PHORGOTTEN PHENOMENA

The Importance of the Pre-Job Meeting

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A thorough pre-job meeting is an essential part of any project. This article covers the requirements of a pre-job meeting before starting a coating project. It presents advice on who should attend, the roles of the attendees, and references needed.

A pre-job meeting should be specific to the activity being performed, such as welding, coating, insulation, electrical, etc., and should be held before any work is started. Many projects begin without a pre-job meeting and they usually end up being delayed because of conflicts. Delays may occur because of a misunderstanding regarding inspection criteria, materials being used, schedule and work hours, manpower/equipment needs, specifications, safety requirements, and/or expected delivery dates. To say that “a pre-job meeting can prevent completion delays” is an understatement.

Meeting Location

A pre-job meeting should be held at the contractor’s facility if possible. This will give the client, engineers, safety personnel, and inspector(s) a chance to tour the contractor’s facility after the meeting. Pre-job meetings should be scheduled one week prior to start-up to ensure that unknown requirements can be met. Some of these unknowns can take some time to resolve. If everything is understood after the pre-job meeting, equipment and personnel are ready, and safety requirements have been met, then work may start as soon as the day following the pre-job meeting. I have attended pre-job meetings in the morning and begun work after lunch on the same day. It just depends on the outcome of the meeting and if everyone in attendance is satisfied with the results. A pre-job meeting is also the best opportunity to record e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers of all parties involved. Most pre-job meetings consist of a massive distribution of business cards over the conference table, back and forth to each other like a Saturday night card game!
Who Should Attend and their Roles

Who should attend a pre-job meeting? Representatives from engineering, the client, paint manufacturer, contractor, safety department, and inspection department should all attend. The engineering company will want a representative at this meeting to review the drawings and note any required changes. Last-minute engineering changes are quite normal. The client will typically have a project manager and he/she can be very helpful if everyone knows what the expectations of the client are before the work starts. The client’s project manager can inform the group about schedule demands, required delivery dates, and budget issues.

The paint manufacturer representative is always helpful with any product questions and should always be invited to attend. In most cases the contractor’s project manager and foreman can provide valuable information regarding work schedules, equipment, and personnel. The safety representative can provide vital information regarding personal protective equipment requirements, storage, and disposal of waste. The inspector will usually review the specification in detail and highlight any unusual requirements. All too often, the contractor does not get a chance to review the specification in detail and the inspector will be able to answer questions regarding inspection criteria and any of those issues that are not exactly clear within the specification.

References Required

Reference materials needed at a pre-job meeting include the following: engineering drawings, client specifications, manufacturer’s data sheets, material safety data sheets (MSDS), a work schedule, safety policies, inspection reports, and any other procedures or policies required by the contractor to perform the work. Documentation may also include federal, state, and local requirements and permits.

Conclusions

The pre-job meeting is a great way to kick off a project. It is a valuable tool to identify those issues that may become a concern or cause delay at a later date. These issues should be discussed in detail and may include conflicting data regarding client specifications and manufacturer data sheets, acceptable finished weld conditions and weld coating requirements, inclement weather, weekend work, holiday work schedules, paint storage, and inspection hold points.

It is also crucial for the appropriate person to step up and take control of the meeting and to have a written agenda outlining who is responsible for what. Usually this person will be the client’s project manager.

The important thing to remember is to ask questions at this meeting and resolve issues before work starts. It is common to have 10 to 20 action items for various folks to “run down” once this meeting is complete. Everyone should become involved and engaged and adequate time should be allowed to cover all aspects of the job in detail. The time spent on a thorough pre-job meeting will be worth it!

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June 2009 MATERIALS PERFORMANCE 51