

## **An architect's field reports**

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Almost no one ever reads a field report, except when things go really wrong.

Think of field reports as the “black box recorder” of the construction process, or the unsung hero of effective construction contract administration. The architect—via the field report—tracks progress, monitors conformance to design intent, provides a record of work underway, and (when methodically kept) offers protection in disputes stemming from builder errors and omissions.

Keeping a consistent record of field activities across your entire practice is a good habit even if your contract includes minimal CA. Once you set foot on a job site, be prepared to record and publish your observations, preferably with supporting photos, on a standard form:

On your letterhead, describe:

1. **Context:** Project ID, report #, date, time onsite (arrival and departure), and weather. (Always note the weather even on interior work. Outside conditions such as high ambient humidity can affect progress of work or create issues later on).
2. **Builder's resources:** Trades on site, number of personnel for each trade, machines or tools in use, materials on site and adequacy of material storage
3. **Construction progress:** work in place against the project schedule, work in place by trade, planned activities and adequacy of coordination, regulatory conformance and signoffs
4. **Look ahead:** Submittals, long lead Items, open issues from past reports
5. **General conditions:** housekeeping, site safety
6. **Quality:** Conformance with design intent and construction documents, observations re workmanship and acceptance

You can organize your field report to support requisition signoffs: structure items #2, and #3 above to follow the schedule of values. Discrepancies between observed progress and requisition percentages can flag problems.

Write simple sentences. Get to the point, don't embellish. Document clearly. Clarity, consistency, and simplicity enhance the report's effectiveness.

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