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Reliability centered maintenance (RCM) is one of the most misunderstood processes in the maintenance world. RCM techniques were first developed by Nowlan and Heap to transform aircraft maintenance as the Boeing 747 was being introduced. It was quickly adapted to industrial maintenance by pioneers such as John Moubray and Anthony “Mac” Smith.

As time went by, others adapted RCM further, some adding elements and other taking them away. At last count there were over a dozen major RCM derivations and many other less popular methods. The only thing some of the processes have in common are three little letters: R, C, and M.

Like many technical subject areas, you do not know what you do not know about RCM and its derivations until it is too late. Luckily the Web is a great place to learn more about the world of RCM.

Let’s start with the archives at MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY magazine. Visit www.mt-online.com and click on Articles. There are dozens of archived RCM articles including many by John Moubray.

Reliabilityweb.com also features an RCM knowledge base linked from the home page that includes articles, and streaming tutorials.

Reliability Radio includes an audio interview with Anthony “Mac” Smith, co-author of RCM–Gateway to World Class Maintenance.

You can also visit Aladon , the company founded by John Moubray and the current promoter of RCM-2 methodology . There are several excellent articles and papers that anyone exploring RCM should read.

You can also read some articles by Mac Smith at the JMS Software site including one that

covers implementing an RCM program.

The Society of Automotive Engineers has written a rigorous RCM standard that some companies have adopted to ensure a consistent RCM service level. There are advantages and disadvantages of using a standard like SAE-JA1011; however, understanding it should be included in your RCM learning goals. Visit www.sae.org and search for Reliability Centered Maintenance to purchase the standard.

Jack Nicholas Jr. is building on the work of Nowlan and Heap, John Moubray, and Mac Smith with the help of Doug Plucknette, the developer of RCM Blitz, to create an RCM scorecard method for applying consistent metrics for short and long term RCM results.

Jack will deliver a full day workshop at the Reliability Centered Maintenance Managers' Forum, March 9-11, 2005, in Clearwater, FL and welcomes e-mail input from people who have experience implementing reliability centered maintenance. Specifically Jack is inviting comments that explain:

- How the results of RCM projects are measured during and after completion
- What pitfalls and problems have been encountered when identifying adequate metrics
- What solutions may be beneficial to practitioners, vendors, customers, managers, sponsors, or anyone else interested in the progress and eventual outcome of an RCM project.

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