

# Narrow-clause supersession

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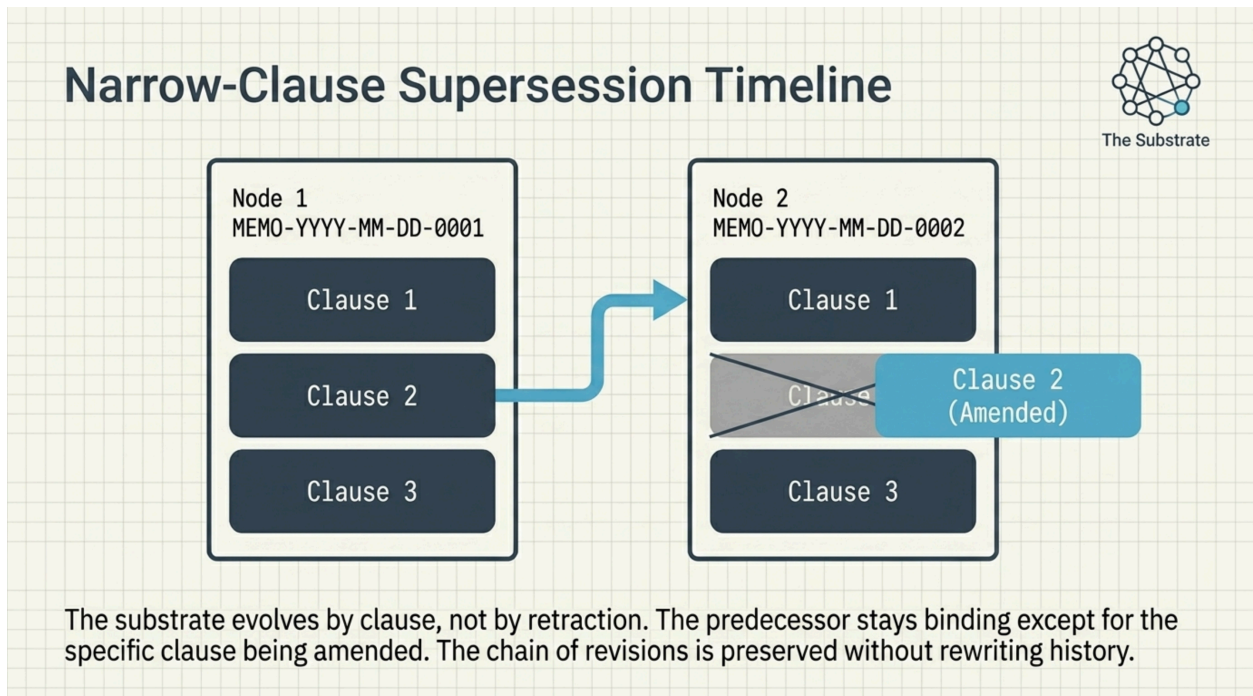


Figure 1: A memo with three clauses is superseded by a successor that amends only Clause 2; Clauses 1 and 3 remain in force from the original. The chain of revisions is preserved without overwriting history, and every clause has a current owner.

A memo discipline where a successor narrows a single clause of a predecessor; the rest of the predecessor stays binding. The chain of revisions is preserved without overwriting history, and every clause has a current owner.

## Where named

[coo/memo\\_protocol.md](#). Practiced across the memo corpus; the discipline is what makes the per-memo file format auditable.

## Related

- Memo
- Format-as-analogy-generator
- Substrate

## Detail

The naive alternative would be: a new memo “replaces” an old one wholesale. That works once, but breaks fast – most revisions are clarifications of a single point, not complete rewrites, and the naive form forces the author to re-state every clause they aren’t changing.

Narrow-clause supersession instead requires the successor to **name** the specific clause it narrows (“This memo narrows clause 3 of MEMO-2026-04-12-abcd”). The predecessor’s remaining clauses stay binding. The successor inherits everything else from the predecessor.

The discipline is enforced socially (memo authors are expected to be specific about what they narrow) and structurally (the *supersedes* field is required to specify which memo and, in the common case, which clause). The result: the memo corpus is incremental rather than churning, and a reader can trace any current rule back through its narrow revisions to the original.

## Links to this page

### Glossary

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### Memo

- [Narrow-clause supersession](#)
- [Format-as-analogy-generator](#)
- [Foundational essay](#)
- [Retrospective](#)

### Memos

- [Glossary: memo](#)
- [Glossary: narrow-clause supersession — how memos revise prior memos](#)
- [The seven committee quorums — each merge produces a summary memo](#)