



Mini-Latent Cause Analysis

version 7 July 2008

The Mini-LCA is a way to help people see themselves as part of their problems. As opposed to blaming other people and things, the Mini-LCA requires a person to ask “what is it about the way we are,” and “what is it about the way I am that contributed to this problem?” Mini-LCAs are to be performed on any typical problem normally encountered in a persons life (work or home). Mini-LCA’s ask a person to be introspective about themselves and their surroundings.

Imagine a world where everyone looked at themselves rather than pointing fingers at others.

One of the most frustrating findings of formal Latent Cause Analyses is that many of the underlying causes of major incidents are known AHEAD OF TIME. Warning signs almost always precede major incidents, but are neglected. Frustrating equipment, people, and systems are usually recognized, but often ignored until they result in disaster.

It is people that ignore and neglect these problems. In the limit, people cause problems – ALL people. We either do things we should not have done, or neglect to do things we should have done. Although most people easily see these qualities in other people, it is rare to find individuals who can see their own role in things that go wrong.

The Mini-LCA is an attempt to help people see themselves as part of their problems.

First we need to see ourselves as part of the problem, then we’ll be ready to change.

The intent of the Mini-LCA is not to generate action items or recommendations. In fact, you will find little space on this template for recording these types of things. Simply pick a typical problem, and address it in your normal manner. Take it as far as you normally take it, and then be introspective.

The Mini-LCA is, therefore, a self awareness exercise. If we look for our own role in things that go wrong often-enough, healthy people will “connect the dots” and desire a change.

The Mini-LCA is also an organizational awareness tool. In this respect, when you finish this Mini-LCA please send it to whomever is tracking LATENT CAUSES at your site. Your signature is NOT required.

Mini-LCA Template

- **Who** (did it happen to)?
- **What** (was the undesired actual/potential consequence)?
- **Where** (did it happen)?
- **When** (did it happen)?
- **Your Name:**
- **Completion Date:**

should read like a paragraph

Simple Schematics

Insert **labeled schematics** so the reader can understand the remainder of this document.
Make sure ALL items referred-to in other portions of this document are included. Keep it **simple**.

Summary Sequence of Events

Approximately **5 bullets**, IN **GENERAL TERMS**, referring to the schematic

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Why Statement (*what question will you answer in this Mini-LCA -- should relate to WHAT on page 1*)

Physical Evidence

Insert **labeled photos and sketches** of **PHYSICAL EVIDENCE** here.
Make sure ALL items referred-to in other portions of this document are included. Keep it simple.



People Evidence

WHO said **WHAT**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick gray border, intended for recording evidence. It occupies the central portion of the page below the title and subtitle.

Paper Evidence

WHAT said **WHAT**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick gray border, intended for recording information related to the 'WHAT said WHAT' section.

Physical Causes

Physical Causes: Based on all the evidence, **HOW** did the incident occur (What were the **PHYSICS** of the incident)? BE SPECIFIC. Do not mention anything about people. Use sentences/paragraphs. Write in past tense.

Reactive Actions Taken: What has already been done in response to this incident?

Preventative Actions Recommended: What else should be done to make sure the Physical Causes cannot recur?

Human Causes

WHO did **WHAT WRONG** (functions, not names)

List ACTIONS that people DID (or did NOT do) . Do not mention “thoughts or attitudes.”

Be specific. Bulleted list. Write in past tense.

Human Thoughts

Fill-in ONE copy of this page for each of the identified HUMAN CAUSES.

Human Cause #1:

Triggering Situation *(When should the person have behaved differently?)*:

Actual Thoughts at this point in time

Desired Thoughts at this point in time

Organizational Latent Causes

What is it about the way we ARE that is evident in the above thoughts? Must be generic, i.e. not specific to only this one incident, and present tense. Bullet-style. Preface all responses with the words "We."

- We...
- We...
- We...
- We...

What do you think we should do about these Organizational Latencies? Please be as SMART as possible (specific, measurable, actionable, reasonable, and time-bound):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Circle the most significant item in each box

Personal Latent Causes

“What is it about the way I AM that might have contributed to this incident? Must be generic, i.e. not specific to only this one incident, and present tense. Bullet-style. Preface all responses with the words “I.”

- I...
- I...
- I...
- I...

What will you do about these Personal Latencies? Please be as SMART as possible (specific, measurable, actionable, reasonable, and time-bound):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Circle the most significant item in each box

Explanatory WHY Tree

Organizational Latent Causes

Personal Latent Causes

Summary

My own, personal bottom-line learning from this incident:

What I think others should learn from this incident:

Positive observations made during the Mini-LCA:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Golden Rule of an LCA

When something goes wrong, we must try to understand to such an extent that we're convinced we'd have done the same thing under similar circumstances. This is true for all who truly desire to understand why things go wrong, everywhere, in all walks of life.

Let's Learn from Things that Go Wrong!

THANKS to ConocoPhillips for many of the ideas captured in this document, and to all those who have sent me their Mini-LCA's for comment! C. Robert Nelms

More about Failsafe Network, Inc.

Failsafe exists to help individuals and organizations discover the TRUTH about why things go wrong, without hurting one another in the process. All of Failsafe's approaches are based on the need to SLOW DOWN — to allow EVIDENCE to guide us to the right answers. After all, **“everything we need to know about our existence is staring us right in our face, if we'd only take time to look.”**

The concepts underlying this Mini-LCA are natural and basic. The Mini-LCA is merely an attempt to help people see their own role in small problems, in hopes that the people will change so that big problems can be avoided. In the meantime, unfortunately, large and medium size problems will continue to occur.

Failsafe's Maxi, Midi, and Mini-LCA concepts exist to address large, medium, and small-size problems. A total, comprehensive approach to learning from things that go wrong is available through Failsafe, and is presented in the 4-day class called **“The Latent Cause Experience.”** This 4-day experience was designed to jump-start your site's LCA effort's. It was designed for a cross-section of an organization, since EVERYONE must eventually see themselves as part of their own problems. The 4-day experience will CHANGE the way the attendee thinks about failure and its causes, as well as introducing a vision, vocabulary, tools, and structure for your LCA efforts. It is strongly recommended that a CRITICAL MASS of an organization experience the 4-day class prior pursuing any form of Latent Cause Analysis.

For a FREE DOWNLOAD of the most recent release of the Mini-LCA, visit www.failsafe-network.com

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