Most construction employers utilize the time card only to record the amount of time that their employees work during the day and, perhaps, add a computer code to keep track of the work category. The time card should not only record the time, but it should also be used to record what work was accomplished.

Tie cards should be used to track the accomplished work, according to function, not only recording the time, but what was accomplished. The tie cards should also show the non-working time (non-productive time) and the reason. Let your crew know what goals they must accomplish. Define the goals in employees’ language—such as “feet per day”, “tons of steel per day”, “hours to do a task”, etc. Have each employee record the hours spent in each category and what was accomplished.

The foreman should check the card and assign a code to prevent inaccuracies in the coding. This allows you to easily check the production, making sure the crews are obtaining the desired production. If the crew is not meeting the desired production level, the employer is alerted early and adjustments can be made.

Productivity measures input versus output. Normally, input is working hours and output is work accomplished. To control and improve productivity, establish a feedback loop. Inform each crew what is expected of them and then check back to determine what the crew’s production was.

Recording daily accomplishments on the time card builds employee morale and self-esteem. The number one motivator of employees is feedback on results; utilizing their time cards to record, every day, their results constantly stimulates self-motivation. The employee, most of the time, reaches the established production goals, therefore the employee goes home satisfied with his/her performance and job.

Non-working Time . . .

A key element of productivity is the amount of non-productive working time spent by the employees and why. This is, in fact, a check on management productivity. Such categories as material handling, rework, and waiting for instructions are non-working time. Non-productive time can be an extremely large portion of a construction worker’s day. Material handling and moving materials back and forth does not accomplish work in place. By effectively tracking material handling time you can dramatically cut down non-productive time.

Reduction Techniques . . .

Ask your employees what their non-working time is and when it occurs. The time cards are an excellent place to obtain this information because employees should keep track of their productive and non-productive time. When employers recognize what is causing employees’ non-productive time, they can take measures to correct it. This is a participative management technique that has been popularized by the Japanese.

The employee will often reach the production goal for the day. Of course, one gets paid the normal hourly compensation, whether the production is reached or not. However, if a pattern evolved of a crew not reaching the desired goals, action can be taken. This will show the efficient and non-efficient crews. Some crews will be more efficient than others in certain categories. Don’t use time cards as a witch hunt to weed out non-productive employees; use time cards to reinforce good results and communication from one crew to another.

Tie card results should be the basis of cross-communications to your crews. Communicate the good produc-
tion results and techniques to the less productive crews. In this way, you can control productivity and improve production dramatically. Controlling production costs cuts down on labor cost overruns, and therefore, cuts down on potential claims and legal problems.

To develop your own time card, you may wish to follow the example above: