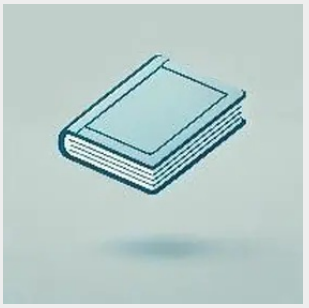
Flinterman

# Safety Without Illusions

Real Stories of Risk in Organisations That Demand Certainty



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Safety management uses policies and dashboards, but it unfolds in the everyday decisions, tensions, and compromises through which work gets done. Safety Without Illusions: Real Stories of Risk in Organisations That Demand Certainty follows a team of safety professionals working on construction and infrastructure projects, where formal systems collide with the realities of the jobsite. Through a series of narrative episodes, from project meetings and incident investigations to site visits and informal conversations, the book explores how risk, responsibility, power, and organisational pressures influence the choices people make. It asks why organisations that understand risk often struggle to respond to it, how compliance can sometimes crowd out practical judgement, and why uncertainty is so often managed through reassurance rather than learning. Each chapter combines a real-world story with insights from organisational sociology and safety science, showing how safety is influenced both by individual decisions and by the structures, relationships, and expectations that surround employees. Rather than offering another framework or set of prescriptions, the book invites readers to see safety as a practical, social accomplishment in complex environments where certainty is impossible, consequences matter, and competing demands are unavoidable. Written for safety professionals, project leaders, regulators, engineers, and others concerned with risk, leadership, and organisational performance, the book offers a grounded and thoughtful perspective on what it means to practice safety in the real world.

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