

18-642:

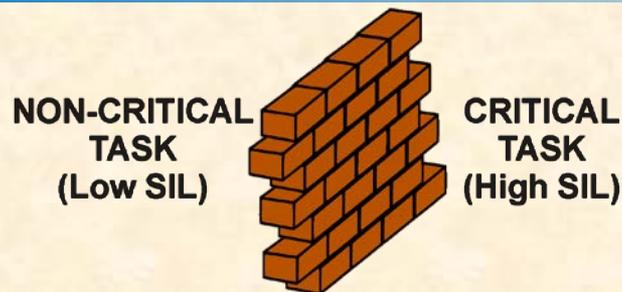
Critical System Isolation

11/8/2017



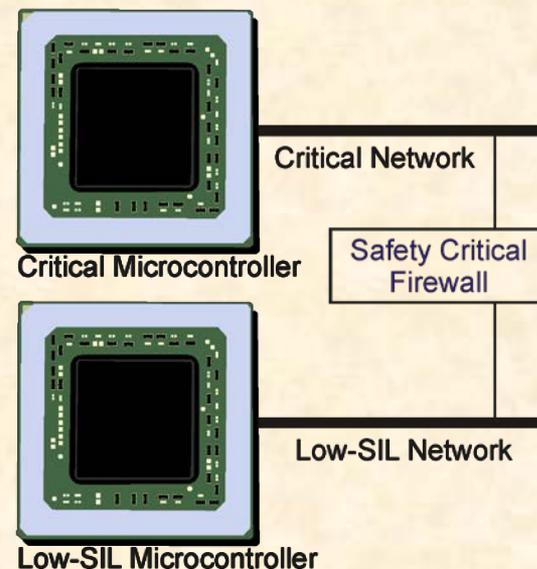
■ Anti-Patterns for Isolation:

- **Low-SIL software can access critical data**
- **Low-SIL software can block critical tasks**



■ Need isolation between different SILs

- Lower SIL assumed to compromise High SIL
 - Higher SIL → “trusted” (critical tasks)
 - Lower SIL → “untrusted” (non-critical tasks)
 - » Corrupts high-SIL data values, timing, configuration
- Hardware isolation is best option
 - Different SILs separated on different chips
 - Different networks for safety vs. non-safety data
 - » Network data exchange is safety critical



Mixed-SIL Interference Examples

■ Memory value interference

- Non-critical task modifies critical variables
- Non-critical ISR causes critical task stack overflow
- Non-critical task memory leak; heap exhaustion

■ CPU time interference

- Non-critical task runs at high priority; starves critical tasks
- Non-critical task disables interrupts; delaying critical tasks

■ Watchdog timer

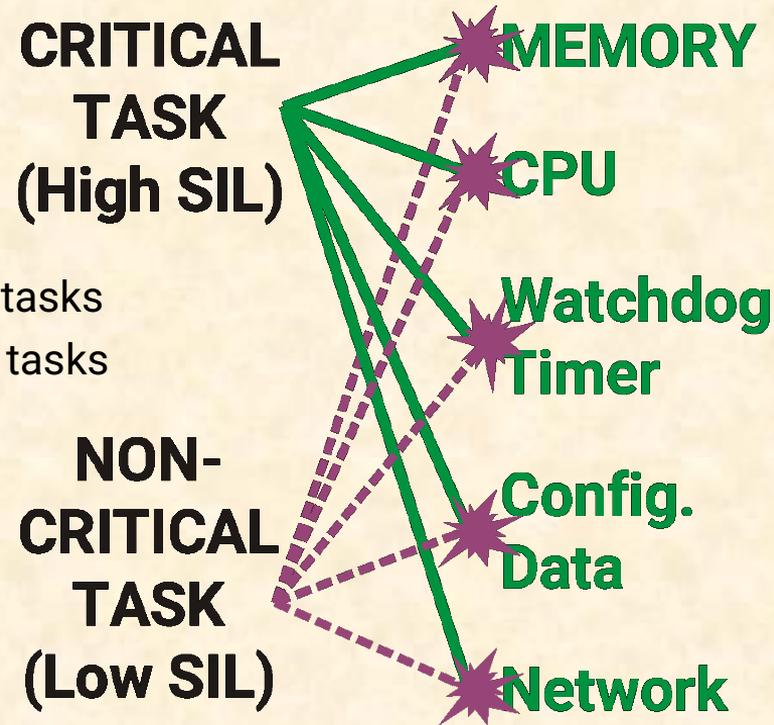
- Non-critical task kicks watchdog regularly
- Non-critical task disables watchdog

■ System configuration

- Non-critical task changes digital output to input

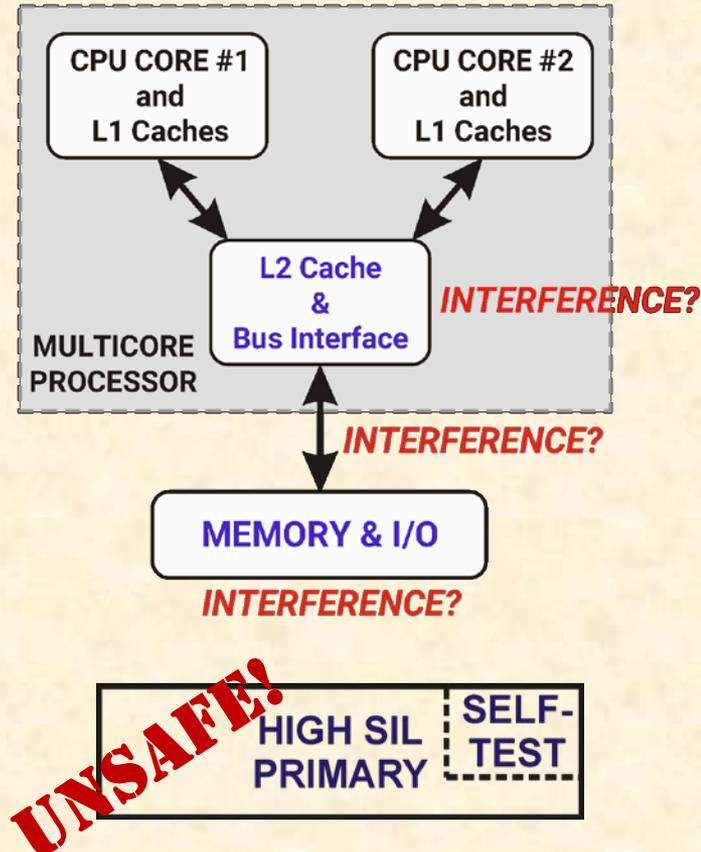
■ Network

- Non-critical node sends unsafe critical message



Mitigating Cross-SIL Interference

- **Develop all software at highest SIL**
 - Avoids isolation, but increases expense
- **Hardware solution – separate CPU chips**
 - Multi-core provides only partial isolation
- **High-SIL RTOS approaches**
 - Hardware memory protection (MMU)
 - Hardware CPU time isolation (e.g., multi-core)
 - Virtualization of I/O and configuration
- **Other techniques can help for Low-SIL**
 - Variable mirroring (two one's complement copies)
 - Critical tasks run at high priorities or in ISRs
 - Non-modifiable watchdog timer configuration
- **Self-test is insufficient for High-SIL integrity**
 - Fault in high SIL hardware can subvert self-test



Single CPU at SIL 3 or SIL 4

■ Lower-SIL task is ~ a malicious attacker

- How can it disrupt higher-SIL software?
- Consider:
memory corruption, timing, configuration, network

■ Implications for safety:

- A weaker fault model means making assumptions
- Lower-SIL update means revisiting assumptions

■ Implications for security:

- Higher-SIL functions more resistant to attack if isolated
- Bad pattern: everything on one CPU with desktop OS
- Better pattern: isolated CPUs with high-SIL critical RTOS



Displaying an arbitrary message and a false speedometer reading on the Driver Information Center. Note the car is in Park.

■ Use as much hardware isolation as you can

- Consider:
 - Data value isolation
 - CPU time isolation
 - Configuration corruption
 - Shared resource isolation
- Applies to any different SILs
 - Crucial for non-SIL ↔ SIL 3/4



■ Pitfalls:

- Multi-core CPU isn't enough on its own (other shared resources!)
- IEC 60730: Arguing that low-SIL software won't interfere...
... requires **re-arguing** after every low-SIL change