

CD Cost Estimate Guidelines

Last updated by Adeline LeBouef on Jun 17, 2025

As a Probable Cost Estimate is initiated, the time-consuming part of the process is the gathering of the proper quantities of building material, systems and components so that a price can be associated with each item. Below is a representative list of typical quantities that are contained on the majority of projects. This list will need to be compared to each individual project to add or subtract materials as necessary to properly represent the specific building construction.

Unit prices have been interpolated between numerical values provided from the 2015 edition of RSMeans Facilities Construction Cost Data periodical, empirical data derived from bid results of past projects in our market sector, and direct consultation with local general contractors. The majority of unit quantities shown below are indicated as square foot or linear foot units. The assignments of these unit quantities are based on how general contractors typically price materials in our market sector (for example glazing is usually estimated on a square foot basis not a linear foot basis).

It is also important to note, that the estimator CANNOT rely on procuring quantities of certain materials from Revit alone. Building components are modeled in different ways on different projects which will affect the way Revit determines square footages and linear footages. An estimator must back check material numbers to see if the quantities provided by Revit seem accurate.

CD Cost Estimate Template

How to Use the Template

First download the Template file above and save it to your project folder. This file can now be modified for your project.

1. Open the template from your project folder.
2. Fill in all of the project specific materials and quantities on the backup pages. these are the items discussed above.

DIVISION 6 - WOOD & PLASTICS				
Exterior Sheathing	1	sf	\$1.65	\$1.65

Misc. Rough Carpentry	1	l.s.	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Exterior Grade Plywood Sheathing Blocking	1	ls	\$800.00	\$800.00
Upper And Base Cabinets	1	lf	\$505.00	\$505.00
Base Cabinets	1	lf	\$278.00	\$278.00
Tall Wardrobe Storage Cabinets	1	lf	\$205.00	\$205.00
Adjustable Shelving	1	lf	\$162.00	\$162.00
SUBTOTAL DIVISION 6				\$6,951.65

3. Next modify the cost per unit if necessary:

DIVISION 6 - WOOD & PLASTICS				
Exterior Sheathing	1	sf	\$1.65	\$1.65
Misc. Rough Carpentry	1	l.s.	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Exterior Grade Plywood Sheathing Blocking	1	ls	\$800.00	\$800.00
Upper And Base Cabinets	1	lf	\$505.00	\$505.00
Base Cabinets	1	lf	\$278.00	\$278.00
Tall Wardrobe Storage Cabinets	1	lf	\$205.00	\$205.00
Adjustable Shelving	1	lf	\$162.00	\$162.00
SUBTOTAL DIVISION 6				\$6,951.65

4. Once all of the material quantities and cost have been updated, ensure that the cost on the backup sheets match the cost for the division on the Summary Page.

DIVISION 6 - WOOD & PLASTICS				
Exterior Sheathing	1	sf	\$1.65	\$1.65
Misc. Rough Carpentry	1	l.s.	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Exterior Grade Plywood Sheathing Blocking	1	ls	\$800.00	\$800.00
Upper And Base Cabinets	1	lf	\$505.00	\$505.00
Base Cabinets	1	lf	\$278.00	\$278.00
Tall Wardrobe Storage Cabinets	1	lf	\$205.00	\$205.00
Adjustable Shelving	1	lf	\$162.00	\$162.00
SUBTOTAL DIVISION 6				\$6,951.65

Division 1	General Requirements	\$303,107
Division 2	Site Work	\$1,282,990
Division 3	Concrete	\$695
Division 4	Masonry	\$0
Division 5	Metals	\$842,004
Division 6	Wood and Plastics	\$6,952
Division 7	Thermal and Moisture Protectio	\$7,317
Division 8	Doors and Windows	\$3,111
Division 9	Finishes	\$85,058
Division 10	Specialties	\$89,750
Division 11	Equipment	\$0

Division 11	Equipment	\$0	
Division 12	Furnishings	\$0	
Division 13	Special Construction	\$0	
Division 14	Conveying Systems	\$0	
Division 21	Fire Suppression	\$81,000	
Division 22	Plumbing	\$325,400	
Division 23	Mechanical	\$726,000	
Division 26-28	Electrical	\$879,830	
	Building Sub Total	\$4,633,214	

Final Steps

Before the final opinion of probable cost is sent to the owner, the document must be reviewed thoroughly and reviewed with the PIC.

General List

The following list can be used as a starting point for gathering necessary information to aid in the development of an accurate cost estimate. Every project is different and will have its own unique systems and materials

Below is a listing of some of the quantiles needed to be gathered in order to accurately cost a project.

General Pricing Information To Gather At Start of Estimate

- Building slab square footage:
- Linear feet of exterior wall:
- Square footage of each material on exterior wall:
 - Exterior masonry
 - Exterior CMU
 - Exterior stucco system
 - Fiber cement siding

- Fiber cement panels
- Etc.

Metals

- Assign a lump sum for miscellaneous steel
- Number of metal pan stairs
- Square footage of any architectural metal furring strips for exterior materials
- Amount of any metal strapping for exterior materials
- Number of steel bollards
- Linear feet of any handrails (above what is included within metal pan stair systems)

Finishes: Square footage of the following interior finish materials:

Flooring

- Carpet (also can be priced in square yard units)
- Porcelain floor tile
- VCT flooring
- LVT flooring
- Terrazzo flooring
- Epoxy flooring
- Sealed Concrete
- Wood flooring
- Terrazzo
- Cork Flooring

Interior Ceiling & Soffit Systems

- Square footages of each type of ceiling (e.g. hd. ACT 1, ACT 2, Etc.)

- Square footages of each type of ceiling (gyp bd., ACT-1, ACT-2, etc.)
- Square footage of any wood ceilings
- Square footage of gypsum board ceiling assemblies
- Square foot and materials of any exterior soffit areas
- Square footage of any acoustical panels on walls or ceilings
- Linear foot of Gyp. Bd. furr downs
- Number and size of any specialty ceiling elements

Interior Wall Systems

- Linear feet of interior 3-5/8" studs with gyp on both sides
- Linear feet (and height) of interior 6" studs with gyp on both sides
- Linear feet (and height) of interior 8" studs with gyp on both sides
- Square feet of any interior batt insulation
- Linear feet (and height) of any 4" CMU walls
- Linear feet (and height) of any 8" CMU walls
- We have found it accurate to estimate painting based on the square footage of building area (see cost estimate example)
- Square footage and types of wall coverings
- Square Footage of Ceramic wall tile
- Linear foot of ceramic wall base
- Linear foot of rubber base
- Linear foot of wood base

Doors & Windows

It is important for the estimator to know what the wind rating is based on the IBC Wind Zone Chart for estimating exterior doors and windows. For example, if impact resistant design is required within the project's zone that will affect the cost of exterior building materials.

- Number of interior wood doors
- Number of store front doors (interior):
- Number of store front doors (exterior):
- Number of steel doors
- Number and size of overhead doors, if any
- Number of fire rated overhead doors:
- Number of cased openings, if any
- Square footage of aluminum storefront (interior)
- Square footage of aluminum storefront (exterior)
- Square footage of any curtain wall system
- Square footage of any fire rated glazing:
- Number of overhead counter doors
- Number of fire rated overhead counter doors
- Number of fire rated rolling counter doors
- Number of any plumbing chase doors required

Wood & Plastics

- Linear foot of upper cabinets and base cabinets
- Linear foot of lower cabinets that don't have associated upper cabinets
- Linear foot of any upper cabinets that don't have associated base cabinets
- Square footage of exterior sheathing

Thermal and Moisture Protection

- Square footage of moisture barrier under slab (make sure this cost is not carried within structural consultant's cost of the slab)
- Square footage of exterior weather proofing membrane

- Square footage of exterior insulation system on exterior wall
- Square footage of any metal wall panel systems
- Square footage of any metal wall panel soffit systems
- Lump Sum price to waterproof elevator pit

Roofing & Sealants

- Linear feet of any metal copings and /or fascia board
- Number of roof hatches and any associated access ladders
- Assign cost for general joint sealants and fire caulking
- Linear foot of any expansion joints
- Square footage of each type of roofing system (price per square foot of roofing system should include insulation, cover board and accessories)
 - TPO Roofing
 - Modified Bit roofing
 - Standing seam metal roofing
 - Asphalt Shingle Roofing
 - Clay Tile roofing
- Square footage of sheathing on backside of parapets
- Assign cost amount for walking pads

Specialties

- Number of FEC's
- Number and size of marker boards, if any
- Number and size of white boards, if any
- Number of any projectors we are providing
- Number of projector mounts we are providing (if not providing projectors)
- Number of smart boards, if any

- NUMBER OF SMART BOARDS, if any
- Quantity and types of toilet accessories
- Quantity and types of toilet compartments
- Quantity of urinal screens
- Linear feet of any moveable partitions
- Quantity and size of marker boards
- Square footage of vinyl wall graphics
- Building interior signage quantity
- Monumental Sign allowance
- Square footage of aluminum canopy structures

The following disclaimer statement should be incorporated into every cost estimate provided to a client. The disclaimer needs to be edited as necessary to accommodate different projects:

- These estimates are based on conceptual assumptions which are very general in nature and do not represent a final cost analysis – which can only be accomplished once the final project and design have been defined. It is intended to be a budgetary and planning tool and is subject to fluctuation with the construction market and annual inflation rates. Please note that these estimates do not account for any hazardous material remediation or FF&E cost.