



BEST IN QUALITY

Developing Your Quality Control Plan

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MILENDER WHITE



“Quality is not an act, it is a habit.” - Aristotle

The word quality is simple to define. Simply speaking, it is superiority in kind – a general excellence of standard or level – the degree of excellence. When you expand the word to quality in construction, any definition will likely be long, potentially confusing and reference the International Organization for Standardization of quality management systems. We prefer to keep it simple - quality in construction at Milender White (MW) is an attitude and a mindset that we aim for everyday on the job.

Developing that mindset with the right processes and procedures is the hard part. Basically, it's important to 1) Have a plan and 2) Follow the plan with the process. Here are the elements of those two steps when looking at quality in construction.

Quality Control Plan

A Quality Control Plan provides the project team a reference point to build a unique QC/QA program for the project. Every project is unique, so every quality control plan will be unique. However, Quality Control procedures and checklists for all aspects of the job should be outlined and developed and then pulled together for the project. Job aspects include everything from site layout, to concrete, to plumbing and fire protection to the electrical plan.





Quality Control Process

Simply having a Quality Control Plan, does not translate to quality results on your project. Execution is key. It's about developing an organized approach/process to manage the plan. Quality starts at the very beginning and is managed throughout the course of the project within each project phase.

Buyout

During the buyout process and prior to awarding a subcontract, MW works with each subcontractor to ensure that a complete scope of work is procured. It's essential that a mutual understanding of the quality control process is achieved and documented during this time. Subcontractors are also evaluated on their ability to fulfill the work scope, which is critical to quality.

Premobilization

Prior to on-site work, it's critical that the contractor and the subcontractor's key personnel meet as soon as possible following subcontract issuance. The meeting is an orientation to the project and a means of establishing main points of contact. The quality control process is communicated, reiterating construction standards, contractor expectations and contract requirements. By the conclusion of the meeting it is important that the subcontractor understands all necessary actions that are required to ensure quality work.

Preconstruction Meeting

This meeting is conducted at least one week in advance of commencement of work by a subcontractor. The objective is to verify that the responsible individual(s) or subcontractor is prepared to comply with the requirements of the contract documents and to discuss how the subcontractor plans to complete the job safely and within the quality control plan.



Initial Inspection

An initial “representative sample of work” shall be completed for each scope of work by a subcontractor. The Initial Inspection is to verify that the subcontractor begins the work in full compliance with the contract requirements and to establish an acceptable level of workmanship. It’s important that key members of the general contractor, the owner and the subcontractor are present at this venture to review processes, practices and procedures. Together, the team can identify possible areas for change to improve quality of the resulting work.

Follow-up Inspections

Work-in-progress inspections must be performed on a daily basis during site walks and regular subcontractor communication. Follow-Up Inspections are performed throughout the duration of work to assure that work is progressing satisfactorily, per contract and in compliance with good practice. Inspecting work along the way allows the team to correct any missteps if they should happen before additional work is impacted.

Final Inspections

Final inspections and sign-offs are critical to the process as the teams review the quality requirement outlines in the contract. For many scopes of work, a final acceptance by the owner is required acknowledging that a finished area is ready to be transitioned.

Conclusion

Clients expect a quality product. Quality processes added to a quality control program that is executed will then in turn produce quality projects. A project that is managed properly and to the quality control plan will see improved productivity, shorter punch lists, fewer callouts and ultimately improved profitability. At the end of the day, it’s all about planning your work and working your plan.

“If you wouldn’t accept it at your house, you shouldn’t accept it on your project.”

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