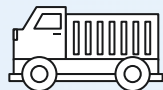


Fix Problems for Good: The 5 Whys Technique

Simple Root Cause Analysis for Municipal Challenges



What is the 5 Whys?

Developed at Toyota, the 5 Whys is a root cause analysis tool done by asking 'Why?' repeatedly (usually 5 times) to move past symptoms and reach the true root cause of a problem. It prevents recurring issues in budgets, safety, services, and infrastructure without fancy software.

- Gather a small team.
- Start with the observable problem.
- Ask "Why?" each time based on evidence (no blame—just facts).
- Stop when you hit a systemic fixable cause.

How It Works – Municipal Example

Problem: Municipal worker develops hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) from prolonged tool use.

- Why 1: Hands went numb and painful after repeated jackhammer/pneumatic tamper use.
- Why 2: High vibration levels transmitted directly to hands and arms during concrete breaking.
- Why 3: Using older, high-vibration pneumatic tools for extended periods without limits.
- Why 4: No lower-vibration alternatives were substituted for the task.
- Why 5: Tool selection process didn't prioritize low-vibration models or anti-vibration features.

Root Cause: Reliance on high-vibration tools without substitution to lower-vibration options.

Start Using the 5 Whys Today – Save Time & Resources

Better decisions for your community start with asking the right questions.

- Train teams in under 30 minutes.
- Try it on your next injury or near miss.
- Keep problems from repeating.

