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# Best Practices in Safety Investigations

How to write a balanced Just Culture investigation report

Tony Licu

Head of Safety Unit

EUROCONTROL Network Manager Directorate

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# Overview



- Background to Safety-II thinking
- S-I and S-II in a nutshell
- Systemic Thinking and its 10 principles
- S-II in Investigations
- Systemic Occurrence Analysis Methodology

Safety-I and Safety-II

# In a nutshell

# Safety-I in a nutshell

- Definition of safety: As few things as possible go wrong
- Manifestation: Adverse outcomes, 'unacceptable' risks
- Mechanism: Causality credo
- Foundation: Bimodality & decomposability
- View of human: Predominantly treated as a liability or hazard
- Safety management principle: Respond to occurrences or unacceptable risks
- Occurrence investigation: Identify causes & contributory factors to adverse outcomes
- Risk assessment: Determine likelihood of adverse outcomes

## Safety-II in a nutshell

- Definition of safety: As many things as possible go right
- Manifestation: All possible outcomes, especially typical ones
- Mechanism: Emergence
- Foundation: Performance adjustments & performance variability
- View of human: Resource necessary for system flexibility and resilience
- Safety management principle: Continuously anticipate developments and events
- Occurrence investigation: Understand how things usually go right as a basis for understand how they occasionally go wrong
- Risk assessment: Understand conditions where performance variability can become difficult or impossible to monitor and control

# Systems Thinking for Safety



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Systems Thinking for Safety: Ten Principles  
A White Paper  
Moving towards Safety-II

DNM Safety



# Putting systems thinking in practice

## Practical advice structured around 10 Principles

AA2 Systems Thinking for Safety

### Principle 2. Listen to people's stories

People do things that make sense to them. To understand their goals, understand the context, the flow of work, and the focus of attention at the time.

Work needs to be understood from the perspective of those doing the work.

Systems Thinking for Safety

### Practical advice

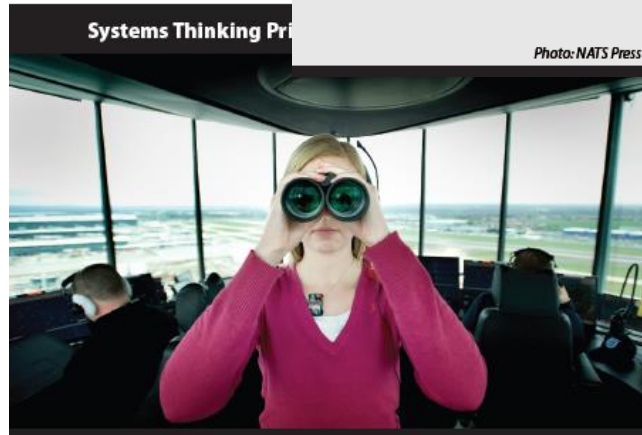
- **Listen to people's stories.** Consider how field experts can best tell their stories from the point of view of how they experienced events at the time. Try to understand the person's situation and world from their point of view, both in terms of the context and their moment-to-moment experience.
- **Understand goals, plans and expectations in context.** Discuss individual goals, plans and expectations, in the context of the flow of work and the system as a whole.
- **Understand knowledge, activities and focus of attention.** Focus on 'knowledge at the time,' not your knowledge now. Understand the various activities and focus of attention, at a particular moment and in the general time-frame. Consider how things made sense to those involved, and the system implications.
- **Seek multiple perspectives.** Don't settle for the first explanation; seek alternative perspectives. Discuss different perceptions of events, situations, problems and opportunities, from different field experts and perspectives. Consider the implications of these differential views for the system.

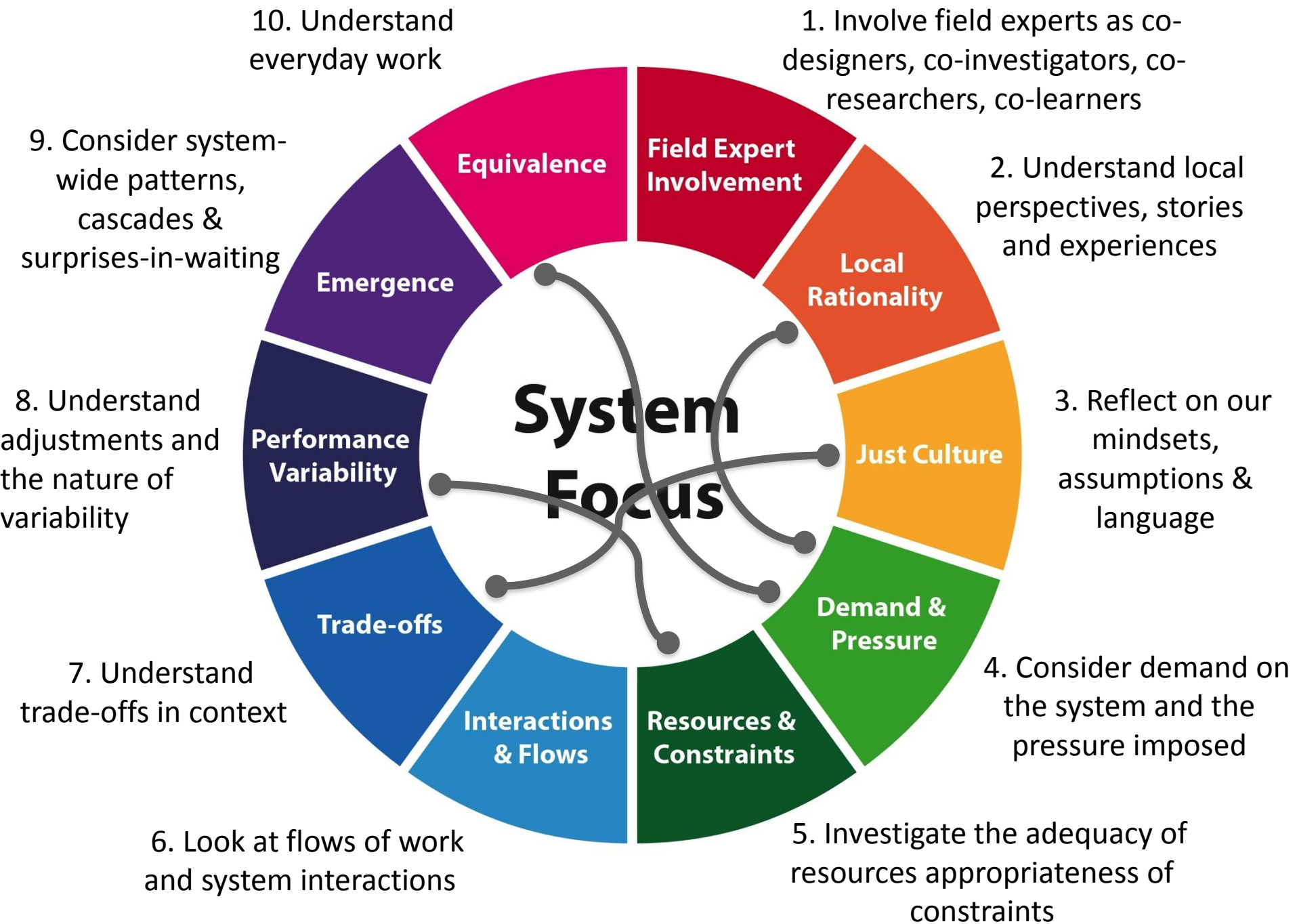
Read more

<http://bit.ly/2-LR>

Systems Thinking for Safety

Photo: NATS Press Office <https://flic.kr/p/cwTKS1> CC BY-NC-ND 2.0







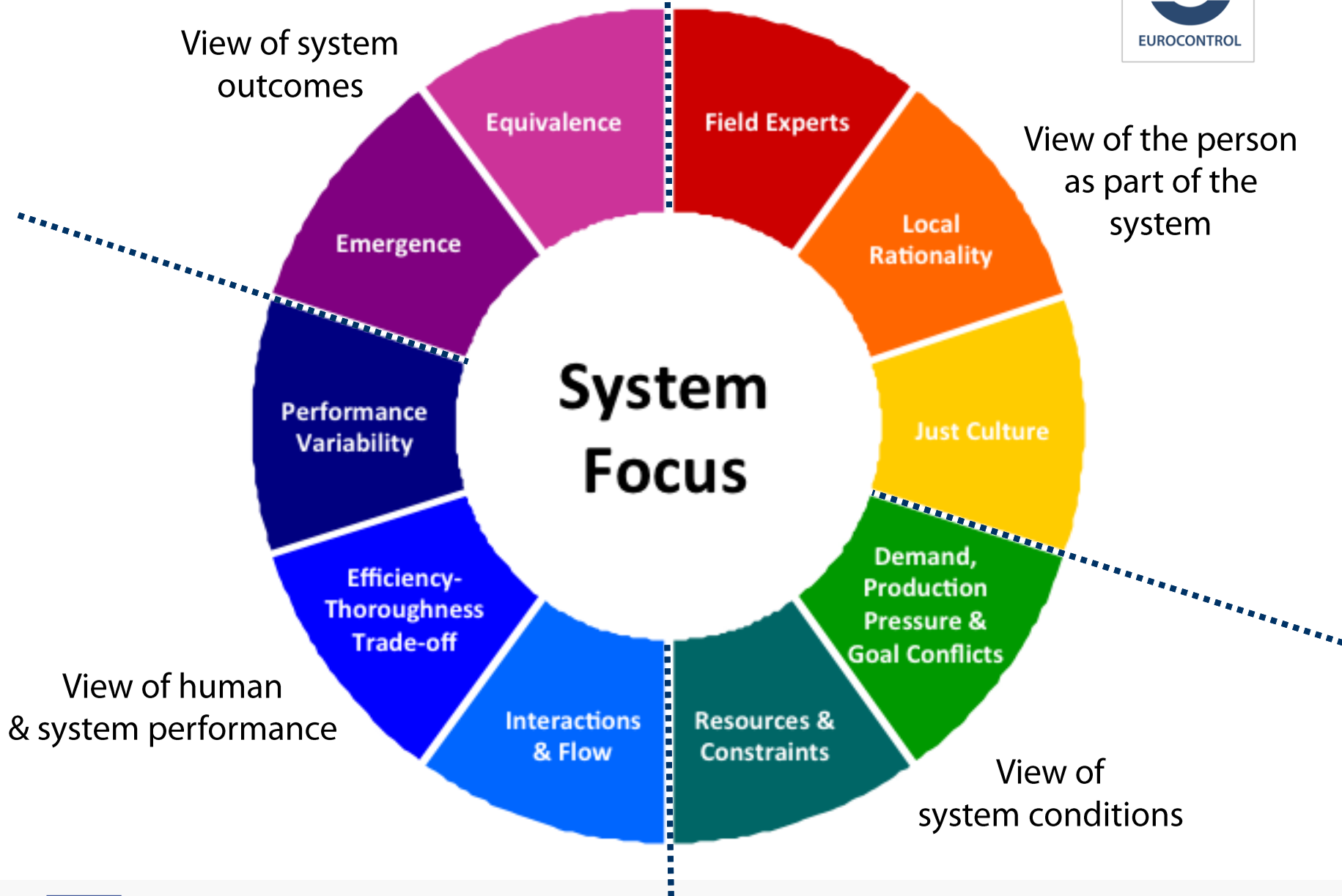
How to find out what goes right...

# Safety Investigation

# Rationale

- Need to move on from ‘human error’
- Reduce fear of considering human performance
- Put human performance in proper system context
- Integrate insights from **systems safety**, **systems human factors**, and **systems thinking**
- Make theory more engaging and memorable
- White Paper available on SKYbrary

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CD9YqdWwwdw>



# Enabling co-investigation and co-learning

Flexible tools to  
encourage  
communication and  
creativity

System Safety Learning

## Interaction with Equipment

D-2-1. Working position / console  
D-2-2. Surveillance equipment  
D-2-3. Communication equipment  
D-2-4. Navigation equipment  
D-2-5. Other information display  
D-2-6. Equipment warning device  
D-2-7. Interaction with Mode S  
D-2-8. Interaction with CPDLC  
D-2-9. Interaction with ADS-B

D2 System Safety Learning



### Contextual Factors

## Interaction with Equipment

Interaction design and usability of the working position and associated equipment such as input devices and output devices. Does not include availability or integrity problems (See "Equipment").

Includes interaction with working position/console, surveillance, communication, navigation, information displays, warnings, Mode S, CPDLC and ADS-B.



Photo: NATS Press Office

# The language of investigation

✗ Mis-see...  
Expectation bias

✗ Incorrect decision...  
Failure to consider side effects

✗ Misrecall  
information...Memory  
capacity overload

✗ Unclear information transmitted...  
Unclear speech

✗ Unreliable equipment

✗ Unclear procedure

✗ Inadequate mentoring

✗ Complacency

✗ Lack of  
responsibility

# The problem with negative contributory factors

- Apply only to failures (infrequent) in safety occurrences (rare)
- Constant expansion needed as more faults are found
- More categories = fewer data in each category
- Can be seen as blaming
- Do not allow learning about what goes right
- Leads to partial analysis
- Need a focus on **performance variability** of activities, functions & resources

# Shifting the language

Neutralising the language of safety investigation

Did the controller fail to detect the information completely?



**No detection of visual information**

*Focuses on the individual & failure.  
Hindsight perspective.  
Implicitly suggests source of failure.*

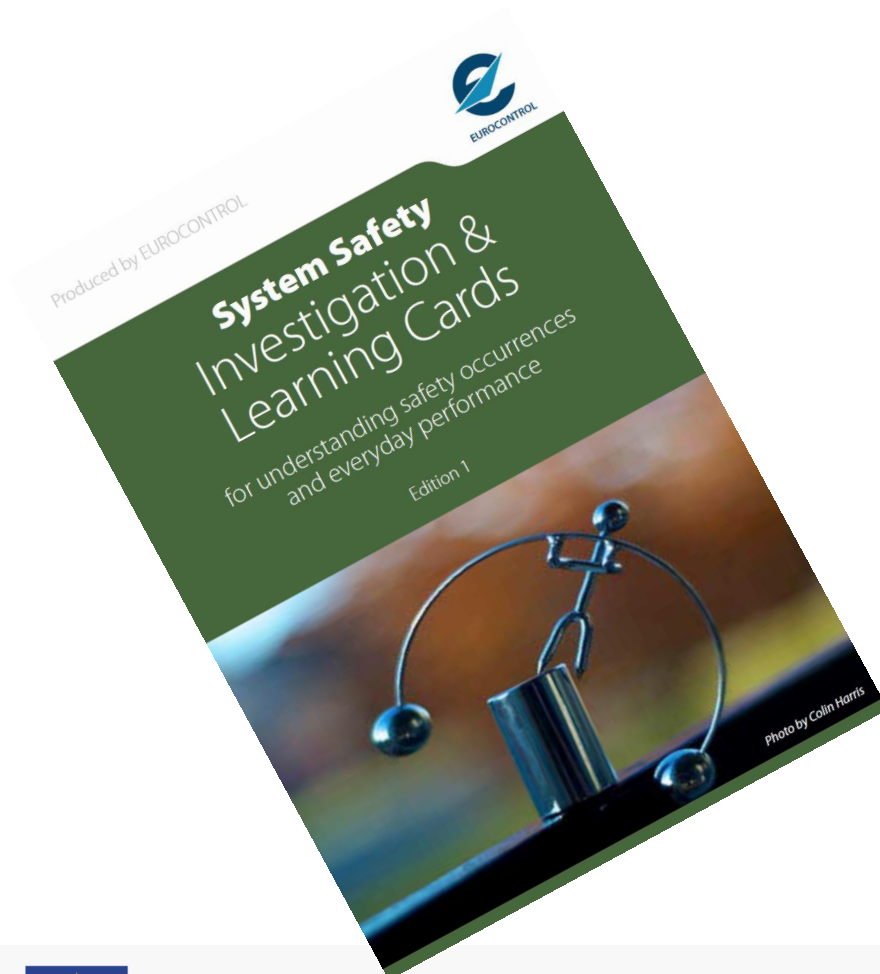
Does the situation or interaction concern the detection of visual information?



**See - detection**

*Focuses on the situation and context.  
Local rationality perspective.  
Suggests a starting point for further investigation.*

# Investigation & Learning Cards

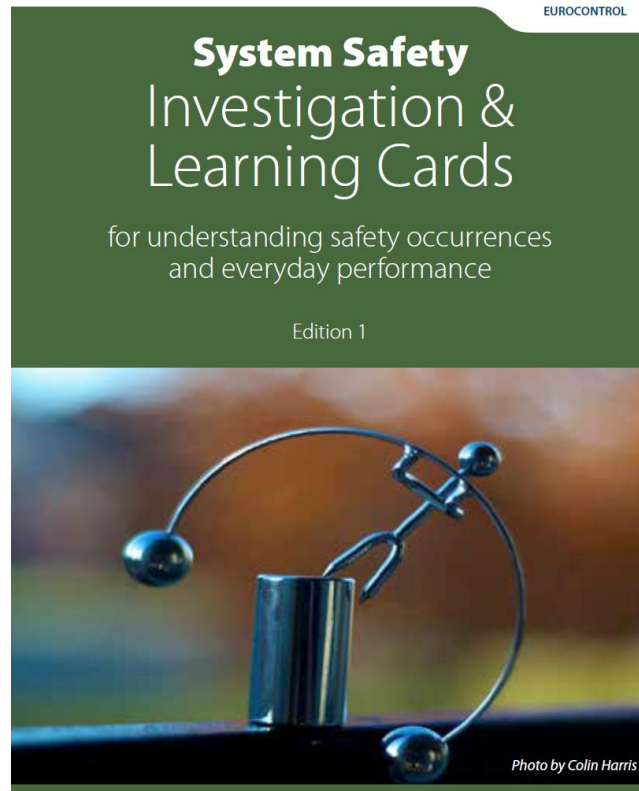




# Purpose & Rationale

- Assist training, investigations and other learning activities
- Development ACHIEVED with investigator involvement
- Structured around high-level EUROCONTROL RAT – Risk Analysis/eTOKAI (Tool Kit for ATM Occurrence Investigations) explanatory factors
- Includes 10 principles to help systemic application
- Potential uses:
  - Investigator training
  - Post-discussion/interview/observation summary
  - Analysis and reconstruction
  - Risk assessment
  - Safety refresher training

Produced by EUROCONTROL



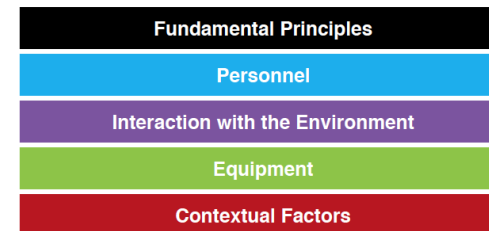
0b Safety Culture



## Organisation of the Cards

There are several individual cards for each of section of the explanatory factors.

Each card introduces a different issue for analysis, reflection or discussion.



Cards for each major category within these groups

0h



## Fundamental Principles

### Principle 9. Efficiency-Thoroughness Trade-Off (ETTO)

People have to balance the thoroughness and efficiency of performance in a complex and uncertain environment

Consider how people balance efficient and thoroughness, from their point of view, and understand the tactics they use to maintain efficiency (e.g. multitasking, recognition) and thoroughness (e.g. checking).



0e



## Fundamental Principles

### Principle 6. Demand, Production Pressure & Goal Conflict

Pressures relating to efficiency and capacity have a fundamental effect on performance

Performance needs to be understood in terms of demands, resulting pressures and conflicts between goals of production and protection



## Front

A3 Safety Investigation Cards



### Personnel

### Decision

Judging or projecting the accuracy of spatial or temporal information and forming a decision or plan to achieve an intended outcome

Judgements and decision-making requires continuous adjustments to the context and conditions. Decision making must be considered from the point of the view of the person, including goals, knowledge, understanding of the situation and focus of attention at the time, as well as the context of work.



*Photo by Andrew Tarrant*

## Back

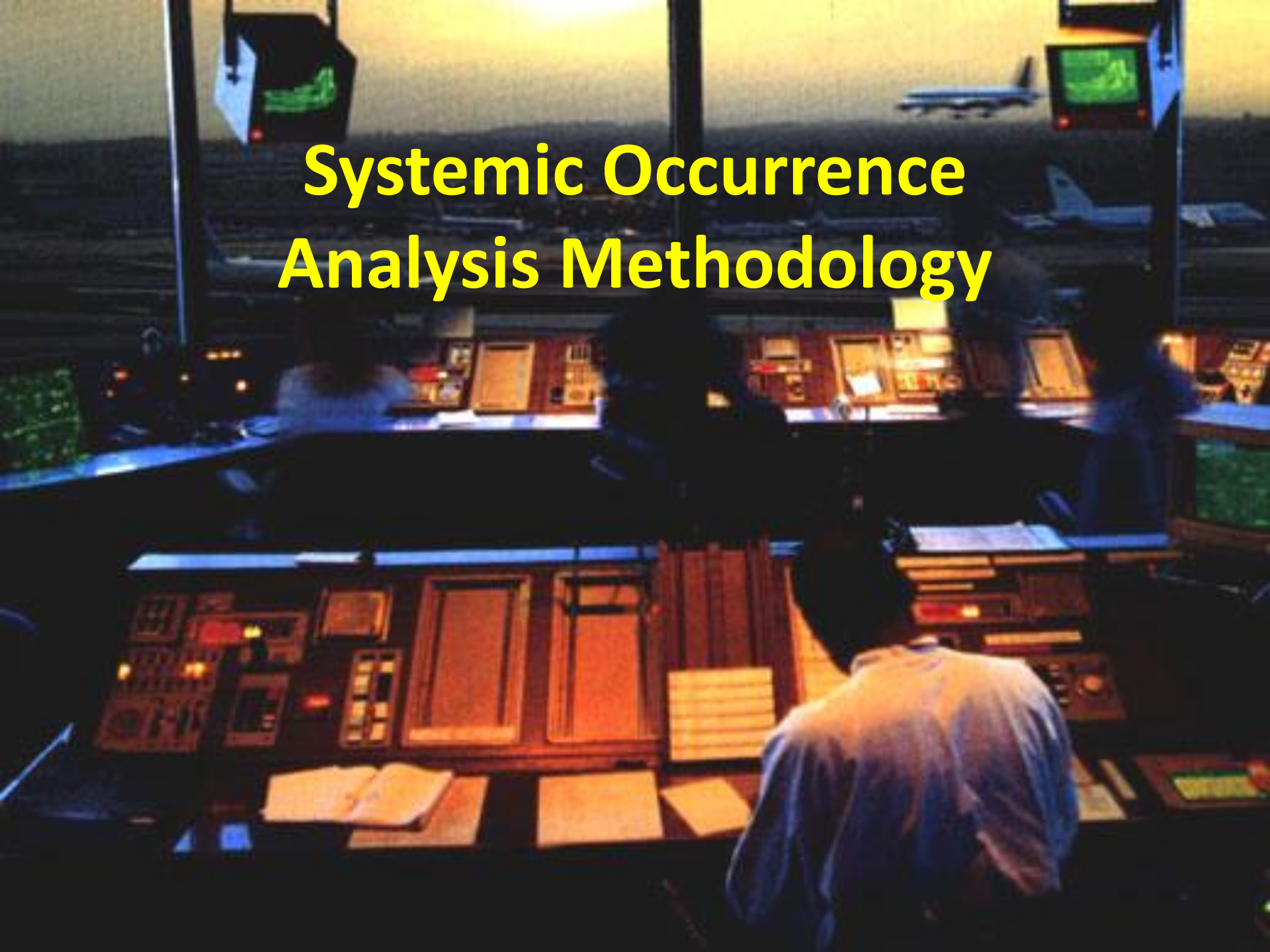
Safety Investigation Cards

### A.3. Decision

- A3-1. Judge / project
- A3-2. Decide / plan ('correctness'/workability)
- A3-3. Decide / plan (sufficiency)
- A3-4. Decide / plan (timing)
- A3-5. Decide / plan (presence of decision/plan)

**RAT**  
explanatory  
factors

# Systemic Occurrence Analysis Methodology



# SOAM Antecedents

- The Reason Model ~ circa 1990
  - Developed from Professor James Reason's work on human error and "organisational accidents"
- Tripod Delta ~ circa 1994
  - Developed for Shell Petroleum, based on Reason Model
- ICAM ~ circa 2000
  - Developed for BHP Billiton, based on Reason Model and Tripod Delta



# How SOAM can help

- A methodology that includes structured processes to:
  - identify and classify a range of contributing factors
  - sort out irrelevant, non-contributing facts
  - move from a focus on human error/s to identify systemic causes ~ support for 'Just Culture'
  - analyse simple events through to high severity incidents and accidents
  - clearly link recommendations to the facts of the analysis

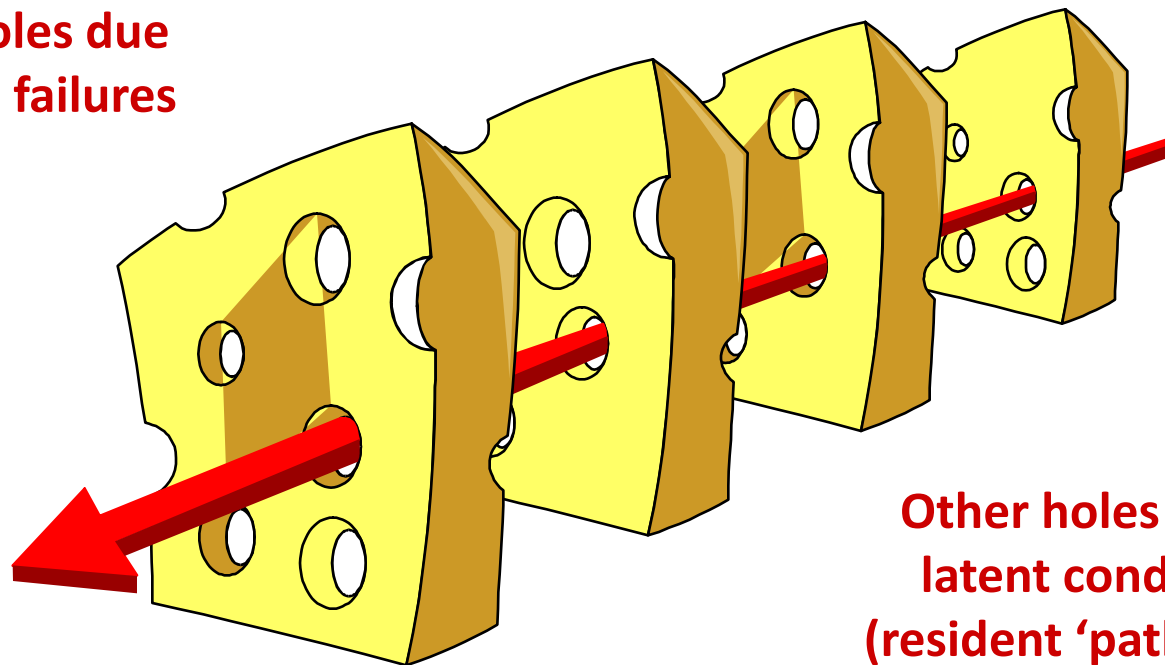
# The “Swiss Cheese” model of accident causation

Resilient systems have successive layers of defences, barriers, & safeguards

Some holes due to active failures

Hazards

Losses

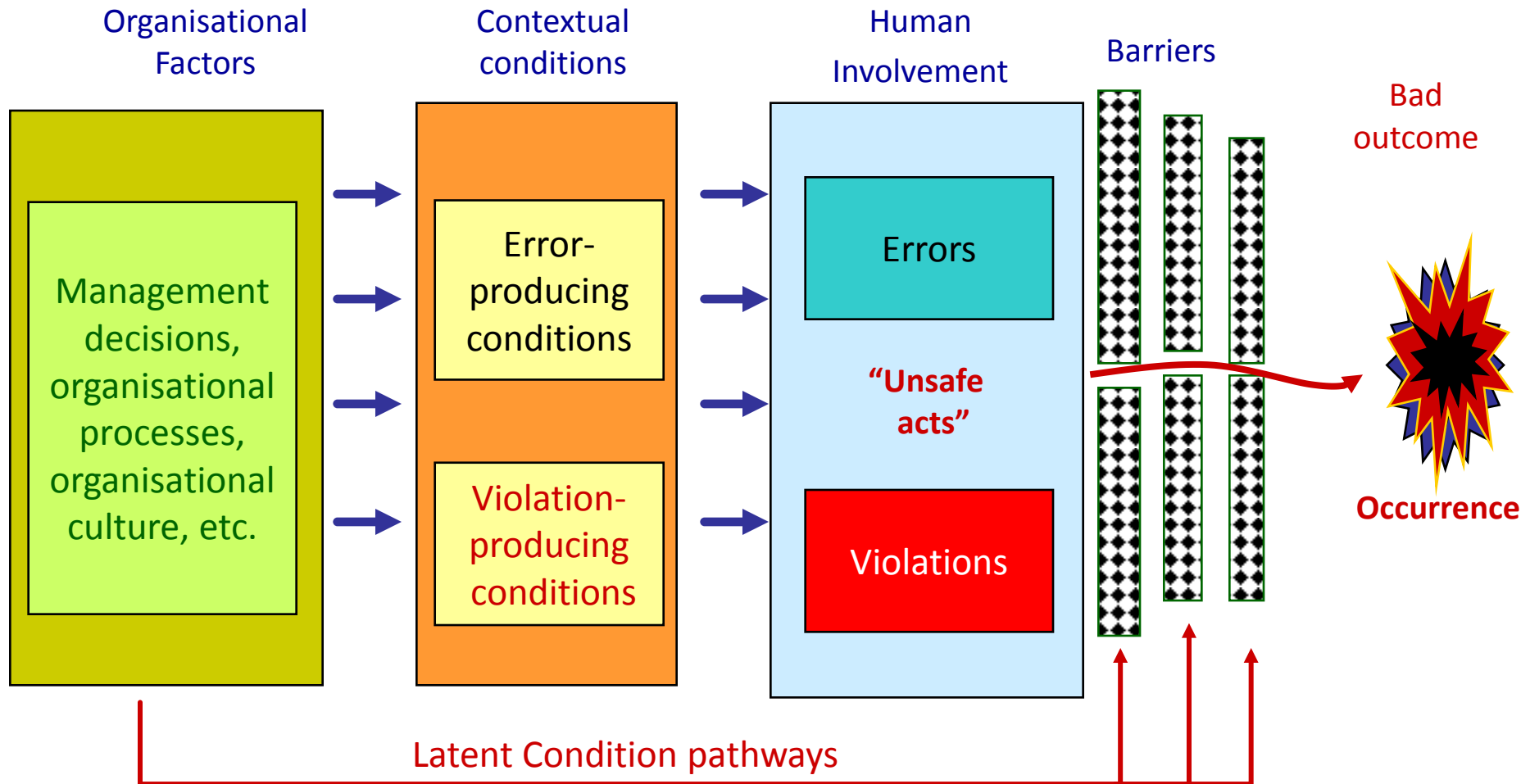


Other holes due to latent conditions (resident ‘pathogens’)

(After Reason, 2000)



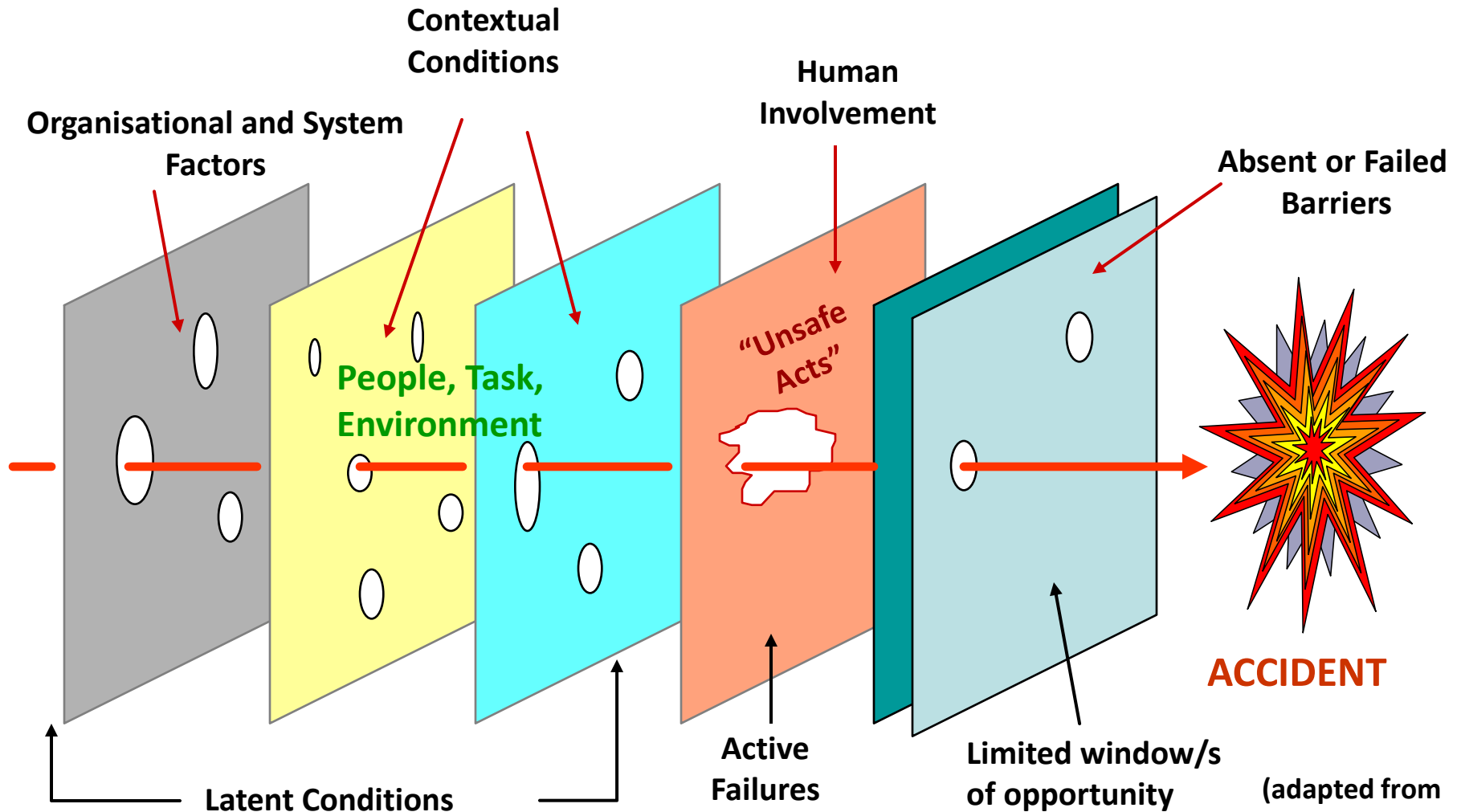
# Modelling Organisational Occurrences



(after Reason, 1991)

# The Reason Model

## Organisational Error Chain



(adapted from Reason, 1990)

# SOAM Worked Example



# Accident Summary

**On 23 September 1999, at about 2247 local time,  
a Boeing 747-438 aircraft overran runway 21 Left (21L)  
while landing at Bangkok International Airport, Thailand.**



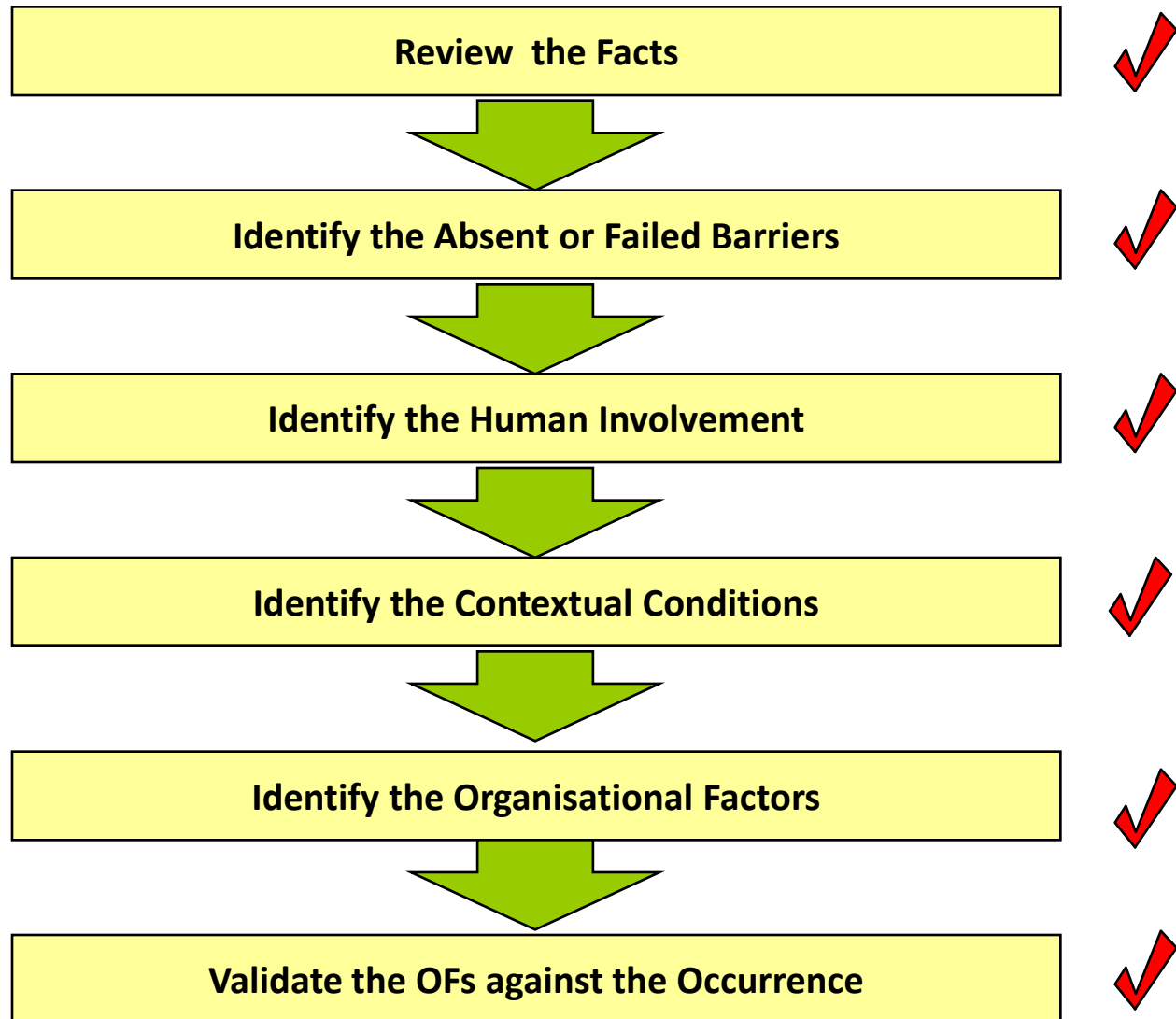
# Accident Summary

**The overrun occurred after the aircraft landed long and aquaplaned on a runway which was affected by water following very heavy rain.**



**The aircraft sustained substantial damage during the overrun. None of the three flight crew, 16 cabin crew or 391 passengers reported any serious injuries.**

# SOAM analysis key steps



# Raw Data Collection

**AC1 overruns runway at Bangkok after landing long, recent heavy rainfall, and water on runway.**

## PEOPLE

Crew employed flaps 25/ idle reverse landing configuration

FO did not fly the aircraft accurately during final approach

Captain cancelled go-around decision by retarding thrust levers

FO awake for 19 hours at the time of the accident

Captain did not order a go-around earlier

Recent crew experience using full reverse thrust lacking

Crew did not use an adequate risk mgt strategy for approach and landing

Captain awake 21 hours at time of accident

Captain & FO quite low levels of flying prior 30 days

## HARDWARE

Normal practice to use flaps 25/idle reverse

Importance of reverse thrust as stopping force on water-affected runways not known

Most pilots not fully aware about 'aquaplaning'

Confusion after thrust levers retarded, in high workload situation

Boeing advised that if idle reverse technique is adopted, it should be the exception rather than the rule

Absence of reverse thrust during landing roll not noticed, not used

## SOFTWARE

Revised approach/ landing procedure introduced in 1996: flaps 25, idle reverse thrust

No appropriately documented info, procedures regarding operations on water-affected runways

No policies, procedures on duty or work limits for pilots with flying & non-flying duties

Documents unclear (eg., key terms not well defined)

Most pilots disagreed they had adequate training on landing on contaminated runways

No policies or procedures for maintenance of recency for management pilots

## ENVIRONMENT

Very heavy rainfall, runway surface affected by water

Reduced visibility & distraction: rain and windscreen wipers

Qantas B747s generally operated in good weather & to aerodromes with long, good quality runways

Bangkok runway was resurfaced in 1991

High workload situation, distraction or inexperience

Partial loss of external visual reference due to heavy rain

## ORGANISATION

Introduction of new landing procedure poor

No formal risk assessment conducted when changed landing procedure researched

Cost-benefit analysis of new landing procedure was biased

Contaminated runway issues not covered in recent years during crew endorsement, promotional or recurrent training

"Landing on Slippery Runways" (Boeing doc) not distributed in Qantas since 1977

No formal review of new procedures after 'trial' period

**Gather data relevant to the occurrence**



# Raw Data Refinement

AC1 overruns runway at Bangkok after landing long, recent heavy rainfall, and water on runway.

PEOPLE	HARDWARE	SOFTWARE	ENVIRONMENT	ORGANISATION
Crew employed flaps 25/ idle reverse landing configuration	Normal practice to use flaps 25/idle reverse	Revised approach/ landing procedure introduced in 1996: flaps 25, idle reverse thrust	Very heavy rainfall, runway surface affected by water	Introduction of new landing procedure poor
FO did not fly the aircraft accurately during final approach	Importance of reverse thrust as stopping force on water-affected runways not known	No appropriately documented info, procedures regarding operations on water-affected runways	Reduced visibility & distraction: rain and windscreen wipers	No formal risk assessment conducted when changed landing procedure researched
Captain cancelled go-around decision by retarding thrust levers	Most pilots not fully aware about 'aquaplaning'	No policies, procedures on duty or work limits for pilots with flying & non-flying duties	Qantas B747s generally operated in good weather & to aerodromes with long, good quality runways	Cost-benefit analysis of new landing procedure was biased
FO awake for 19 hours at the time of the accident	Confusion after thrust levers retarded, in high workload situation	Documents unclear (eg., key terms not well defined)	Bangkok runway was resurfaced in 1991	Contaminated runway issues not covered in recent years during crew endorsement, promotional or recurrent training
Captain did not order a go-around earlier	Boeing advised that if idle reverse technique is adopted, it should be the exception rather than the rule	Most pilots disagreed they had adequate training on landing on contaminated runways	High workload situation, distraction or inexperience	"Landing on Slippery Runways" (Boeing doc) not distributed in Qantas since 1977
Recent crew experience using full reverse thrust lacking	Absence of reverse thrust during landing roll not noticed, not used	No policies or procedures for maintenance of recency for management pilots	Partial loss of external visual reference due to heavy rain	No formal review of new procedures after 'trial' period
Crew did not use an adequate risk mgt strategy for approach and landing				
Captain awake 21 hours at time of accident				
Captain & FO quite low levels of flying prior 30 days				

Sort out the non-contributing facts of the investigation



# Raw Data Refinement

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Recent crew experience using full reverse thrust lacking		No policies or procedures for maintenance of recency for management pilots		No formal review of new procedures after 'trial' period
Crew did not use an adequate risk mgt strategy for approach and landing				
Captain awake 21 hours at time of accident				
Captain & FO quite low levels of flying prior 30 days				

Use the remaining factors to build the Analysis chart

# Building the Analysis Chart



**ORGANISATIONAL  
FACTORS**

**CONTEXTUAL  
CONDITIONS**

**HUMAN  
INVOLVEMENT**

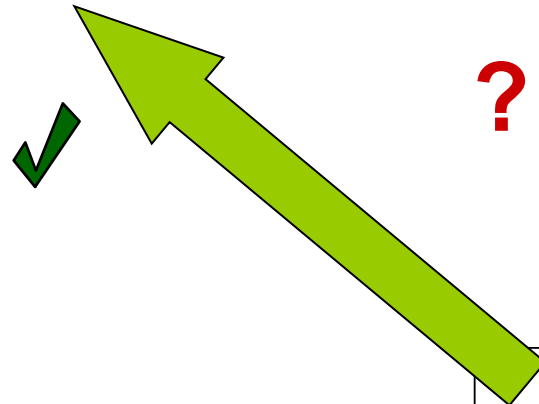
**ABSENT OR  
FAILED BARRIERS**

**ACCIDENT**

Very heavy rainfall,  
runway surface  
affected by water

Very heavy rainfall,  
runway surface  
affected by water

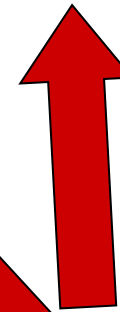
Very heavy rainfall,  
runway surface  
affected by water



?



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**Raw Data**

QF1 overruns runway at Bangkok after landing long,  
recent heavy rainfall, and water on runway.

**PEOPLE**

Crew employed flaps  
25/ idle reverse landing  
configuration

FO did not fly the  
aircraft accurately  
during final approach

Captain cancelled go-  
around decision by  
retarding thrust levers

FO awake for 19 hours  
at the time of the  
accident

Captain did not order a  
go-around earlier

Recent crew  
experience using full  
reverse thrust lacking

Crew did not use an  
adequate risk mgt  
strategy for approach  
and landing

Captain awake 21  
hours at time of  
accident

Captain & FO quite low  
levels of flying prior 30  
days

**HARDWARE**

Normal practice to  
use flaps 25/idle  
reverse

Importance of  
reverse thrust as  
stopping force on  
water-affected  
runways not known

Most pilots not fully  
aware about  
'aquaplaning'

Confusion after  
thrust levers  
retarded, in high  
workload situation

Absence of reverse  
thrust during  
landing roll not  
noticed, not used

**Very heavy rainfall,  
runway surface  
affected by water**

documented info,  
procedures regarding  
operations on water-  
affected runways

No policies,  
procedures on duty  
or work limits for  
pilots with flying &  
non-flying duties

Documents unclear  
(eg., key terms not  
well defined)

Most pilots disagreed  
they had adequate  
training on landing  
on contaminated  
runways

No policies or  
procedures for  
maintenance of  
recency for  
management pilots

Qantas B747s  
generally operated in  
good weather & to  
aerodromes with long,  
good quality runways

High workload  
situation, distraction  
or inexperience

Partial loss of external  
visual reference due to  
heavy rain

procedure researched

Cost-benefit analysis  
of new landing  
procedure was biased

Contaminated runway  
issues not covered in  
recent years during  
crew endorsement,  
promotional or  
recurrent training

"Landing on Slippery  
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No formal review of  
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# Contextual Conditions

- Describe the context of the event ~ the conditions existing immediately prior to, or at the time of the accident

- Check Question:

“Does the item describe an aspect of the workplace, local organisational climate, or a person’s attitudes, personality, performance limitations, physiological or emotional state that helps explain their actions?”

# Human Involvement

- Describe the errors or violations (actions or omissions) by operators at the scene which “triggered” the accident
- Check Question:  
  
“Does the item describe an action or non-action (error or violation) that immediately contributed to the occurrence?”

# Building the Analysis Chart



## ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

## CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

## HUMAN INVOLVEMENT

## ABSENT OR FAILED BARRIERS

## ACCIDENT

Very heavy rainfall, runway surface affected by water

Crew employed flaps 25/ idle reverse landing configuration

Crew employed flaps 25/ idle reverse landing configuration



Raw Data

QF1 overruns runway at Bangkok after landing long, recent heavy rainfall, and water on runway.

Crew employed flaps 25/ idle reverse landing configuration

### SOFTWARE

### ENVIRONMENT

### ORGANISATION

Revised approach/ landing procedure introduced in 1996: flaps 25, idle reverse thrust

No appropriately documented info, procedures regarding operations on water-affected runways

No policies, procedures on duty or work limits for pilots with flying & non-flying duties

Documents unclear (eg., key terms not well defined)

Most pilots disagreed they had adequate training on landing on contaminated runways

No policies or procedures for maintenance of recency for management pilots

Reduced visibility & distraction: rain and windscreen wipers

Qantas B747s generally operated in good weather & to aerodromes with long, good quality runways

High workload situation, distraction or inexperience

Partial loss of external visual reference due to heavy rain

Introduction of new landing procedure poor

No formal risk assessment conducted when changed landing procedure researched

Cost-benefit analysis of new landing procedure was biased

Contaminated runway issues not covered in recent years during crew endorsement, promotional or recurrent training

"Landing on Slippery Runways" (Boeing doc) not distributed in Qantas since 1977

No formal review of new procedures after 'trial' period

Captain cancelled go-around decision by retarding thrust levers

FO awake for 19 hours at the time of the accident

Captain did not order a go-around earlier

Recent crew experience using full reverse thrust lacking

Crew did not use an adequate risk mgt strategy for approach and landing

Captain awake 21 hours at time of accident

Captain & FO quite low levels of flying prior 30 days

Stopping force on water-affected runways not known

Most pilots not fully aware about 'aquaplaning'

Confusion after thrust levers retarded, in high workload situation

Absence of reverse thrust during landing roll not noticed, not used



# Absent or Failed Barriers

- Describe the “last minute” measures which failed or were missing, and therefore did not prevent the accident

- Check Question:

“Does the item describe a work procedure, aspect of human awareness, physical obstacle, warning or control system, or protection measure designed to prevent an occurrence or lessen its consequences?”

# Organisational Factors

- Describe the organisational and system factors (failures) which created, or allowed, the prevailing contextual conditions

- Check Question:

“Does the item describe an aspect of an organisation’s culture, systems, processes or decision-making that existed before the occurrence and which resulted in the contextual conditions or allowed those conditions to continue?”

## OTHER SYSTEM FACTORS

## ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

## CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

## HUMAN INVOLVEMENT

## ABSENT OR FAILED BARRIERS

## ACCIDENT

EUROCONTROL

# SOAM Chart Aircraft Accident Boeing 747-438 Bangkok, Thailand September 1999

**PP** Regulations covering contaminated runway operations deficient

**AC** CASA surveillance of airline flight operations deficient

**PP** Regulations covering emergency procedures & EP training were deficient

**PP** No appropriately documented info, procedures re operations on water-affected runways

**CO** "Landing on Slippery Runways" (Boeing doc) not distributed in Qantas since 1977

**TR** Contaminated runway issues not covered during crew endorsement, promotional or recurrent training in recent years

**CO** Documents unclear (eg., key terms not well defined)

**OC** Mgt decisions informal, "intuitive", "personality-driven"

**RM** No formal risk assessment conducted when changed landing procedure researched

**CM** Introduction of new landing procedure poor

**CM** No formal review of new procedures after 'trial' period

**CG** Cost-benefit analysis of new landing procedure was biased

**WM** No policies or procedures for maintenance of recency for management pilots

**WM** No policies, procedures on duty or work limits for pilots with flying & non-flying duties

Very heavy rainfall, runway surface affected by water

Crew not aware of critical importance of reverse thrust as stopping force on water-affected runways

Most pilots not fully aware about 'aquaplaning'

Qantas B747s generally operated in good weather & to aerodromes with long, good quality runways

New 1996 approach/ landing procedure inappropriate

Normal practice to use flaps 25/idle reverse

Recent crew experience using full reverse thrust lacking

Reduced visibility & distraction: rain and windscreen wipers

Captain & FO quite low levels of flying prior 30 days

FO awake for 19 hours at the time of the accident

Captain awake 21 hours at time of accident

High workload situation

Flight crew did not use an adequate risk management strategy for approach and landing

Crew employed flaps 25/idle reverse landing configuration

First Officer did not fly the aircraft accurately during the final approach

Captain did not order a go-around earlier

Captain cancelled go-around decision by retarding the thrust levers

Landing procedure

Absence of reverse thrust during landing roll not noticed, reverse thrust not used

Crew Resource Management

- Aircraft overran runway after landing long
- No serious injuries (391 pax, 19 crew)
- Potential for more serious outcome
- Aircraft repair cost: \$100,000,000 (?)
- Damage to company reputation



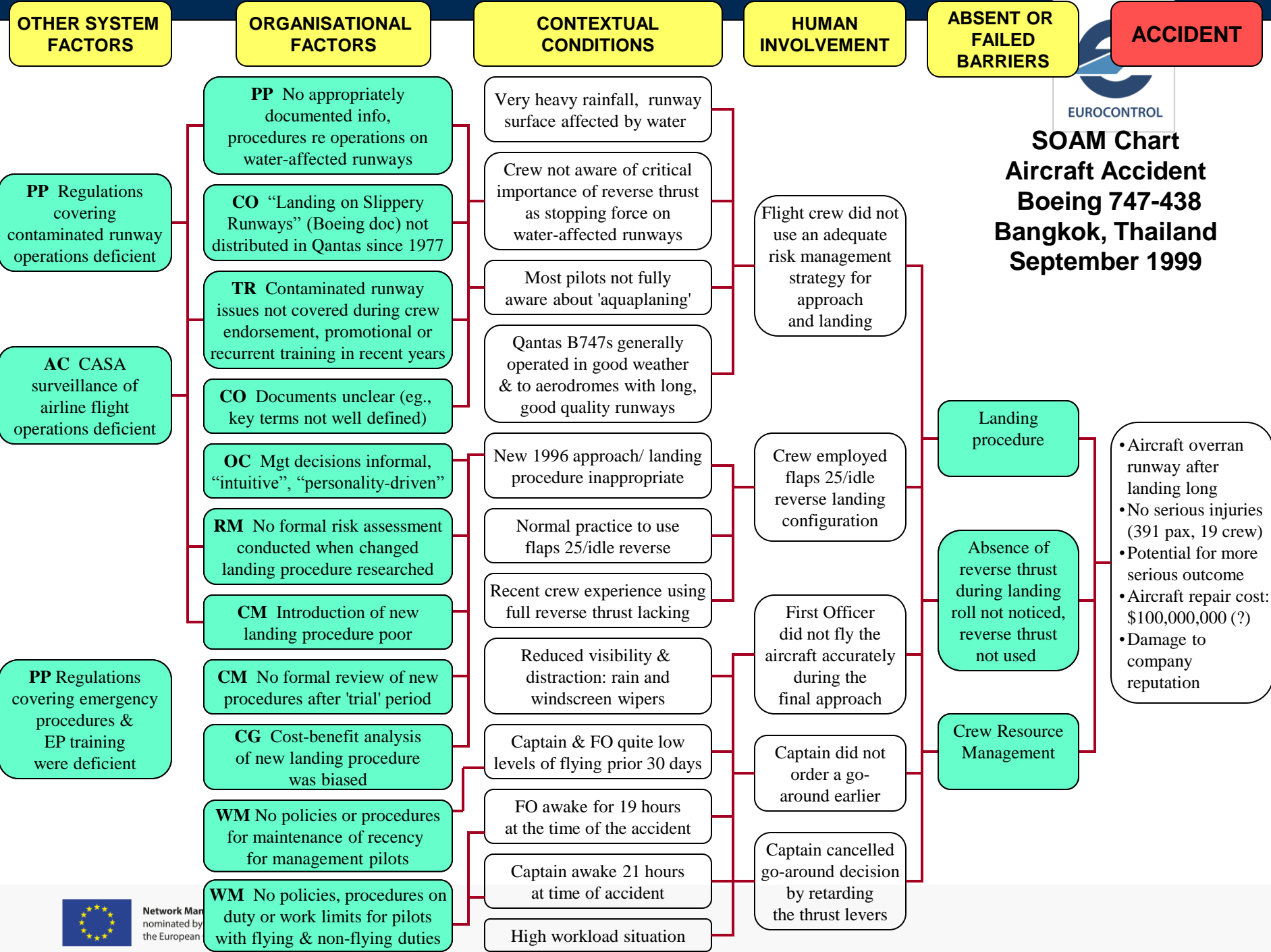
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# Recommendations

- Provide recommendations that will prevent recurrence of this scenario
- **Recommendations** should be directed to the responsible position, and must address all identified:
  - 1 Absent or Failed Barriers
  - 2 Organisational Factors





**SOAM Chart**  
**Aircraft Accident**  
**Boeing 747-438**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**  
**September 1999**



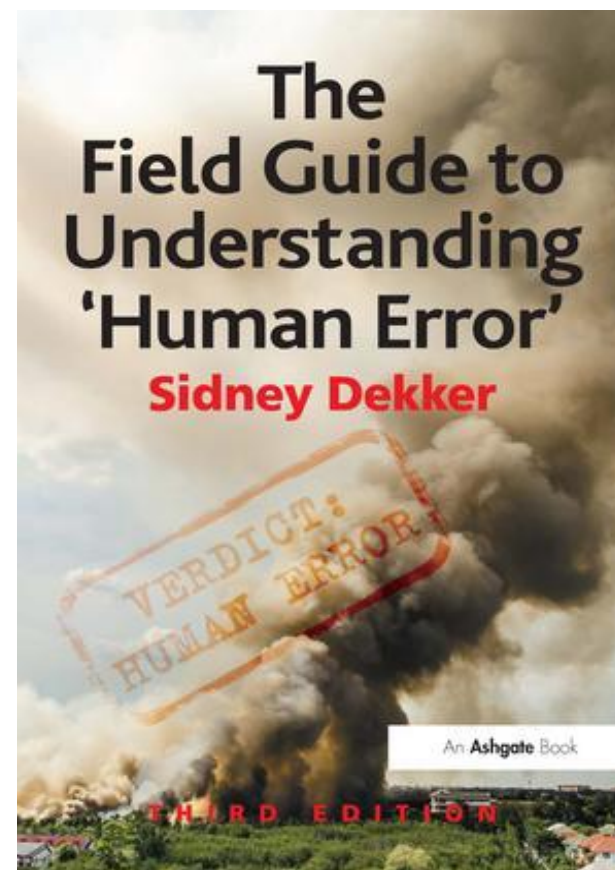
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And finally a new technique in the making...

# SAT – Situation Analysis Toolkit

## SAT in conjunction with *The Field Guide to Understanding “Human Error”*

- Step 1 – Getting HF Data
- Step 2 – Building a Timeline
- Step 3 - Leaving a trace
- Step 4 – Constructing influences and interactions
- Step 5 – making recommendations





**Thanks for listening. Any questions?**