management decisions even under non-stress conditions can lead to dangerous situations, which can increase the economic burden placed on an organization. This book describes such situations in order to promote improvement in organizational preparedness by training, experience, and education to reduce safety and economic risks.

This book offers:

- Case studies of accidents that have affected different HROs (high-risk organizations) and others, due to poor decision-making by management
- Training methods (advocated by Admiral Hyman Rickover, adopted by military bodies and others) to prepare staff to make critical decisions under difficult conditions and examine their applicability to training managers of high-risk facilities
- Documentation on how making decisions in difficult situations have psychological constraints related to the degree of preparedness and the tools available to aid the decision maker(s)
- Studies on the key actions taken before, during, and after accidents and how these management decisions can affect accident propagation, and how one could improve management decision-making by the use of training in decision-making and an understanding of Ross Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety.
- Simulation techniques to improve training of front-line operators and management
- Consideration of cost and investment evaluations and how they can distort the selection of tactics and measures that ensure successful operations and avoidance of accidents

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#### **Maxine Ford:**

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