



NOTICING AND DECLARING BREAKDOWNS

1.0 What

A Lean/IPD program encourages stakeholders to plan, design and develop processes that increase value and eliminate waste. It is crucial for team members to understand that all team actions must drive to the desired results. When this is not the case, it is critical for the team to declare a breakdown.

A breakdown is an event that violates or will violate the principles of the project or organization—or erodes team trust.

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2.0 Why

Projects and processes have challenges every day. When breakdowns are brought to light sooner rather than later, the team has more time to be proactive rather than reactive—and having to clean up a mess. Properly addressing a breakdown can often lead to great breakthroughs and innovation.

3.0 When

A breakdown should be declared by anyone, anytime they:


- Foresee an event that will violate the principles of a project, or organization—or will erode trust;
- Experience an event that has violated the principles of a project or organization, or erodes trust;
- Are confused; or,
- Get results different from what was expected.

Reasons for declaring a breakdown do not—and should not—correspond to the apparent size of the potential violation. Breakdowns may be declared for both minor and major reasons.

If one team member declares a breakdown, it is incumbent upon the entire team to respond appropriately and create shared alignment.

4.0 How

- All employees and project participants must be granted the authority to declare a breakdown. This should be part of all Onboarding plans.
- Breakdowns should be declared to whomever is involved or affected as soon as immediately practical, even if the declarer is uncertain it is indeed a breakdown. This should not occur by email, but in a face-to-face setting.
- Once the breakdown has been declared, the team should prepare for a session to create a shared understanding, identify the root cause, and prevent the situation from recurring. An action plan with ownership should be developed. The method may be a retrospective, a plus/delta, a fishbone diagram, an A3, etc. The method will depend on the breakdown at hand.
- The session should focus on the process or system. Avoid blame pointing fingers.
- When discussing breakdowns, the team must follow the rules of engagement for a safe environment. Nothing should be taken personally and all should understand that everyone did the best they could with the information they had at the time.
- The team should update actions at the daily check-ins.



Quick Reference

High-Performing Teams	113
Partner Selection	117
Reliable Promising	151

For additional readings and information, please see the below information.

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Additional Readings

[3.1 Good 5 Why Application in design environment](#)

[Case Study of Using an Integrated 5D System in a Large Hospital Construction Project](#)

[Developing the True North route map as a navigational compass in a construction project management organization](#)

[Harborview Case Study - Mike Sweeney](#)

[Last Planner and Integrated Project Delivery](#)

[Lean Journey-Value Stream Mapping](#)

[Making Data and Decisions Flow in a Big Room - John Mack and Robert Mauck](#)

[Projects in Review-The Facebook Journey](#)

[Schedule for Sale Workface Planning for Construction Projects](#)