Back in the late 90s, the Yellow Book was published and it provided much-needed help for people wanting to apply best-practice engineering safety management. However, it has been withdrawn and at the same time, the EU Regulation 402/2013 The Common Safety Method for Risk Evaluation and Assessment (CSM for REA) was made law. Although the RSSB has published additional information to replace and update the Yellow Book guidance, and the European Rail Agency and the Office for Rail Regulation (ORR) also provide information, it can be difficult to understand how the EU regulation fits with the UK’s ALARP framework and how best to deliver the ‘safety piece’ cost-effectively.

The CSM for REA presents challenges for any organisation working on change for the main line railway including technical, operational and organisational aspects. Responsibility for application of the CSM lies with the Proposer, but all stakeholders need to be involved, and are required to share information. The CSM prescribes a process that includes hazard identification and then the selection of a Risk Acceptance Principle for management of the hazard. If a Code of Practice (effectively a standard) or a Reference System is selected (e.g. when the project involves straightforward re-use of technology), risk is deemed inherently acceptable. Otherwise, the third principle, of Explicit Risk Estimation, must be used to understand the cause and consequence of the hazard so that appropriate safety requirements may be established. Record of the CSM work is required in the form of a Hazard Log that links the hazard with the selected risk acceptance principle(s), and the work must be independently assessed by a CSM Assessment Body (AsBo).

ERA Technology has been working in safety assurance for many years. It helps clients to prepare for safety case delivery and also acts as Independent Safety Assessor (ISA).ERA’s recent ISA projects include acting as the CSM Assessment Body. With its vast experience, ERA has been a key provider of engineering safety management training that aligns with all currently published guidance.

ERA has developed three excellent courses that provide practical approaches:

A two-day introduction. Starting from first principles, this course provides a sound understanding of how accidents happen, how we work to minimise safety risk and what tools and techniques are available to analyse safety. The basis of UK and EU law is discussed and the application of the Common Safety Method is described in detail.

A one-day update for safety professionals. Safety engineers with knowledge based on the old Yellow Book will wish to understand what is different in the updated guidance that has been provided. This course describes in detail the CSM regulation and facilitates discussion about strategies for compliance.

A half-day briefing for senior managers. Senior managers need to understand what challenges are faced by their organisation. They should know how requirements of, for example, the CDM Regulations relate to their responsibilities under CSM, how safety-related software should be managed, and what their responsibilities are with respect to the system integration activities.

For more details of ERA’s CSM training courses, please visit www.era.co.uk/csm-training or email events@era.co.uk