

BOOK REVIEW

Controlling skin exposure to chemicals and wet-work – a practical book

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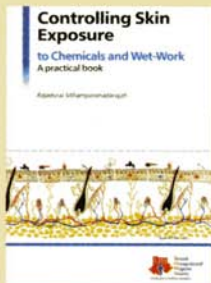
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Reviewed by Frank Hallett

This book is written by Rajadurai Sithamparanadarajah – more commonly known as Bob Rajan – an HSE Principal Inspector with many years' experience in respiratory and other forms of body contamination.

However, rather than being directly HSE-sponsored, this book is published under the BOHS banner, while also retaining Crown Copyright for unspecified content. I would not normally bother with such detail, but given that this is a commercial venture, I believe that this book has the potential to become one of a very small group of authoritative publications that form the foundation of any workplace assessment of skin exposure to substances and consequences. It would also be very useful to anyone studying for any of the myriad median or higher-level health/safety qualifications.

Unsurprisingly, given Bob Rajan's background, the layout and format are very similar to the better-written of the HSE's HS(G) series. This familiar and easy-to-understand and navigate presentation made it very easy to



review the book.

The contents are divided into four parts, all of which are liberally illustrated with very clear, good-quality diagrams, pictures and tables, and accompanied by comprehensive "further reading" and "reference" lists. There are also brief self-tests at the end of each chapter, and three appendices.

Some terminology and acronyms will be new to many – even in the H&S field. Having read the book, I'm happy that I understood both the relevance and function of these terms. Part 1 comprises a thorough, but not overly technical, description of the skin and its functions, and introduces common diseases and their source. Part 2 (the shortest section) takes the reader through a (very) brief introduction to the legal issues that underpin workplace control of exposure to substances – with a deceptively brief list of further reading!

Part 3 then takes the reader through the Exposure Hazard & Risk Identification process and outlines techniques for monitoring exposures. To be honest, much of this is already within the public domain (via the HSE MDHS series, HSE research documents and other material) but not in such an accessible, consolidated format. The 'further reading' list should not be seen as optional for this section.

Part 4 deals with the Management of Exposure; unsurprisingly, this is the largest section – although, rather oddly, it has the shortest 'further reading' list. This didn't detract from the value of the section, however, as there is a reasonably comprehensive and eclectic approach to discussing protective measures.

The title includes the phrase 'a practical book'. In my opinion this objective is not only reached but exceeded. I now class this book as one of my almost indispensable references when considering or discussing skin protection – especially with clients.