

Scheduler

Nature of Work

The scheduler or scheduling engineer assumes the responsibility for the overall scheduling of a construction project. He or she may be involved in one project or numerous projects. The scheduler's responsibilities include a wide range of duties involving initial job planning, scheduling of time, scheduling of materials, coordination of subcontractors, monitoring of job progress, analysis of changes, and problem solving. Specifically, the scheduler will produce the contractor's Initial Schedule and then update the schedule throughout construction. He or she will also use the schedule to analyze the impact of change orders, delays, and any other schedule disruptions.

The scheduler works very closely with the project manager, project superintendent, and the subcontractors during the preparations and updating of the construction schedule. Because of this, the scheduler must possess good communication skills. He or she will continually be producing critical scheduling information for the project team's use, very much like an accountant produces financial information for a company's managers. Therefore, the scheduler maintains an important support role to the project superintendent, project manager, and all other parties associated with the project.

Education and Training

In the past, the role of a scheduler or scheduling engineer was handled by the project superintendent, the project manager, or both. Their scheduling education basically consisted of many years of experience working on construction projects.

Today, many general contracting firms have schedulers on their staff or they retain the needed talent by using outside consultants. These schedulers normally have a college degree in an engineering discipline, architecture, or construction management. They must have a good understanding of construction practices, procedures, and the methods of construction. The scheduler must also be proficient in reading construction drawings. Since most construction scheduling is accomplished using the Critical Path Method (CPM), schedulers must have knowledge and experience in this technique. CPM Scheduling, now taught in most colleges, has become a basic requirement for all schedulers.

Also, since computers are used to prepare CPM schedules, knowledge and experience in the use of computers and scheduling applications is very advantageous.

Advancement Potential

Schedulers are considered part of the management staff, and many continue on to become project superintendents, estimators, project managers, or project executives.