

Reduce Your Stress, Run a Good Preconstruction Project Meeting

You currently have seventeen outstanding RFI's, are eight days behind schedule (with good weather), and your quality manager just notified you there is missing head flashing above the first-floor windows (another "by-others" scope that was missed). Now brick work needs to be removed/reinstalled at the windows, add in the roofer just left your office asking how he is supposed to tie his air barrier into the vertical wall guys air barrier (no details for this), and to top it off, last night after working eleven stressful hours, you came home tired, frustrated, and you got into a meaningless argument with your significant other.

Sound familiar? Have you ever wondered how this job you always wanted, is now the bane of your existence. Could something have helped reduce this stress and streamlined your work so you had the information your trades needed at the right time, and materials could be installed in the proper order? Something to allow you to just put in nine hours a day rather than eleven, and you could go back to enjoying your job? Did you run a preconstruction meeting?

A preconstruction meeting is vital to establish good/open communication between the trade partners and with the construction manager. It can help refine a schedule, clearly identify scopes of work (and their respective handoffs), and help find missing details, products, and scopes of work before they cause significant issues/delays/RFIs. In other words, proper planning and a good preconstruction meeting can help reduce your field/construction issues and stress during construction. Unfortunately, many contractors do not schedule a preconstruction meeting; if they do, it is rarely adequately planned/run successfully. This meeting does take effort, attention to detail, teamwork/cooperation, and good leadership to be effective.

A preconstruction meeting should be required for all major construction phases (structural, enclosure, rough-in, and finishes). Timing-wise, it should take place one to two weeks before each major construction phase starts. Depending on size and complexity, your project may require additional preconstruction meetings.

Why hold a preconstruction meeting for the different phases of construction?

Project schedules are continually being reduced, owners are asking for more complex buildings, and adding in the potential for punitive damage should the project not be delivered on time. For today's construction manager, there is no time for mistakes, rework, or delays. The project must run smoothly. For this to occur, the team needs

to have all the required information in time for trade partners to be able to purchase the materials and install them in a timely and correct manner. Rushing installations or installing materials without all of the information causes rework and potential liability to the construction manager. These items can quickly escalate into lawsuits, costing millions of dollars, and damage the company's reputation.

What occurs in a preconstruction meeting?

A good preconstruction meeting should validate schedule sequencing, durations for work areas, determine hand-offs between trades, discuss scopes of work that may have been missed, (window flashing for example) or doubled up on, and who will be contracted for those gaps, along with reviewing complex details or details which incorporate numerous trades in one location. An example is the "common" parapet roof/wall detail. I have sat in preconstruction meetings where this one detail has taken forty minutes to review, discuss, argue about, and finally confirm the



