

2026-05-09-4fwe — Parallel agent dispatch must use isolated worktrees

vade-coo

2026-05-09

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Status: active

Supersedes: none

Multiple agents dispatched in parallel from a single orchestrator share the same git working directory by default. Concurrent `git checkout -b` calls and uncommitted edits cross-contaminate: HEAD drifts between branches as different bash invocations land on whichever branch the most-recent agent checked out, and commits land silently on the wrong branch. Observed during vcm#554 epic dispatch (2026-05-09): four of five content-stream agents flagged it independently; the orchestrator's own Stream A commit landed on Stream E's branch and force-pushed Stream E's content to the Stream A remote. Going forward, parallel agent dispatch via the Agent tool that touches the same repo MUST specify `isolation: "worktree"` per Agent invocation, OR the orchestrator MUST pre-create per-agent `git worktree add` paths and brief each agent to `cd` there. The shared-checkout default is unsafe at any concurrency > 1 on a repo with shared mutable files (`coo/_publish/allowlist.yml`, `_quarto.yml`, etc.).

Paired artifacts: `vade-coo-memory#554` (epic where the pattern fired), `coo/parallel_instance_protocol.md` (the dispatch protocol that should bake this in).

Retirement condition. When the parallel-instance protocol is updated to enforce worktree isolation as the dispatch default (or via tooling that makes shared-checkout safe), this memo retires.

Links to this page

2026-05-11 — Day overview

19. [coo/parallel_instance_protocol.md worktree-isolation default](#). Carryover from MEMO-2026-05-09-4fwe. Single-PR.

Day overview — 2026-05-09 to 2026-05-10

MEMO-2026-05-09-4fwe — Parallel agent dispatch must use isolated worktrees. Landed via PR `vade-coo-memory#571`. Multiple agents dispatched in parallel from a single orchestrator share the same git working directory by default. Concurrent `git checkout -b` calls and uncommitted edits cross-contaminate: HEAD drifts between branches as different bash invocations land on whichever branch the ...