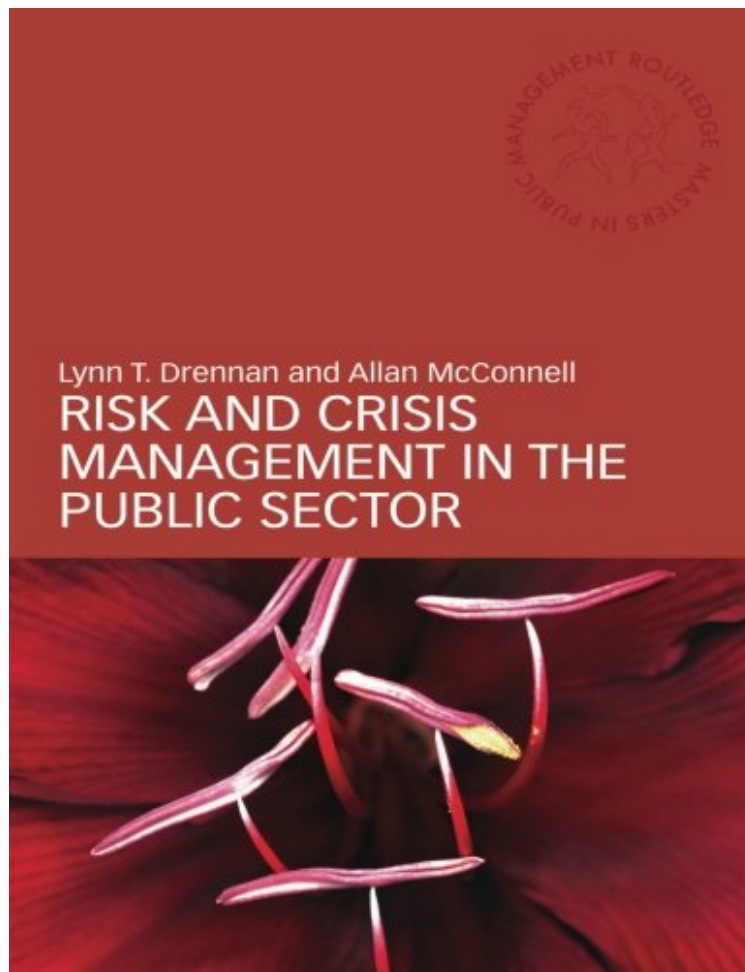


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Risk and Crisis Management in the Public Sector (Routledge Masters in Public Management)

Lynn Drennan, Allan McConnell
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#3424635 in Books 2007-06-03 2007-03-29Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 11.00 x .62 x 8.50l, .92 #File Name: 041537815X272 pages | File size: 37.Mb

Lynn Drennan, Allan McConnell : Risk and Crisis Management in the Public Sector (Routledge Masters in Public Management) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Risk and Crisis Management in the Public Sector (Routledge Masters in Public Management):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Solid introduction to an important arena in public administrationBy Steven PetersonThe purpose of this book is stated thus: "This innovative text aims to provide its readers with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess and treat risks arising in public sector organizations." The co-authors write in a serviceable style; the book is pitched toward graduate students, in-service training programs, or self-guided study. Some of the nice features: learning objectives are laid out at the front each chapter; there are all manner of boxed

items, illustrating key points; exercises are provided to allow the reader to apply book learning to fairly concrete issues. The book begins by discussing the essence of risk and crisis. Risk is straightforwardly defined as (Page 2) "the chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives, often specified as an event or set of circumstances and the consequences (both positive and negative) that will flow from this." Crisis, in its turn, is defined as (Page 2): "a situation or episode in which different actors and groups seek to attribute meaning to a particular set of circumstances which pose extraordinary threats to individual, institution, and/or society." The book unfolds, with discussion of the nature of risks and crises, what factors affect risk and crisis management, how to assess risk and manage the acute phases of crises. Finally, a global perspective on risk and crisis management is addressed. All in all, a solid introduction to the field.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good for MBA students - not for practitioners

By Charles Dickens
Book Review: RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
By Lynn Drennan Allan McConnell, 2007 Routledge, Abingdon: England
Lynn Drennan is CEO of ALARM, the UK national forum for risk management in the public sector. Allan McConnell is Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the University of Sydney. Their intention when writing this 240 page soft leaf book was "to explore both the theory and practice of risk and crisis management from an organisational and a public policy/management perspective". They wanted to help students and professional practitioners understand the complexities and contradictions of risk and crises rather than put together a "how to" book to manage risks and crises. This is a well written textbook that follows the Routledge Masters in Public Management format. It uses learning points, text boxes, annotated reading and student questions. There is an overview of the area, a critical approach to the practise in public services and exercises to support reader learning. The book covers the nature of risk and crisis; drivers for risk and crisis management; assessing risk; responding to risk; contingency planning and crisis preparedness; managing the acute phase of a crisis; holding decision-makers to account and learning from failure after a crisis; and global trends. It's enlivened by a wide variety of case studies taken from around the world. This type of format works well for those who like to learn in a paint-by-numbers way; and it makes an excellent primer for generalists or line managers early in their careers (especially if used as part of a broad but not too deep management education programme like an MBA). However, the book's strengths for students and generalists are also weaknesses for practitioners because I didn't find it engaging, insightful or practical. It is dry reading - like a book length literature review. I doubt that many practitioners will find it helpful for much more than a quick revision of their knowledge and references for further reading. The first two chapters are pretty much "Definitions and Drivers for Dummies". The third chapter discusses at a high level techniques very familiar to practitioners, as well as perception of risk and acceptable v. tolerable risk. Successive chapters follow the same path - a worthy but dull once over lightly. The crisis management part of the book steps up half a gear. "Managing the acute phase of crisis" differentiates between the symbolic-political aspects of representing the response effort and the operational demands of getting things done on the ground. Unfortunately the discussion stops at a very high level just when it gets going, dangling interesting themes such as the psychology of response to crises, and "communication pathologies" tantalisingly out of reach. Similarly, the chapter discussing "After the Crisis" introduces some stimulating ideas but it stops before going very far. I am sure that most people working in the public sector would like to learn much more about the notion that "sceptical search for truth is bound before long to collide with established norms and authority". On page 204 a quote is taken from the 9/11 Commission on what was wrong with the government agencies that allowed the attacks on the World Trade Centre: "the most important failing was one of imagination". I think the same is true of this book:- it is worthy and full of good intentions but as far as this practitioner is concerned, it missed the point.

A particular feature of modern, post-industrial societies is their growing awareness of risk and crisis management. This book's main theme is therefore the context, concepts and practice of risk and crisis management in the public sector in Western, notably European, and Asia Pacific countries. Relating to extraordinary phenomena, the term risk and crisis management, covers such events and incidents as: natural catastrophes (earthquakes, hurricanes and floods) terrorist attacks (Bali, New York, Madrid) corporate failures (HIH, Enron, WorldCom) threats to human and animal welfare (SARS, Foot and Mouth, BSE) critical incidents (bushfires, rail crashes, aviation accidents, mass shootings) environmental degradation (rain forests, ozone layer, oil spills) policy failures (UK Poll Tax, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, public-private partnerships). The public sector, at both national and sub-national levels, plays a crucial role not only in the management of such extraordinary events as these, but also in anticipating and preparing for the unthinkable. This book links theory and practice, to equip public managers and those studying public management with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage risk, and deal effectively with crises.

'This book is an excellent introduction to risk and crisis management. The authors demonstrate an impressive command of this interdisciplinary field. It showcases the most important challenges faced by contemporary risk and crisis managers, highlights the main findings of academic research about them, and offers sensible lessons for practitioners.' - Professor Paul Hart, Australian National University and Utrecht University, the Netherlands