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Book Review

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Book Review

Erratum

The citation for this review is *4 RISK 263 (1993)* in most commercial databases.

MANAGEMENT OF HAZARDOUS AGENTS. Vol. 1: INDUSTRIAL AND REGULATORY APPROACHES. Vol. 2: SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND POLICY ASPECTS. (Duane G. LeVine & Arthur C. Upton eds., Praeger 1992). Each volume contains: bibliography, series foreword, foreword, figures, notes, biographical references, tables, index. Vol. 1: [194 pp.] LC-92-167 ISBN 0-275-94322-4. Vol. 2: [188 pp.] ISBN 0-275-94323-2. [Cloth, each \$49.95. 88 Post Road West; Westport CT 06881.]

These volumes are the first in the *Only One Earth Series* and contain compelling essays based on forums at the Dubos Center in 1987 and 1988. Notwithstanding that the introduction to each volume is the same, calling for more research in risk assessment and risk communication, as well as for regulatory and legislative change, the volumes have different foci. The first tends to be more technical, outlining methods for assessing and managing risks from hazardous materials, and the second tends to be more policy oriented, suggesting social and political strategies for addressing the fissure between public and scientific knowledge. From scientific, industrial, governmental and public viewpoints, these volumes offer invaluable discussions of the complex issues that must be addressed in minimizing the effects of hazardous agents, including electric and magnetic fields, on us today and in the years to come.

Volume one contains the work of fifteen scholars, including physicians, regulators and scientists. Divided into five sections, it addresses heavy metals, radiation, PCBs, dioxins and related materials, and pesticides. Each section discusses methods of assessing the health hazards, exposure estimates, and risks and benefits associated with those respective materials. Also, innovative industrial and regulatory approaches are suggested for limiting human exposures. Moreover, we are made aware that our ability to communicate risk information to the public does not seem to have kept pace with our ability to assess risks.

The first volume seems most useful for those directly engaged in environmental risk assessment and exposure control. The strategies it describes for achieving more accurate health and risk assessments certainly should be known to those who regulate hazardous materials as

well as those who produce such materials. It offers an important view of current risk assessment in the scientific community and furnishes the opportunity for what one essay calls an "obligation to remain current with the scientific advances and to revisit the validity of assumptions used in evaluating risks."¹

The twenty essays in the second volume continue nicely where those in the first leave off. They address respectively institutional and legislative initiatives, risk communication, and public involvement in dealing with risks posed by hazardous agents. However, this volume seems to address a potentially broader spectrum of readers. In doing so, it furnishes a compelling overview of how we, as a society, may cope. One essay in this volume suggests that we should "Think broadly about risk potential, act on the significant."² Another paper, likely to be of interest to a very broad spectrum of readers, discusses strategies that average citizens may consider in attempting to force local polluters to clean up their act.³

Taken together, this set provides even those of us without formal technical training a comprehensive and generally understandable overview of attempts to assess and manage hazardous materials, technically and politically, privately and collectively.

James R. Baum[†]

¹ John A. Moore & Jane Hopkins, *Regulatory Approaches...*, Vol. 1, at 145.

² Fred D. Hoerger, *The Role of Business and Industry...*, Vol. 2, at 33.

³ Maria Pavlova, *Practical Lessons in Risk Communication at the Community Level*, Vol. 2, at 139.

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