



Safety-I and Safety-II: The Past and Future of Safety Management

By Erik Hollnagel

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Safety-I and Safety-II: The Past and Future of Safety Management By Erik Hollnagel

Safety has traditionally been defined as a condition where the number of adverse outcomes was as low as possible (Safety-I). From a Safety-I perspective, the purpose of safety management is to make sure that the number of accidents and incidents is kept as low as possible, or as low as is reasonably practicable. This means that safety management must start from the manifestations of the absence of safety and that - paradoxically - safety is measured by counting the number of cases where it fails rather than by the number of cases where it succeeds. This unavoidably leads to a reactive approach based on responding to what goes wrong or what is identified as a risk - as something that could go wrong.

Focusing on what goes right, rather than on what goes wrong, changes the definition of safety from 'avoiding that something goes wrong' to 'ensuring that everything goes right'. More precisely, Safety-II is the ability to succeed under varying conditions, so that the number of intended and acceptable outcomes is as high as possible. From a Safety-II perspective, the purpose of safety management is to ensure that as much as possible goes right, in the sense that everyday work achieves its objectives. This means that safety is managed by what it achieves (successes, things that go right), and that likewise it is measured by counting the number of cases where things go right. In order to do this, safety management cannot only be reactive, it must also be proactive. But it must be proactive with regard to how actions succeed, to everyday acceptable performance, rather than with regard to how they can fail, as traditional risk analysis does.

This book analyses and explains the principles behind both approaches and uses this to consider the past and future of safety management practices. The analysis makes use of common examples and cases from domains such as aviation, nuclear power production, process management and health care. The final chapters explain the theoretical and practical consequences of the new perspective on the level of day-to-day operations as well as on the level of strategic management (safety culture).

Safety-I and Safety-II is written for all professionals responsible for their organisation's safety, from strategic planning on the executive level to day-to-day

operations in the field. It presents the detailed and tested arguments for a transformation from protective to productive safety management.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Much more than a technical book. Erik's work is a well documented journey into the multiple interactions between safety, work and human nature. A timely contribution to vindicate human beings and their variability from the one sided focus on the evils of human error. A groundbreaking look at "the other story" that will certainly contribute to safer and more productive workplaces.' Dr Alejandro Morales, Mutual Seguridad, Chile 'Safety needs a new maturity. We can no longer improve by simply doing what we have been doing, even by doing it better. Dr Hollnagel brings forth new distinctions, interpretations, and narratives that will allow safety to progress to new unforeseen levels. Safety II is more than just incident and accident prevention. A must read for every safety professional.' --Tom McDaniel, Global Manager Zero Harm and Human Performance, Siemens Energy, Inc., USA 'If you want to belong to the future of safety management, Erik Hollnagel argues, you pretty much know where to stand. It is called Safety II.' --Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, July 2014

Although someone may judge from the book title that the author refers to a new methodology for managing safety, Hollnagel's work is definitely more than this. The specific book recommends a new way of thinking and approaching safety itself, prior to attempting to manage it. The real life examples and the smooth introduction of the reader to safety related concepts, which are based on broad and solid theoretical and empirical bases, are just few of the strong points in Hollnagel's book. --NEWSLETTER of the Europe Chapter of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society No. 2 / 2014

About the Author

Erik Hollnagel (Ph.D., psychology) is Professor at the Department of Regional Health Research, University of Southern Denmark and Chief Consultant at the Centre for Quality, Region of Southern Denmark. He is also Professor Emeritus at University of Linköping (Sweden), and Visiting Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study of the Technische Universität München (Germany). He has since 1971 worked at universities, research centres, and industries in several countries and with problems from many domains, including nuclear power generation, aerospace and aviation, air traffic management, software engineering, healthcare, and land-based traffic. His professional interests include industrial safety, human factors, resilience engineering, systems theory, and functional modelling. He has published more than 350 papers and authored or edited 20 books, some of the most recent titles being Resilient Health Care (Ashgate, 2013), The Functional Resonance Analysis Method (Ashgate, 2012), and Resilience Engineering in Practice (Ashgate, 2011). Erik Hollnagel is also Editor-in-chief of Ashgate Studies in Resilience Engineering.

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