



Risk and Reason: Safety, Law, and the Environment

By Cass R. Sunstein

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What should be done about airplane safety and terrorism, global warming, polluted water, nuclear power, and genetically engineered food? Decision-makers often respond to temporary fears, and the result is a situation of hysteria and neglect--and unnecessary illness and death. Risk and Reason explains the sources of these problems and explores what can be done about them. It shows how individual thinking and social interactions lead us in foolish directions. Offering sound proposals for social reform, it explains how a more sensible system of risk regulation, embodied in the idea of a "cost-benefit state," could save many thousands of lives and many billions of dollars too--and protect the environment in the process. Cass R. Sunstein is the Karl N. Llewellyn Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago. Appointed by President Clinton to serve on the Advisory Committee on the Public Interest Obligations of Television Broadcasters. His many books include Republic.com (Princeton, 2001) and Designing Democracy (Oxford, 2001). He has worked in the United States Department of Justice and advised on law reform and constitution-making in many nations.

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Review

"Splendid..." The New Republic

"Valuable insights..." The Washington Times

"Regulatory policy debates often fail to serve a constructive role. Advocates of risk and environmental regulation maintain that only with zero risk will we be safe. Economic critics seek to impose cost-benefit tests on these policies that many believe ignore the distinctive character of safety and the environment. In Risk and Reason, Cass Sunstein eliminates the impasse in the regulatory policy debate with a balanced policy perspective. W. Kip Viscusi, Harvard Law School

"a masterly and multifaceted analysis of government policy towards the protection of the population from risks. The central theme is analyzed in an extraordinary variety of viewpoints. The author has drawn, with deep knowledge and originality, on recent developments in cognitive psychology and in legal doctrine to complement rationalistic and economic viewpoints." Kenneth J. Arrow, Stanford University

"The University of Chicago professor merges psychology, legal doctrine and economic principles to address questions of safety, from terrorism to genetically engineered food." The Washington Post

"...an excellent book...This book could not be more timely." Financial Times

"A thought-provoking and timely introduction to risk..." Forecast

"...fascinating...Sunstein is almost certainly correct in arguing that cost-benefit thinking would eliminate some of the follies of the environmentalism of the 1970's." Commentary

"Professionals in risk assessment and risk management will find this thought-provoking book challenging." Choice

About the Author

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