



Pointers for Building Your Schedule Activities

Before any schedule is built, you need to understand the job like a builder. This guide gives you practical tips to break down the construction drawings into logical, buildable phases. By identifying scopes early—including the ones that are easy to miss—you'll create a schedule that not only tracks time, but actively prevents mistakes and rework in the field. Whether you're a student or a professional, these pointers will help you think like a superintendent and plan like a project manager.

Set Your Schedule Standards Early

Before you start adding activities, define a few baseline rules. These standards help keep your schedule manageable, readable, and useful for tracking progress later. They also make it easier to spot mistakes or missing scope.

Suggested Schedule Standards:

- 🕒 No activity should last longer than 30 working days
 - Break up long durations into smaller, trackable chunks. Example: Instead of "Rough-in MEP (60 days)," break it into floors or areas.
- 🕒 No activity should be shorter than 1 day
 - Anything less is too granular. Group related tasks together when appropriate.
- 💰 No single activity should cost more than \$50,000 (or ~2% of project cost)
 - If it does, you're likely grouping too much work together and losing visibility on scope or sequencing.
- 🧑 Activities should represent real construction work
 - Use verbs like install, form, pour, place, paint, inspect—not just "MEP" or "Drywall."
- 🔗 Every activity should have a predecessor and a successor
 - This ensures it's properly tied into the project flow—no orphans, no dead ends.

Setting these rules up front keeps your logic clean and your updates meaningful.



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Construction Scheduling Best Practices

1. 🔍 Read the Drawings Like a Builder 🧑‍🔧

Before you schedule anything, study the drawings page by page and ask:

- What work is being done here?
- Who's doing it (trade/crew)?
- Where does it fall in the overall sequence?

📌 Start from the ground up (literally):

Civil/Site ➡ Foundation ➡ Framing ➡ MEP ➡ Interior Finishes ➡ Equipment

2. 📁 Use Drawing Pages to Build Major Scopes

For each drawing sheet or group of sheets:

- Identify the major scopes of work shown
- Note any inspections or permits required
- Determine if scopes can be grouped into phases or trade packages

Example Activities from a foundation sheet:

- Excavation
- Form footings
- Pour footings
- Form stem walls
- Pour stem walls
- Underslab plumbing
- Slab prep
- Pour slab

3. ⚠️ Identify 'Easy to Miss' Critical Scopes

Some scopes are small but essential—if forgotten or delayed, they can stop the entire job or require costly rework.

So ask:

- What happens if this scope is skipped?
- Will it be difficult to complete later?
- Is it hidden between larger tasks and easy to overlook?

📌 Add these items as separate schedule activities—even if they seem minor.



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Frequently Missed Activity Examples:

- Sawcut opening for fryer drains – Forget it? You'll be jackhammering a finished slab.
- Install blocking for TVs/monitors – Walls are finished? Now you're opening drywall.
- Paint behind walk-in cooler – Once installed, you can't access the wall.
- Set anchor bolts before slab pour – No anchors = no structural steel install.

4. 🧑‍🔧 Pro Tip: The Schedule is a Quality Control Tool

Use your schedule to prevent field mistakes before they happen. By clearly showing when and where these small but critical scope items belong, you're helping the field team plan better, the PM avoid costly change orders, and the Owner receives a better-quality building.

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