

Preconstruction: That Magical Time Between Award and Mobilization

The following is the general scope of work that typically falls into Preconstruction:

- Review the “Issued For Construction” (IFC) plans and specs for accuracy and buildability and clarify issues with design team through RFIs
- Coordinate with your Health and Safety manager to assemble and submit your company’s HASP (Health And Safety Plan)
- Obtain all AHJ permits (Authorities Having Jurisdiction – i.e. the city, the state, the property owner, etc.), buy insurance and construction bonds as required in your contract. **Critical Note:** do not let anybody, for whom your company is or will be responsible, to step foot or drive a vehicle onsite until permits, insurance and the approved HASP are firmly in place.
- Develop a high-level schedule to determine when long lead equipment is required onsite. Subtract from that date ((the quoted lead time) + (shipping time) + 2 (time to generate submittals and review)) X 1.2 to determine the deadline to purchase the equipment.
- Develop and set up the project budget and submit SOV – sometimes called a zero-cost requisition – for your client’s approval
- Write Scopes of Delivery for long lead equipment – the PM will buy all other equipment once mobilized
- Assemble bid packages for long lead equipment and release RFQ’s
- Write Scopes of Work for subcontractors
- Assemble bid packages for subcontractors and release RFQ’s. The RFQ for each discipline should be broken down by following the Scope of Work to attempt to have comparable costs per line item for each bidder
- Level and evaluate bids – if the bids are not all broken out the same way or if some bidders exclude portions of the scope while others base their costs on inferior material or equipment that will likely be rejected, then leveling bids moves away from being basic arithmetic on a spreadsheet to a full blown art that could take a month to get a handle on. Do your best to keep the bids consistent.
- Round 2 RFQ’s for the strongest bidders in round 1: Best and Final – ask your top 2 bidders to sharpen their pencils
- Final face to face negotiations based on round 2 results – face to face is always best, if for nothing else, it affords the opportunity to seal your deal with a handshake which still means something to some people, but it still needs to be followed up with paper.
- Prepare all subcontracts and purchase orders and release for signature – don’t forget that the purchase/contract is contingent on receiving the executed document AND an approved COI – Precon Mgr’s responsibility. If you don’t secure an original signature, then you do not have a contract.
- Process and resolve all RFIs that the vendors will inevitably submit

- Process and track all submittals and shop drawings keeping in mind that any open RFI's from any given vendor will give them credence to believe that any delay in their submittals, and therefore delivery, is not their fault... They may be right.
- Set up rental agreements and delivery of office trailers, toilet and sanitary facilities, temp utilities, office equipment, etc. and installation of fencing and all necessary means of ensuring safety and security within the management trailer area. Your company will be responsible for this area of the job site as if they own it.
- Schedule any required preconstruction inspections and photos. Document the existing conditions of the grounds and buildings surrounding the upcoming project, make sure that you leave your client's property in a condition equal to or better than you found it.
- Finally – reap your reward. You just did 6 months of work in 1 month's time and now you get to hand it all over. Your final task is to schedule a Hand Off meeting between Preconstruction and Project Management. Make sure that the PM has access to all of your records and documentation and you make them aware of any open or continuing issues that they will inherit. Now that your part is done you could Tune Out but don't Drop Out – you will be receiving the blame for things that go wrong early in the project and you will have to duck back in and help resolve it. As a personal example – I took the hit for ordering silencers for high pressure boilers off the equipment schedule which said I needed 6 – one for each new boiler but the project included the installation of only 4 boilers. I bought 2 too many non-returnable silencers – a \$12K hit on a \$60M job. I call it a win because if I didn't know better than to buy the boilers from an equipment schedule, we would have had 2 too many boilers.