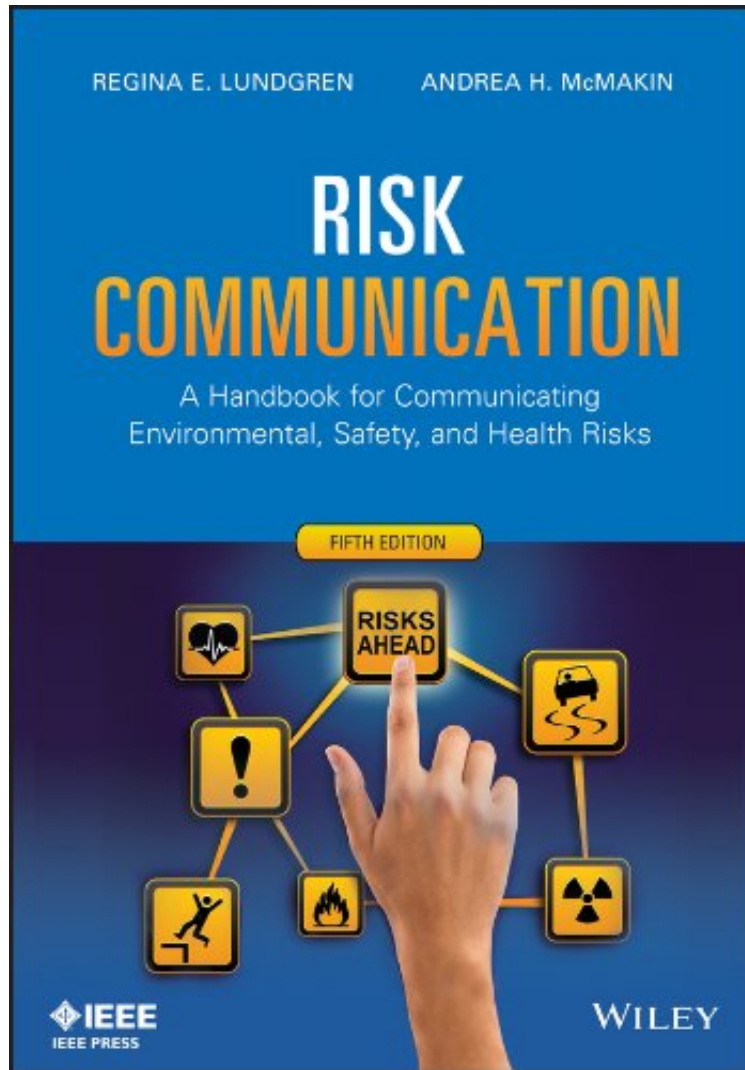


Risk Communication: A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks

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Regina E. Lundgren, Andrea H. McMakin : Risk Communication: A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Risk Communication: A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Syed M. Aftabok0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy robertMy teacher made us buy this book7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A valuable reference for risk communicators and risk managersBy SeekingTravelerThis is a review of "Risk Communication: A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks" by Regina E. Lundgren

and Andrea H. McMakin. To save you time, you should just buy and read this book without reading the rest of this review. If you aspire to become a great risk communicator, then you should learn about this profession through a university degree program, followed by a challenging real-world job under the guidance of a seasoned risk manager. Some universities and organizations offer highly focused short-courses on risk communications, including online training. I am glad I read this book. It (1) filled in gaps in my knowledge; (2) exposed me to different ideas and perspectives; (3) added to my risk communication toolkit; and (4) provided an overview of recent literature. The book may not be ideal; but it is the best single resource that I know of. If anyone knows of a better single reference, please leave a comment. If you want to see the table of contents for the book, perform a web search for the book's title while limiting the search to the Wiley dot com website. While you are there, you can read a digital copy of the book's first chapter. Also, the principle author has a webpage: search for Regina Lundgren Consultant and Trainer. While there, go to the "Other Resources" page and check out the links to other helpful websites. If you are new to the field of risk communication, then this book is a good place to start. You can spend the next 20 years learning this subject matter on your own (possibly learning from regrettable mistakes) or you can read this book and profit from the wisdom of two experienced professionals. Even if you are a veteran risk communicator, I am certain this book will teach you a few new tricks. The cost of this book is less than you would pay to hire some consultants for an hour. My main purpose in reading this book was to evaluate its suitability for students. I can recommend this book for a reading list (perhaps allowing two weeks to read it), but I would not select this as a course textbook. But then, with the word "Handbook" in the title, one might guess that the book is intended as a job reference, not as a textbook. Someone at Texas AM is using this book in their "Risk Management" course; if you want their opinion, you might get in touch with them. The education I received in graduate school was more advanced than this book; however, those busy Ph.D.s can't seem to find time to design and develop a book of their own. I greatly admire the authors for their efforts to pioneer this risk communication reference. I respect the fact that the authors had to apply their expert judgment when selecting what to include and what to exclude. Nearly all of the issues I have made in this review could probably be answered with one of three responses: 1. We made the decision that it was outside the book's scope. 2. We'd like to do that, but we didn't have the budget. 3. That may be of interest to a scientist, but it is of little use to a front-line risk communicator. (This last one is probably a subset of Response 1.) A few helpful references (some free): - The authors frequently cite Dr. Peter Sandman (Ph.D. in communication). Dr. Sandman is a world-class expert in risk communication and his insights are priceless. To go directly to the source, search for his website (psandman). He has posted some great information on risk communication, including text, audio, and video files. Be sure to check out the video he made (with his wife) for the American Industrial Hygiene Association. While I reject Dr. Sandman's (catchy, but flawed) definition of "risk" as "hazard plus outrage," I am always eager to learn from his superior expertise. - The authors frequently cite risk expert Dr. Vincent T. Covello. I like the fact that Dr. Covello emphasizes that risk communication is a "science-based discipline." Several of Dr. Covello's books are available here on . - Surprisingly, the authors never cite crisis communications expert Dr. Barbara Reynolds. You should read the CDC's Crisis and Emergency Communication manual (which is available for free download on the CDC website). Better yet, take the course! This manual is great (I give it five stars). The authors of "Risk Communication" finally listed this manual as a "resource" on the last page of the book (prior to the Glossary and Index). I mention it here, since readers might never make it to the final page. - If you want to learn from the best, I highly recommend *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves: A History of American Environmental Policy*, Second Edition by Dr. Richard Andrews. Dr. Andrews is one of the world's foremost experts on risk management, public policy, and city regional planning. Dr. Andrew's book is written at a much higher cognitive level than "Risk Communication"; however, it is a book about policy, not communications specifically. Even so, any professional who communicates environmental, safety, and health risks will be wiser for having read Dr. Andrew's book. Back to the review: "Risk Communication" is not in the same league as a modern university textbook. I suppose this book does not have the market and associated budget to be brought up to that level. However, I know of no other single book that does a better job reviewing risk communication strategies and tactics. Therefore, anyone who reads this book is sure to gain a fair amount of useful knowledge and wisdom. I gave it a four-star rating only because it is not as good as the five-star writings of Drs. Sandman, Covello, Reynolds, or Andrews. Ways to improve the book: - Add more content to the really good bits. - Filter and distill: run the book through a filter to remove low-value and repetitive content; run the book through a distillation column to reduce the verbosity. - Expand the use of modern information display techniques. - Be more systematic about building reader expertise by consulting a curriculum designer (it might be beneficial to create or borrow a task analysis for the risk communicator position). - Eliminate the distracting half-page text blocks that do nothing more than exactly quote the adjacent text. I appreciate that the book is written using simple English (i.e., the authors avoided jargon, snobbish vocabulary, and complicated sentences). The writing could be more succinct; I much prefer the leaner writing style of the CDC's Crisis and Emergency Communication manual. While this book is written well, it is drier than it needs to be (this coming from someone who reads textbooks, academic papers, technical manuals, safety analysis reports, coding documentation, regulations, licensing documents, and the like for hours on end). The book might be more engaging if: (1) the authors used journalistic techniques when appropriate (such as those often employed by Dr. Peter Sandman); and/or (2) portions

were written in the form of linked narratives supported by case studies presented as anecdotes. The book has been meticulously well proof-read. Just a wee bit of nit-picking:- The word "media" is plural, not singular. Yes, yes, I know: a lot of folks now use "media" as a singular word; but I am sad to see communication majors do this.- On page 295, the statement is made that "there were nearly 6 million mobile phone subscriptions worldwide" (obvious typo). The number should be over "6 billion."- Figure 14-5 on page 168 lists the added elevation dose for 5000 feet as 2 millirem (obvious typo). The number (which is borrowed from the EPA) should be 21 millirem, not 2 millirem.- On page 274, the book describes "so-called reverse 911." It is not "so called," that's its name. Reverse 911reg; is a registered trademark of Cassidian Communications. As explained later, I feel that the introduction of the book should have provided a brief primer on "risk" and the risk analysis process. While not directly part of the risk communicator's job, such cross-training makes him or her much more valuable to the team. While I feel that the lack of such a discussion is a serious deficiency, this opinion did not influence my rating of the book. Also, the authors' occasional jabs at Ph.D.s did not influence my rating. While the authors never claim that the book is intended for use as a textbook or training manual, they do state (in Chapter 1) that the book is intended for those who are "new to the field." This book could be substantially improved for this target population. In short, the book does not follow a systems approach to build expertise in the field of risk communication. With just a little extra work, this book could be much more effective for the new learner. Check out Building Expertise: Cognitive Methods for Training and Performance Improvement by Ruth Clark. The book seems to be biased towards covering the kind of work most familiar to the authors. For example, there is a lot of discussion about the use of risk communication during the development of environmental impact statements for a Superfund site. Unfortunately, this focus sometimes results in gaps in the discussion as some areas of potential application were overlooked. What follows is more of a "wish list" than criticism.- This book should provide a very basic primer on the subject of "risk." The very first sentence of Chapter 1 should be (in large, bold letters), "What is risk?" If you are going to communicate risk, you should know what "risk" means. The book never defines "risk" in the analytical way that U.S. federal regulators use the term. "Risk" is not even listed in the book's Index. The book's Glossary defines "risk" as the "Probability of adverse outcome." If I had written that on a test in graduate school, I would have received a failing grade.- The introduction (Chapter 1) fails to provide the new learner with an adequate primer on the risk triangle (or risk pyramid, if you prefer): risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication. (Yes, yes, I know, even professionals in risk assessment and risk management cannot all agree on what falls under "risk assessment" and "risk management.") While these terms are briefly talked about in Chapter 1, the processes are not sufficiently explained in a manner that would effectively orient someone "new to the field of risk communication" (one of the book's target groups). Perhaps the authors assumed that the reader already understands these concepts.- The book should provide substantially more content to discuss involuntary risk versus voluntary risk. The authors should briefly cover how federal regulatory thresholds are different for an involuntary risk to general populations and a voluntary risk to trained workers. They should devote additional discussion to the fact that members of the general public react quite differently to risks they can and cannot control. For example, most individuals do not hesitate to assume the additional risk of driving 0.01 miles per hour over the speed limit; yet these same individuals become outraged when someone proposes an involuntary risk that is orders of magnitude lower (i.e., far less risky).- The book should have provided a brief overview of the risk-based rule-making process followed by nearly all government agencies in the United States. I refer everyone to the paper "Risk Assessment in Environmental Policy-Making," by Milton Russell and Michael Gruber (Science, Vol. 236). The authors may feel that such information (no matter how basic) is outside the scope of a book on "communications." In fact, the authors say as much at one point when they justify not covering a topic because, "these activities are only conducted by OSHA." Actually, "these activities" are performed by nearly all U.S. federal agencies and, therefore, should have been discussed (briefly). Some may feel that the above topics have no place in a book on "risk communication"; however, I believe that any communications specialist working as a "risk communicator" should have a very basic understanding of these concepts. Having presented such a primer dozens of times, I estimate the authors could provide a basic overview in approximately six to ten pages. I was disappointed with the chapter of the book devoted to "Ethical Issues." The topics and examples discussed in this chapter often had little to do with "ethics." The authors presented mostly minnow-sized ethical issues while largely ignoring whale-sized ethical issues (no offense to whales). Since both authors have worked at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory they should have hundreds of examples from the Hanford site. (Don't get me started on DOE facilities!) The authors include "consequences of multiple meanings" as an "ethical issue," but the example they provide has little to do with an ethical choice. Instead, they should have provided examples illustrating the unethical use of multiple meanings to intentionally "twist the truth around." This chapter should also add some discussion about "sophistry." The back cover of the book, the product page, and the author's website state that co-author Regina E. Lundgren is a former "research scientist." This might be a good example of "multiple meanings" for the "Ethical Issues" chapter. The claim to be a "research scientist" could lead folks to imagine something far different from the truth. The book states that Regina E. Lundgren earned a "certificate in regulatory analysis emphasizing environmental, safety, and health regulations from the Harvard School of Public Health." While I know about the Harvard professional certificate programs, I could find

no information about a "regulatory analysis" certificate program. I am curious to know what this credential means exactly. The book needs to improve its discussions about how to explain risk. Dr. Peter Sandman does a better job in his article "Explaining Risk to Non-Experts: A Communications Challenge" (printed in the Emergency Preparedness Digest, October-December 1987). You can find a copy of this on Dr. Sandman's website (psandman). When talking about audience surveys, the authors never used the term "statistically valid." It makes me wonder about the validity of some risk communications activities based on surveys. While the authors do a great job of telling us how to communicate effectively, their book (itself) often fails to demonstrate effective communications strategies by example. Now, it is obvious from portions of this book (as well as from other work by these two authors that I found online) that they know how to use effective information display techniques. Therefore, it is disappointing that the presentation of most of the book is very primitive (it looks forty years behind the times). Most of the book is composed of monochrome, mono-font paragraphs with no delimiting. I would recommend handing this book to a professional instructional designer to improve the presentation with text organization (including lists), color, font changes, case changes, bolding, underlining, italics, delimiting, tables, and illustrations. Due to the formatting limitations in the book, there is no easy way for the reader to distinguish between major and minor points. While reading this book, I often found myself wanting to grab a marker to write a large exclamation mark next to an important, well-written section. (The authors should have done something to this effect for the reader.) Similarly, I often found myself wanting to scratch out sections of little value. (The authors should block-delete such text for the reader.) If it is too expensive to print this book with color, then there are still plenty of black-and-white techniques that could be used to effectively grab attention and enhance memory and understanding. For some free guidance on the subject, try performing a web search for Information Mapping Robert E. Horn. For some not-free training, try a course in InfoMappingreg;. For examples of superlative information display techniques, check out Holt McDougal Larson Algebra 1: Student Edition 2012 (Holt McDougal Larson High School Math Common Core) or Molecular Biology of the Cell or Thermodynamics: An Engineering Approach with Student Resources DVD. I admire the authors for providing this book to the public. I certainly benefited from their decades of work experiences and their wise insights. With time and money this book could be improved. In spite of its shortcomings, your risk communications skill set will be improved if you read this book. It will teach you or remind you of many valuable risk communication strategies and tactics that may improve (make or break) any project that requires public participation, action, or behavior change. This book could do a better job orienting the new learner, but for the qualified communicator it can serve as a valuable handbook for everyday use. Professors who use this for their classes could supplement it with reading assignments, lectures, student oral reports, case studies, and roll-playing with coaching.

A fully updated handbook on effectively communicating environmental, safety, and health risks Written by two well-known risk practitioners with over twenty-five years' experience in the field, this fully updated Fifth Edition of Risk Communication: A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks offers sound, scientific research with practical, hands-on advice for those in the public and private sectors. Highly accessible and easy to understand, this must-read includes real-life examples of such headline-making events as the tsunami and radiation release in Japan in 2011, the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, and extreme weather events, along with the lessons learned from them. It offers new chapters on public health campaigns, and on the use and effectiveness of social media for risk communication purposes. Risk Communication is divided into five self-contained parts: Part I provides background information for understanding the basic theories and practices of risk communication Part II explains how to plan a risk communication effort Part III describes how to put risk communication into action Part IV discusses how to evaluate risk communication efforts, including techniques for measuring success Part V highlights special cases in risk communication, including disasters and other emergencies, international risk communication, and public health campaigns An ideal introduction to the field, this book is also a welcome reference for those involved in communicating environmental, safety, and health risks in government, industry, and academia.

Occupational health professionals, and indeed anyone whose work involves communicating risk, will find this book an informative and interesting read. I will certainly dip into it the next time I am asked to deliver a presentation on the hazards of a workplace agent or lead a health promotion campaign. (Occupational Medicine, 1 September 2015) "Even though this is written specifically for an American audience, it is a proper handbook with many checklists, references and examples which should help anyone who may need to communicate risk to do so in an organised and effective manner." (RoSPA Occupational Safety Health Journal, 1 February 2014) About the Author REGINA E. LUNDGREN is an independent consultant and trainer for both government and industry who specializes in communicating environmental, safety, and health risks, and is a former research scientist for the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington. Her publications have won national awards for their usability. She has led risk communication efforts for a variety of environmental, safety, and health issues, including Superfund cleanup, cancer cluster investigation, and bioterrorism planning as well as helped design risk assessment models for stakeholder use. ANDREA H. McMAKIN is a communication specialist at the Pacific Northwest National

Laboratory in Richland, Washington. She works with government and industry clients on communicating risks and other information concerning science, technology, and business. She's contributed to risk communication programs involving cancer clusters, health and environmental impacts from waste and Superfund sites, international nuclear and biological safety, worker chemical exposure, global climate change, and risk perception research.