

QA/QC Essentials for a Successful Construction Project

**For architects who want to reduce risk, ensure quality,
and support smooth project delivery.**

Client/Project Selection / Contract Negotiations

- Established Client or Potential Client – Confirm client project, litigation, and financial histories.
- RFPs – review of proposed agreement, incorporated terms and conditions and other requirements. Raise concerns now or later – waived if not raised in response to RFP?
- Agreements – Scope, Fees, Dealmakers and Dealbreakers – indemnity, insurance, standard of care, ownership of documents, termination/suspension, limitation of liability and other protective provisions, design and budget interplay, schedules.

Pre-Design / Planning Phase

- Define Project Goals & Constraints – Confirm client priorities, budget, schedule, and project success criteria.
- Establish QA/QC Plan – Determine who's responsible for what, when, and how QA/QC tasks will be managed.
- Confirm Code & Regulatory Requirements – Identify applicable codes, zoning, accessibility, and sustainability standards early.
- Engage Consultants Early – Coordinate with MEP, structural, and civil engineers to avoid future scope gaps.

Design Phase

- Review Key Milestones (Schematic, DD, CD) – Conduct internal peer reviews at each major phase for coordination, code, and constructability.
- Coordinate Drawings Across Disciplines – Overlay consultant drawings with architectural sets to catch conflicts.
- Specify Quality Materials & Systems – Confirm materials meet performance, durability, and warranty expectations.
- Document Decisions & Approvals – Keep a clear record of client approvals, code interpretations, and design changes.

Construction Documents

- Check for Completeness & Clarity – Ensure details, dimensions, and notes are coordinated and unambiguous.
- Verify Consistency Across Sheets – Align plans, sections, elevations, and schedules for accuracy.
- Review for Code Compliance – Perform a dedicated code and accessibility review of final CDs.
- Coordinate Specifications with Drawings – Confirm materials, terms, and performance standards are consistent.

Construction Phase

- Respond Promptly to RFIs – Maintain clear, documented responses that reinforce design intent.
- Attend Site Visits & Observe Work – Verify conformance to drawings, note deviations, and report issues promptly.
- Review Shop Drawings & Submittals Thoroughly – Confirm alignment with specs and coordinated design—no rubber-stamping.
- Track Changes & Clarifications – Maintain a running log of ASIs, RFIs, and change orders. Communicate clearly and consistently.
- Document Field Observations Clearly – Identify who attended, what was reviewed, and any discrepancies found.

Close-Out Phase

- Punch List Thoroughly – Walk the project and document outstanding work clearly with locations and descriptions.
- Collect As-Builts & O&M Manuals – Ensure final documentation is complete, reviewed, and turned over to the owner.
- Confirm Warranty Procedures – Provide clarity to the client on how to request warranty service post-occupancy.
- Conduct Post-Occupancy Check-In – Optional but valuable: Schedule a check-in to evaluate performance and lessons learned.

Across All Phases

- Maintain Clear Communication – Document meetings, decisions, and changes. Avoid verbal-only approvals.
- Flag Risks Early – Proactively identify coordination issues, scope gaps, or delays—and propose solutions.
- Follow a Documentation Protocol – Use consistent file naming, versioning, and storage practices to avoid confusion.
- Regularly Review Insurance & Contract Requirements – Ensure services align with professional liability policies and contract obligations.
- Review Sub-Consultant Qualifications and Contracts – Confirm insurance, experience, and written responsibilities before engagement.
- Confirm Construction Estimates Carry Disclaimers – Note limitations of accuracy and market volatility; suggest third-party estimator as needed.
- Retain All RFIs, ASIs, and Change Orders – Log and store responses with timestamps and context.
- Pause Destruction of Records if Dispute is Likely – Apply a 'litigation hold' if any legal issue may arise.
- Follow Records Retention Policy – Confirm project file includes contracts, approvals, communications, and required durations.

Use This Checklist To:

- Train junior staff on QA/QC expectations
- Stay ahead of errors and omissions
- Protect your firm from avoidable liability
- Promote shared accountability across your team

Disclaimer: This checklist is a practical guide and not a legal standard. It does not replace contract terms, regulatory requirements, or the standard of care. Use of this checklist does not imply a warranty or guarantee of performance.