

SuperVision

Two Week Look-Ahead Schedule

By Norb Slowikowski

The purpose of the two week look-ahead schedule is to plan labor activities and goals for the next two weeks. The focus is on the overall project schedule provided by the general contractor and the job site schedule you received from your project manager. This is what our managers, superintendents and foremen must do to ensure that projects are meeting or beating the estimated hours, controlling overall costs and maintaining the production schedule.

Foremen and/or project managers should attend the weekly job progress meetings and discuss with the GC and other trades to find out how the job is progressing and what problems have arisen. They also should develop an Action Plan for eliminating these barriers. Before this meeting, they should walk the job, review what tasks need to be executed and plan activities for the next two weeks, with a focus on the schedule and labor budgets within the estimate. It is also important to look at previous labor productivity to determine if those goals were met.

Other topics to discuss are materials needed, questions in need of a response and any necessary drawings/sketches. After the look-ahead tasks have been specified, discuss them with the PM and superintendent, and give a copy to the GC for his input. The GC needs to be informed that any deviation from the look-ahead will ultimately put the production schedule behind. Since the “new emergency” was not discussed at the previous meeting, the task needs to be added to the next look-ahead.

There are several purposes for and reasons why you should implement a look-ahead schedule:


Maintain Job Schedules. By using the look-ahead in conjunction with the job schedule, you can plan labor and be prepared to do specific tasks at pre-determined time intervals. The estimate provides a certain amount of labor hours for each task. The look-ahead guides manpower planning for a specific period of time. When used in conjunction with the schedule, you can pre-determine task accomplishment.

Beat Labor Budgets. By converting labor hours into man-days or man-weeks, production can be closely monitored. Tasks can be scheduled in the look-ahead meeting, with a direction toward higher standards than what was included in the estimate labor budget. Reasons for why field labor units may have exceeded estimate budget values should be documented on the look-ahead form. A plan needs to be implemented to regain those hours, and the vice president of the team informed.

Plan Manpower, Materials and Tools Required for Task Completion. The look-ahead is critical for planning manpower, tools, equipment and material. After analyzing the job schedule, plan manpower according to the duration of the project with the estimated hours broken down into tasks. If you plan your manpower efficiently, you will be assigning only the appropriate amount of manpower necessary to complete the various tasks.

Note Information Required for Field Supervision. The foremen should note any information needed from the office—shop drawings, sketches, requests for information, etc. Questions should be listed and remain listed until answered. This allows the PM to document the information required and get responses from the GC.

Note Coordination Needed from the GC or Other Trades. Tasks need to be coordinated not only with the GC but with all other trades. Once the look-ahead is completed, give a copy to the GC so that he knows your plan. Then he can coordinate all other trades with you.

In sum, the Two Week Look-Ahead Schedule is a tool to help you maintain control of your work and also indicates how important planning is in meeting the overall job schedule. 

About the Author

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