

Chapter 4

The Processor



Exceptions and Interrupts

- “Unexpected” events requiring change in flow of control
 - Different ISAs use the terms differently
- Exception
 - Arises within the CPU
 - e.g., undefined opcode, overflow, syscall, ...
- Interrupt
 - From an external I/O controller
- Dealing with them without sacrificing performance is hard



Handling Exceptions

- In MIPS, exceptions managed by a System Control Coprocessor (CP0)
- Save PC of offending (or interrupted) instruction
 - In MIPS: Exception Program Counter (EPC)
- Save indication of the problem
 - In MIPS: Cause register
 - We'll assume 1-bit
 - 0 for undefined opcode, 1 for overflow
- Jump to handler at 8000 00180



An Alternate Mechanism

- Vectored Interrupts
 - Handler address determined by the cause
- Example:
 - Undefined opcode: C000 0000
 - Overflow: C000 0020
 -: C000 0040
- Instructions either
 - Deal with the interrupt, or
 - Jump to real handler



Handler Actions

- Read cause, and transfer to relevant handler
- Determine action required
- If restartable
 - Take corrective action
 - use EPC to return to program
- Otherwise
 - Terminate program
 - Report error using EPC, cause, ...

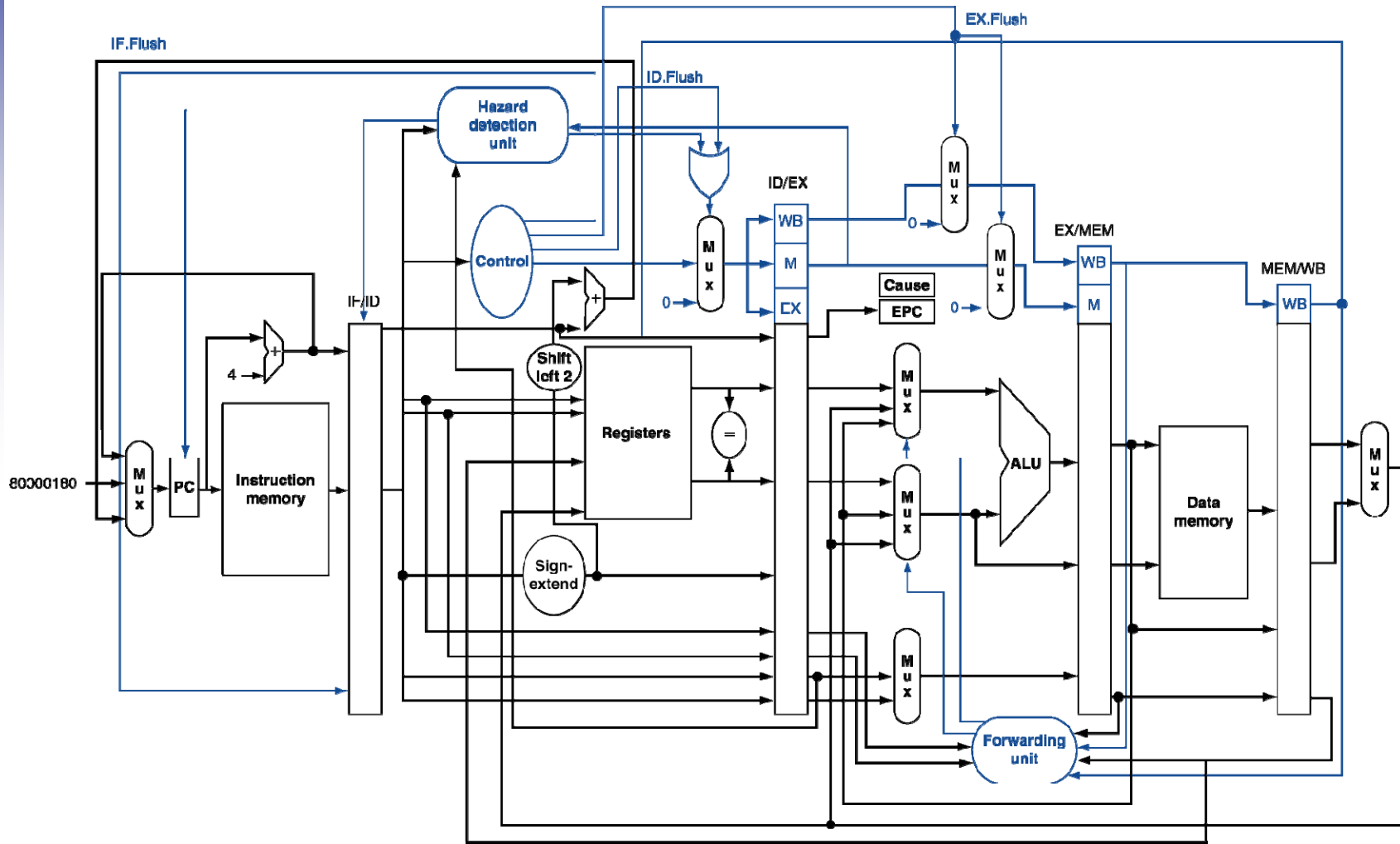


Exceptions in a Pipeline

- Another form of control hazard
- Consider overflow on add in EX stage
add \$1, \$2, \$1
 - Prevent \$1 from being clobbered
 - Complete previous instructions
 - Flush add and subsequent instructions
 - Set Cause and EPC register values
 - Transfer control to handler
- Similar to mispredicted branch
 - Use much of the same hardware



Pipeline with Exceptions



Exception Properties

- Restartable exceptions
 - Pipeline can flush the instruction
 - Handler executes, then returns to the instruction
 - Refetched and executed from scratch
- PC saved in EPC register
 - Identifies causing instruction
 - Actually PC + 4 is saved
 - Handler must adjust



Exception Example

- Exception on `add` in

40	sub	\$11,	\$2,	\$4
44	and	\$12,	\$2,	\$5
48	or	\$13,	\$2,	\$6
4C	add	\$1,	\$2,	\$1
50	sl t	\$15,	\$6,	\$7
54	l w	\$16,	50(\$7)	

...

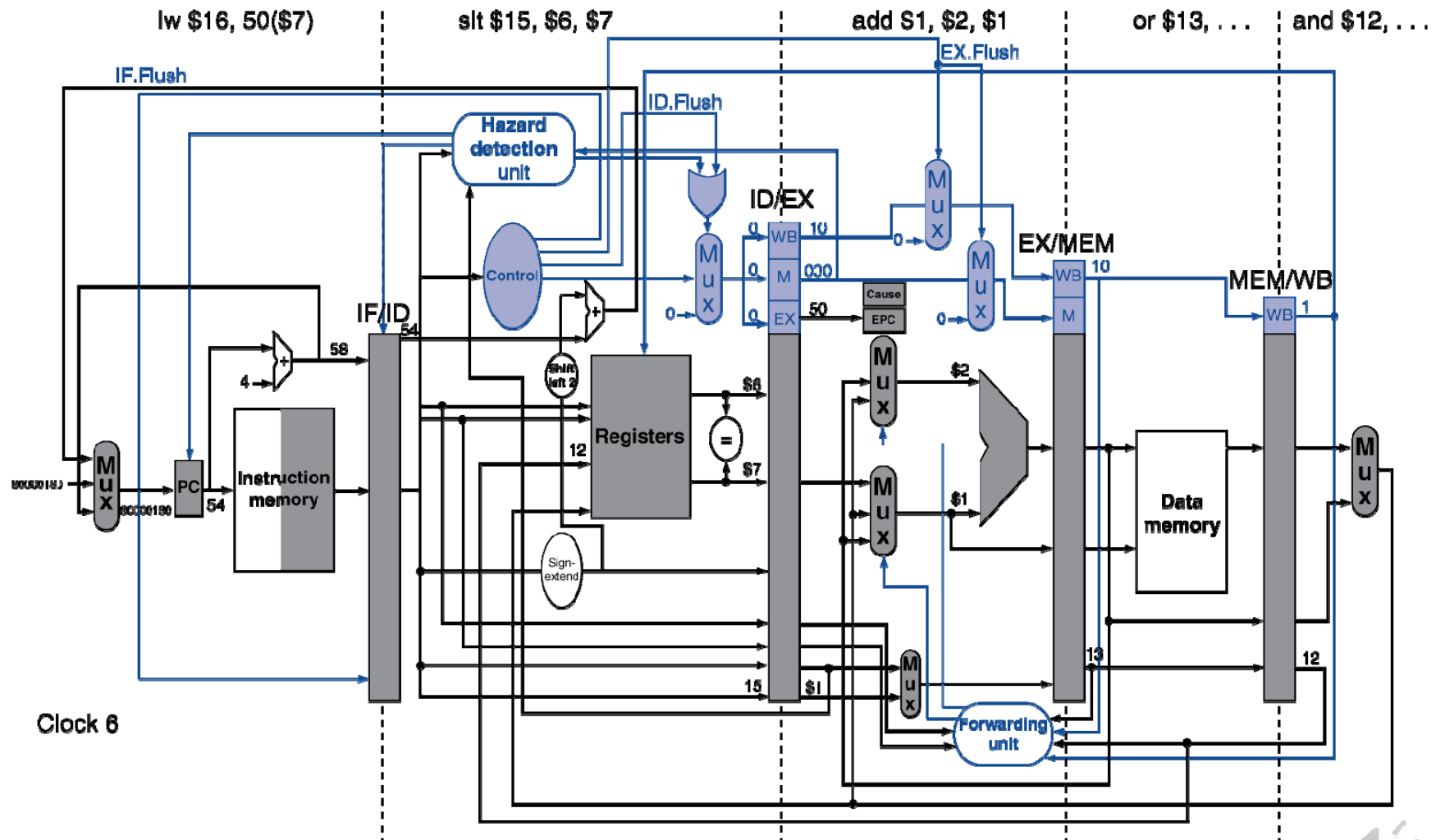
- Handler

80000180	sw	\$25,	1000(\$0)
80000184	sw	\$26,	1004(\$0)

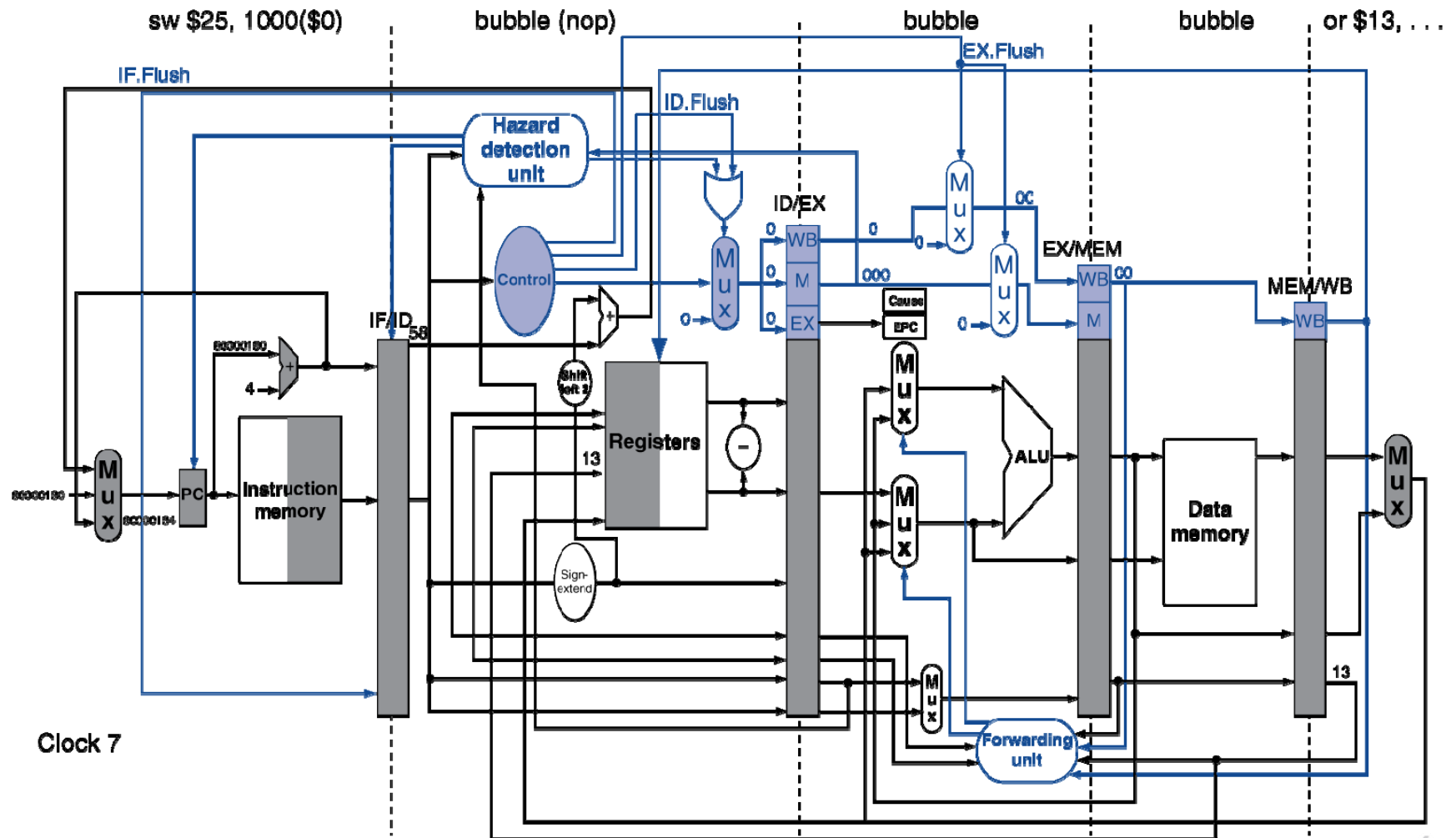
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Exception Example



Exception Example



Multiple Exceptions

- Pipelining overlaps multiple instructions
 - Could have multiple exceptions at once
- Simple approach: deal with exception from earliest instruction
 - Flush subsequent instructions
 - “Precise” exceptions
- In complex pipelines
 - Multiple instructions issued per cycle
 - Out-of-order completion
 - Maintaining precise exceptions is difficult!



Imprecise Exceptions

- Just stop pipeline and save state
 - Including exception cause(s)
- Let the handler work out
 - Which instruction(s) had exceptions
 - Which to complete or flush
 - May require “manual” completion
- Simplifies hardware, but more complex handler software
- Not feasible for complex multiple-issue out-of-order pipelines

