

Tuesday, March 08, 2005

Early Participation by Subcontractors in Contract Schedule Preparation
CRITIAL TO SUCCESS

Subcontractors your input to the Contract Baseline Schedule is critical to the reality and achievability of the Schedule. You are the experts in your trade. You must take a proactive stance. The general contractor has not analyzed and planned out your work and crew availability as you did to formulate your bid and set aside your staffing requirements. This is yours to provide. Even if the general does not ask for your input, you should provide it. Don't wait, as many have and do, until the draft or final GC-produced schedule arrives on your planning table. THIS IS WAY TOO LATE.

Far too many general contractors bend easily to the Owner/CM pressure to shorten the schedule or not get paid; payment contingent upon an approved schedule. If your schedule is not approved/accepted it is often crashed, aborting good logic for bad. Above all other reasons, the original baseline schedule is there to plan an achievable time frame understanding that risk exists; not to lie to the Owner or appease the Owner with dates that cannot be ultimately met in order to get paid. Of course you as the contractor (general or subcontractor) have an obligation to your contract and all of its dictates. Above all, you owe yourself and the Project Owner honesty and the exercise of your best experience and know-how. This must be depicted in the schedule logic.

Subcontractors are hired for one very simple principal; you are the expert in your field of construction and this expertise is required to make this job successful. You are NOT hired so that you can do, understand, or plan/manage the entire project.

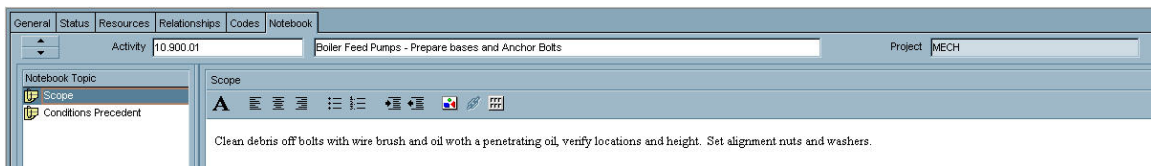
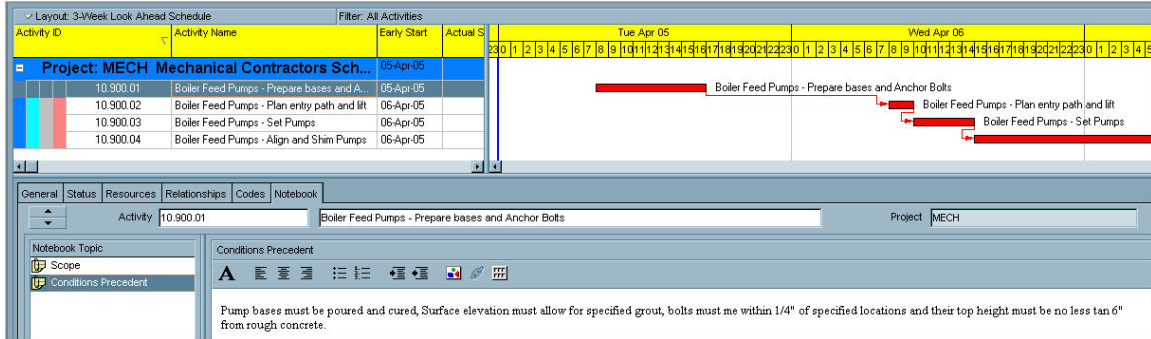
It is important that you supply an understanding of your needs, the conditions precedent to you efficiently commencing your work, and the conditions you need. Be specific, each structure/project is different. You need to be reasonably accurate in your work breakdown and estimated time requirements. You need to be clear about what you need and shared major resources (tower cranes and alike). You need to share your crew planning.

Utilize scheduling software or some other approach. Don't come crying later that you were not given adequate time if you did not make your plan and needs known.

It is possible that given the time constraints you may receive less time than you wanted. A project comprises many trades and it must come down to a reasonable division of available time. This means that when you get the Contract Schedule you must review it and make the necessary planning adjustments in methods, manpower and material availability as will all others. DON'T wait until it's your turn and get caught unprepared.

Since you do not have knowledge of the entire schedule, but you know your prerequisites and your logic, concentrate on that logic. Traditionally we call these fragnets or portions of the network that include your work activity. Pick up a copy of Primavera Contractor, its perfect for this.

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This will create a schedule that you can follow once your work starts and provide needed input to the GC's schedule. The general Contractor's schedule can include you work for the pumps as one activity or several with steps to replace your detailed activities.

Gordon