

# Facilitation Tip 20: Let the Incident Determine Structure, Not the Method

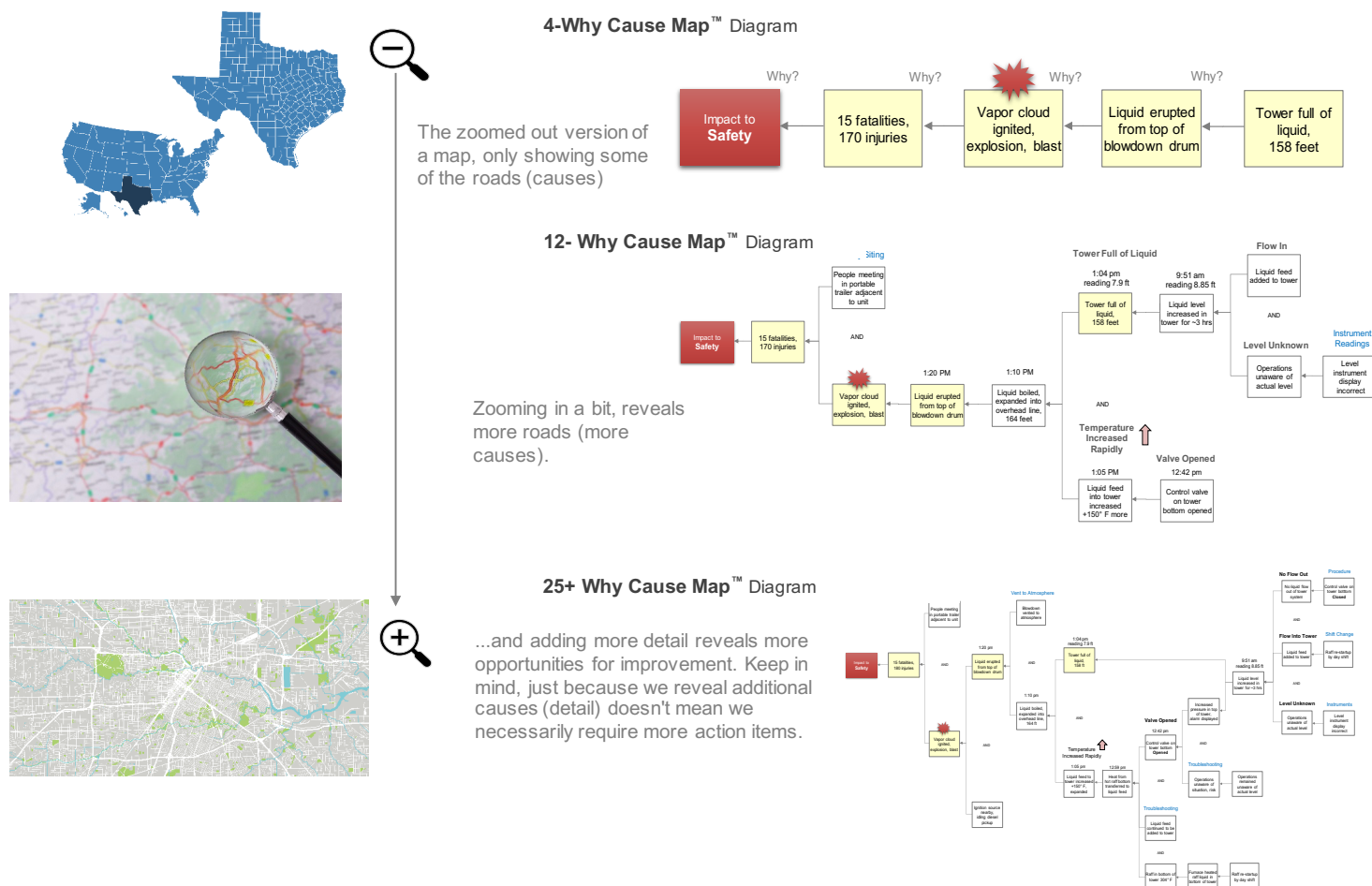
Many people believe the structure of a problem is revealed by the methodology selected to solve it. However, a scientific approach reveals the structure that's already contained within the issue. Because the incident already occurred, it has a specific structure – what DID happen. We can show it in a variety of different 1-Whys, 5-Whys, as a 15-Why or a 50-Why, but all levels of detail need to be an accurate representation of what happened. We don't want to drive the investigation or make the investigation fit into a certain structure based on the methodology.

Similar to Tip #7, we want you to focus on the diagram and not let the method hinder your ability to reveal the specific details contained within the issue. The audience should see the details of the incident (that already occurred, a specific way), not the methodology. The methodology should facilitate investigation communication rather than obstruct it.

## Scientific Approach

Some people believe cause and effect is too simple for complex problems, but cause and effect only seems simple because it's fundamental. A cause-and-effect analysis works for small day-to-day issues as well as catastrophic events. This scientific approach can zoom in and out to different levels of detail as needed. Cause-and-effect relationships validated with evidence reveal why things are the way they are. It is the core of a scientific approach. Cause and effect isn't one of the problem-solving techniques to choose from; it's a principle on which all problem solving is based.

We can use the analogy of a map to see how detail is added as needed to the *Cause Map* diagram.



**LESSON:** In an investigation, people should see the details of the incident, not a methodology. By focusing on the principle of cause and effect, the structure of the incident is revealed. It's a mistake to think the method or the tool provides the structure. An incident can be explained in as much or as little detail as needed without allowing the method to distract from an objective, evidence-based approach.

Curious how this applies to your problems? We can demonstrate the *Cause Mapping* method on one of your problems. Interested in improving your skills? Learn how to become certified to facilitate a complete investigation.

To learn more visit our website at [www.thinkreliability.com](http://www.thinkreliability.com)  
email: [info@thinkreliability.com](mailto:info@thinkreliability.com) phone: 281-412-7766

**Facilitation Tip 20**

Learn more about how incidents already have a structure in this short video explanation.



(5 minutes)