

Construction Punch List and How to Effectively Use One

Every business plan and project comes to an end at some point. And like the other arrangements designed by a company, at some point, it either ends or develops into something different—or a better version of the previous one. As such, construction projects have a definite timeline. Through cost estimating, the contractor and the clients can decide on the duration of the project construction. After establishing the grounds, the construction of the skyscraper or commercial building can start. When the project is near its end, the project management acquires a construction punch list to list down the areas that still need polishing.

This article discusses the importance of this item to the finishing parts of the construction project. Using the information below, companies can use it for their building projects.

What is a Construction Punch List?

In the simplest form, a punch list contains the checklist of activities or construction duties that the contractor needs to finish before the project comes to an end. This document is a list of all specifications included in the construction project contract that is not complete yet, especially when the project is nearing its proposed completion date. In other cases, a punch list also consists of errors incurred while the construction was ongoing. These mistakes can come as incorrect installations of air conditioners, damaged wirings, wrongfully placed fluorescent lights, and leaky rooms. As part of the business plan, the establishment should not have these problems. That's why the engineers, designers, and project managers make use of punch lists to remember the things they have to accomplish. Besides the instances of lapses during the construction process, the engineers inspect finished rooms and then write the actions to do on the punch list, if applicable.

Who is Responsible for the Construction Punch List?



As a quality checklist for the contractors and owners, punch lists are essential in making sure that the construction team fixes the little flaws. Moreover, punch lists can be part of the construction progress report as it shows the updates on the activities within the project. Also, the subcontractor checklist and engineer checklists are crucial materials that track the improvement of the project. As mentioned, a punch list is the responsibility of the officials in the project. People who are not part of the management team should not take part in adjusting the things on the list. With that, here are some points about the people who handle the follow-ups and additions in the punch list:

Owner

As the one in charge of the whole project, the owner often has the last say on the things happening in the construction site. Since he or she is the proprietor of the establishment, he or she sees where the glitches are and what needs improvement. Sometimes, the owner can also view contractor daily reports to know whether he or she can conduct an inspection. However, contractors have the option to decline requests coming from the client when it is inappropriate or out of budget range.

General Contractor

Acting as the middle person or mediator between the clients, other engineers, architects, and subcontractors, the general contractor closely monitors the processes and activities

in the construction site. Part of their job, which is on the owner and contractor agreement, is getting the punch list from the owner and disseminating information to other workers. The general contractor also determines whether the things in the punch list are doable or not. If there changes, the person-in-charge can check the current contractor business plan to see if the revisions apply to the project.

Subcontractors

The role of subcontractors is mostly doing specifications. For instance, subcontractors can be in-charge of some plumbing or wiring systems, when designated by the general contractors. As a whole, subcontractors have particular jobs that they should finish at a definite time. In this case, subcontractors are the ones who are responsible for completing the things on the punch list. Although this is not always the situation, subcontractors are efficient workers that have assignments based on the requests and demands of the owner and general contractor.

Architect/Designer

When a project is about to finish or even before it's completion, the architect has to check the establishment's design. One of the obligations of the designer is examining the building and seeing whether there are errors or not. If the architect found incorrect measurements that the contractors can fix, then it should be on the punch list. The designer can also consult the owner to relay some issues on the building design if there are any. Through the owner and architect agreement, the designer can add items on the punch list, especially if it's part of the contract.

How to Improve Construction Punch Lists



The items written on the punch list need to be crossed off before the deadline—the proposed end date of the project. Consequently, the workers have to go the extra mile to finish the listed items. However, when punch lists are poorly written and incomplete, more problems may arise. If the readers have a hard time deciphering the sentences on the list, then relaying the message to workers would be challenging. Aside from looking at inspection reports and site visit reports, there is also another effective way of creating a more efficient punch list for subcontractors, general contractors, and other people involved in the project. Listed below are some essential methods that the project management team can use when formulating the punch list.

Don't Wait Until the End—Start Early

There's nothing wrong with starting things early. Some contractors begin inspecting the building when the project is almost complete. However, this specific procedure leaves little time for the adjustments that the subcontractors will do for the unfinished spaces in the establishment. Therefore, it's better to generate the punch list a few months before the completion to provide enough leeway for changes. The implementation of the redos or revisions can be part of the daily construction activities schedule or the construction checklist. Doing things ahead of time saves resources and energy.

Communicate

Communication is crucial to a business. Whether it's a construction company, manufacturing business, or a real estate agency, direct communication between the administration and employees is essential. With that, the owners have to discuss their expectations to the contractors before the start of the project. Even when the plan is under construction, the client who receives the construction progress report should still inform the project manager about his or her expectations. And like the owner, the contractor also discusses the status of the project without leaving out problems encountered in the construction site. The trust built between the two parties will strengthen the working relationship in the future.

Be Detailed

Another point that inspectors—owners, contractors, engineers, or designers—have to remember when creating the punch list is that details matter. Like the risk management reports submitted by the contractors, punch lists must also contain details about the places that require updations. By being detailed, the people assigned to accomplish the task will not spend time running around, asking for clarifications. To make it efficient, the inspectors can write down the setbacks in the inspection checklist as a note, or by using a separate document.

Conduct Regular Inspections

A project's goal is obtaining a zero punch list before the finishing touches of the structure is complete. Of course, the quality and high standards of the establishment matters the most. So, the owner and the general contractor conduct regular inspections to make sure that everything is in line with the progress reports. Doing inspections on schedules and productivity of the workers, as well as the safety measures, is crucial in avoiding rework and delays. With regular reviews, owners and contractors can write down defects as early as possible. Most inspectors use inspection checklists, safety checklists, and risk assessment checklists to track everything in the construction site.

Get Everyone Involved

Information dissemination should be the priority of the general contractor to make things easier. Getting the attention of people involved in the project, and making them work to complete the task will save time and resources. Consequently, if the people in the construction site are aware of the possible changes and revisions that will happen in a particular area, the work will be more comfortable. So, it's necessary to inform the workers about these to-dos, especially when some have assignments to complete.

Make Use of Punch List Technology

With the various extensions created by technology, many construction software emerged to assist engineers and project managers with their day to day activities. From scheduling the workload, budgeting for wages and materials, to managing the work-related problems, there is an application available for the convenience of the owners and general contractors. Having a punch list technology is advantageous for the project as it provides tools that make the process of work a little lighter. For example, contractors can write waste management checklists and work safety checklists in the software and then print it afterward.

Key Benefits of Using Construction Punch List Apps

- Through looking at various websites on the internet, a bunch of construction software is accessible to companies. Although some companies design their application for work, others rely on ready-made software on the web. Importantly, these punch list apps are excellent tools for contractors and owners. Here are three key benefits of utilizing a punch list app for the project.
- Advancements in technology brought by the innovative minds of those working in the field of modern tech significantly helped the community. Not only in the construction industry, but throughout the different markets around the globe.

The arrival of the latest construction technology—applications, equipment, tools, software—assist planners in budget tracking and better development swot analysis. Indeed, these present-day tools are gold for everyone!

- Using the app makes the accuracy of the speed data from the construction site better. The algorithm and system in punch list apps calculate numbers for the advantage of project leaders. Even if the construction site is located in a remote area, the app can still capture audio recordings and images. The photos and records are also relevant to the progress report.
- The application is not too heavy for the mobile phone or tablet. With that, it's easy to carry. Updating the app is also convenient.

Going for Zero

Seeing zero in the punch list is a satisfying feat for any construction team. Zero is the end goal of a punch list. And to achieve that, the people involved in the business have to look at different success strategies that other construction companies followed for their respective projects. Besides looking at schedule management plans, budget plans, and business plans, the owner and the general contractor also have to consider the outside factors that affect the construction of the project. The changing weather in the construction site, delay in deliveries of goods, and malfunctioning equipment are some things that cause delays and even errors in the work. Nevertheless, the end goal of having all the tasks in the punch list complete will boost the confidence and morale of the team. In preparation, the team can create contingency plans and alternative methods to lessen holdups.

The Bottomline

After the preconstruction process of the project finishes, the owner and the chosen general contractor have a lot to discuss. From the organizational structure of the team handling the plans to the workers' files, the admin takes charge of these things. On the surface, these may seem like the things that the project only needs. But in reality, a construction project entails many little activities that intertwine to wrap up the plan. As a whole, though it looks tiny and insignificant, a punch list is as important as a marketing plan. The list helps align the things to complete and review again. Without this tool, unfinished rooms and broken interior stuff will pass off as part of the building and will affect the business. In conclusion, having a punch list is a must for all ongoing and future construction projects.