

Book reviews

Fundamentals of Occupational Safety and Health, A.F. Mark, P.K. James. , 4th ed., Government Institutes/Scarecrow Press Inc., Lanham, MD (2007). 503 pp., US\$ 79.00, ISBN: 0-06597-171-X

As with many books I review, this one is being examined at a time when the topic was a subject of stories in the popular press. The news item concerned the Safety Culture of the BP Oil Company in general and its refinery in Toledo, Ohio where I reside. Much criticism has been directed at the company for lax safety oversight and a “poor safety culture” with the local refinery being labeled the worst (from a safety perspective) in the company.

This book addresses that problem by providing practical information on the technology management and regulations governing safety and compliance in the United States. All the major safety topics affecting workplace safety are addressed “. . . from safety-related laws and regulations to hazardous materials and workplace violence.”

The chapter titles are as follows:

1. Introduction to occupational safety and health.
2. Safety legislation.
3. Workers’ compensation and recordkeeping.
4. Safety-related business laws.
5. Accident causation and investigation: theory and application.
6. Introduction to industrial hygiene.
7. Ergonomics and safety management.
8. Fire prevention and protection.
9. System safety.
10. Managing the safety function.
11. Psychology and safety: the human element in loss prevention.
12. Improving safety performance with behavior-based safety.
13. Workplace violence.
14. Terrorism preparedness.
15. Hazardous materials.
16. Construction safety and the multiemployer worksite doctrine.
17. Required written programs.
18. Resources on safety and health.

The writing is clear, and the focus on safety direct. Generally, each chapter follows this format:

- Chapter objectives.
- Case study—examples of workplace accidents.

- Topics covered.
- Conclusion.
- Questions.
- References.
- Bibliography.

The chapter titles given above will give the reader of this review an excellent idea of the comprehensive coverage of the topic so I will not waste time by reiterating the book’s contents, save to highlight a couple of topics that caught my attention. The first unique writing example was a discussion of historical items. Early in the book, Friend and Kohn discuss “Early historical examination of occupational safety and health,” first by ancient Greek and Roman physicians and later a review of the European Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. Further into the book, the history of industrial hygiene is reviewed. Familiar names from ancient history include Hippocrates, Pliny the Elder, Georgius Agricola and Paracelsus (from the foregoing examples, the reader will discern my interest in history which tell us much about the present).

Uncommon with other “new” books, this one has a chapter on terrorism. The objective is to enable the reader to:

- Understand the compelling reasons for preparing for terrorist attack in business.
- Identify some of the key historical events causing the United States and its citizens to prepare for terrorism.
- List critical areas of concern that need to be addressed in terrorism preparation.
- Understand the role of the safety and health professional in company terrorism planning activities.

The book ends with three appendices which are: (1) 29 CFR 1910-OSHA General Industry Standards summary and checklist, (2) 29 CFR 1926-OSHA Construction Standards summary and checklist and (3) Anthropometric Data.

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