

## RISK ANALYSIS TASK FORCE (RATF) HISTORY

In 1985, with the energetic motivation of Dr. A. Alan Moghissi, ASME's Council on Engineering formed the Risk Analysis Task Force (RATF) with Dr. Moghissi as its Chairman. The RATF was established to formulate the Society's role in the development of the national policy on risk assessment and risk management and to foster the advancement of risk-based technology. The RATF emerged from an ASME Inter-Council Task Force on Risk Assessment and Risk Management and it was intended that the RATF activity would facilitate ASME's participation in the discussions of the significance of risk as the basis for formulating laws, regulations, standards, and judicial decisions.

The first task of the RATF was to examine several questions regarding ASME's role in the three areas that were defined for risk analysis: Engineering Assessment, Health and Environment, and Risk Management. These questions included:

- What is the legitimate role of ASME in these three areas?
- Would ASME bring unique qualifications to one or more areas of risk analysis?
- Would members benefit from ASME's involvement in risk analysis?

In answering these questions, the RATF derived its initial goals and objectives. It was determined that ASME could and should lead a national effort in engineering assessment. ASME should make an effort to inform its members and educate them on health and environmental assessment, and, ASME should participate in the national debate on risk management. On this basis, the objectives of the RATF were defined to be the following.

- 1.) Coordinate ASME efforts in engineering reliability/failure assessment for the purpose of reducing health and environmental risks.
- 2.) Help the Council on Public Affairs and other relevant ASME groups prepare public comments on matters dealing with engineering aspects of risk assessment and matters related to risk management.
- 3.) Help ASME members improve their knowledge and understanding of health and environmental risk assessment.
- 4.) Coordinate ASME's efforts in risk management.
- 5.) Organize symposia, workshops, training courses and sessions on risk analysis at ASME meetings and conferences.
- 6.) Help prepare publications on risk analysis, such as papers, books and special issues of various ASME journals.

The second task of the RATF was to solicit interested members from within and outside of ASME and from industry, academia and government, that could provide the technical abilities deemed necessary to fulfill the Task Team's objectives. As the RATF membership grew it

organized itself into committees to facilitate the fulfillment of its objectives.

The first formal meeting of the RATF was held at the ASME 1985 Winter Annual Meeting (WAM). However, even prior to that first meeting the organizers of the Task Force were actively at work and published a notice in ME News asking for expressions of interest to participate in the Task Force and organized a technical session and a training course at WAM 1985. The RATF subsequently held annual meetings at succeeding ASME Winter Annual Meetings and fulfilled most of its activities throughout the year through its committee structure. By the WAM 1986, the RATF had 24 members and five active committees: Membership, Codes and Standards, Technical Sessions, Risk Communication, and Education. During the WAM 1986, the RATF organized and conducted two technical sessions on risk topics. It was also during the 1986 Calendar year that a preliminary "Proof of Concept Proposal" on "Probabilistically Based Inspection Guidelines" was submitted to the newly reformed ASME Center for Research and Technology Development. This was the initial step in what, by 1995, became a very successful series of ASME research programs applying risk-based technologies to the resolution of industry technical and cost issues.

By the end of 1987 the RATF had expanded its range of risk related efforts that were then being addressed by eight committees: Education Committee, Applied Risk Committee, Environment, Papers, Ad Hoc Committee on Risk Analysis Process and Terminology, Government Affairs, Liaison with Codes and Standards, and Liaison with AAES (American Association of Engineering Societies). In 1987, the Liaison with Codes and Standards Committee was actively involved in seeking funding for risk related research activities to be done by the Center for Research and Technology Development. The Liaison with AAES Committee had formed a joint ASME (RATF) and AAES (Technology Forecasting and Assessment Committee) Risk Analysis Panel. This panel was intended to be a "Wise Man" Group that would "speak out" on the technological, health, environmental, economic, and social aspects of risk assessment and risk management. During 1987 serious considerations began regarding the merger of the RATF and its responsibilities into another existing ASME Division but such a merger could not be brought to fruition.

During 1988, there was serious discussion and a tentative decision by the RATF to form themselves into an ASME Division within the General Engineering Technical Group with a target date of WAM 1990. During the year the RATF sponsored several panels, workshops, and published its first compendium of papers related to mixed waste, hazardous waste, health risk and other risk related topics. By the end of 1988 the RATF had organized itself into fifteen active or developing committees, all with defined Chairs and objectives, and began development of formal charters in preparation for transforming itself into a Technical Division.

Over the next several years, the RATF continued with its mission by; further expanding its membership, increasing the total number of committees to ten active committees and seven developing committees, and continuing its annual Risk Analysis Symposium Technical Sessions at ASME WAM, as well as sessions at the ASME PVP and other conferences. Throughout the 1989 to 1991 period the RATF also continued to pursue formation of a Risk Analysis Division but also kept open the option to merge with an existing Division.

In 1991, with growing encouragement from COE and the General Engineering Technical Group, and with growing interest by the Safety Division and the RATF, merger discussions with the Safety Division became quite serious. To facilitate a possible merger the RATF identified the issues that needed to be resolved for a merger to become a reality. By April, 1991 the Safety Division clarified that it saw no major impediments to a merger with the RATF and in May, 1991 the RATF formed an Ad Hoc Committee to "negotiate" a merger with the Safety Division. Finally on June 6, 1991 the Safety Division General Committee met with the RATF Ad Hoc Committee to formally discuss a merger. This meeting finally brought the success that many were seeking and a new Division, the Safety Engineering and Risk Analysis Division was formed through the merger of the Safety Division and the RATF.

The merger resulted in; a vision statement that met both organizations' intentions for the future role of the Division, formal recognition of all active RATF and Safety Division Committees in the new Division, representation of the RATF on the new Division's Executive Committee and a new Division name that represented the new vision and satisfied both parties technical and visibility interests. SERAD (Safety Engineering and Risk Analysis Division) was born!

To address organizational consolidation issues, such as overlapping committee responsibilities, revised Bylaws and other administrative changes, a SERAD Ad Hoc Committee was formed to review and make recommendations to the new Executive Committee. At this point and thereafter the two organizations readily blended into a single focused Division that has resulted in a growing Division with a focus on a brightening future.