BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: Forensic Engineering Investigation


This book appears to be a sequel, or expanded version, of Mr. Noon’s previous book, Introduction to Forensic Engineering, which was previously reviewed in JFS, Vol. 40, No. 1, p. 152. The current book is divided into 23 chapters, and is arranged as follows:

Chapter 1—Introduction
Chapter 2—Wind Damage to Residential Structures
Chapter 3—Lightning Damage to Well Pumps
Chapter 4—Evaluating Blasting Damage
Chapter 5—Building Collapse Due to Roof Leakage
Chapter 6—Putting Machines and People Together
Chapter 7—Determining the Point of Origin of a Fire
Chapter 8—Electrical Shorting
Chapter 9—Explosions
Chapter 10—Determining the Point of Ignition of an Explosion
Chapter 11—Arson and Incendiary Fires
Chapter 12—Simple Skids
Chapter 13—Simple Vehicular Falls
Chapter 14—Vehicle Performance
Chapter 15—Momentum Methods
Chapter 16—Energy Methods
Chapter 17—Curves and Turns
Chapter 18—Visual Perception and Motorcycle Accidents
Chapter 19—Interpreting Lamp Filament Damages
Chapter 20—Automotive Fires
Chapter 21—Hail Damage
Chapter 22—Blaming Brick Freeze-Thaw Deterioration on Hail
Chapter 23—Management’s Role in Accidents and Catastrophic Events

Further Information and References
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Like his first book, this book does contain some useful information. However, many of the criticisms of Mr. Noon’s first book (see JFS, Vol. 40, No. 1, p. 152) are applicable to this one as well. The book is poorly organized, and there is no flow, cohesion, or natural evolution between topics from chapter to chapter. If it was the author’s intention to write a comprehensive book on miscellaneous (not necessarily related) topics in forensic engineering, each chapter should have been a detailed self-contained article written by experts in the respective fields. Following the introduction, Chapters 2 through 6 are randomly selected topics that apparently derive from the author’s personal consulting experiences. Chapters 7 through 11 deal with the topics of fire cause and origin. Chapters 12 through 19 are concerned with vehicular accident reconstruction. Chapter 20 then jumps back to the topic of automotive fires. The remainder of the book then goes back to considering miscellaneous topics. In addition to being poorly organized, in this reviewer’s opinion, the book does not present material in a manner that could be easily understood and applied by either a novice or a seasoned forensic engineering practitioner. The book is lacking in practical examples and as such limits its value as a useful reference. Furthermore, the non-specialist would have a difficult time reading, understanding, and extracting useful information from the book. In this reviewer’s opinion, this book does not materially contribute to the literature and growing number of books dealing with forensic engineering. Better and more comprehensive theoretical and applied treatments of relevant topics in forensic engineering are available elsewhere.