

The Job Site as Battlefield

Understand how and why your customers need their loads delivered in sequence, and you'll get unbeatable loyalty.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mike Sloggatt, an accomplished contractor, is filling in this month for Gary Katz.

The most successful military strategists are the ones who take time to study the ways of their adversary. They learn about their opponents' tactics, weaknesses, and strengths, and then they prepare the advance appropriately.

Speaking as a contractor, I can say that we sometimes view the lumber delivery truck as the enemy. As soon as the truck pulls up, you can hear the foreman groan when he sees everything he needs first—on the bottom of the load.

As a building materials supplier, have you ever tried to put yourself in the boots of your builders? Having insight into a builder's job will help you to service him better, and the better your service, the more loyalty you will enjoy from your clients. And loyalty means more business.

What can you do to make a builder's job easier? Let's consider the lumber delivery.

Having a good idea of how the lumber will be used and making sure the yard foreman knows how to load the truck can save hours for the builder, and make you a hero. That way, your delivery truck becomes an ally in the battle against the clock and production delays.

On tight job sites, scheduling and delivery sequence becomes more critical than in settings with ample storage space. Most framing contractors would love to have an all-terrain forklift, but few can afford the luxury and some sites won't fit one. Properly scheduled deliveries and sequence-loaded trucks make the job much easier.

Although framing techniques vary greatly from region to region, the basics remain the same. Start at the ground and go up from there. Follow along as we build a one-story home on a tight piece of real estate.

After the foundation has been set, and before any lumber deliveries, I set all my crawspace or basement steel. Doing this first allows the boom truck unobstructed,

close access to the site. After this is all complete, I'm ready to start framing. My first delivery should contain all of the material I need to complete the first floor deck.

Day 1: Material in order of use

1. Termite shield
2. Sill sealer
3. Mudsill plates—2 layers—14- to 16-ft. long
4. Strapping (if required)
5. Rim joist—14- to 16-ft. long
6. Joist length as needed typical for a small home 24- to 26-ft. I-joist or 12- to 14-ft. 2x10
7. ¾-in. cdx Plywood or ¾-in. OSB



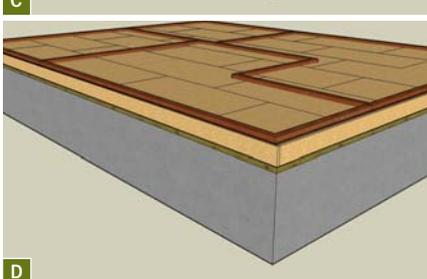
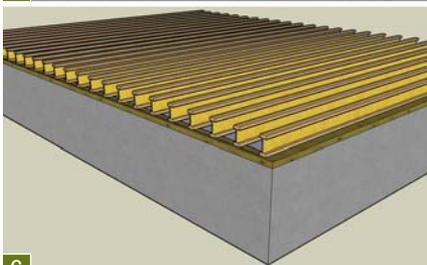
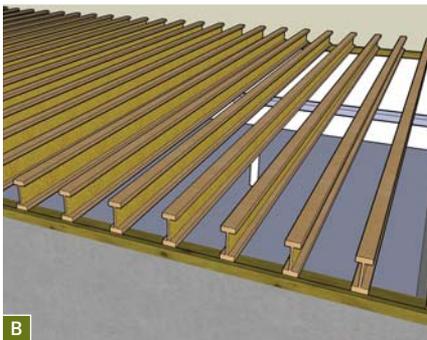
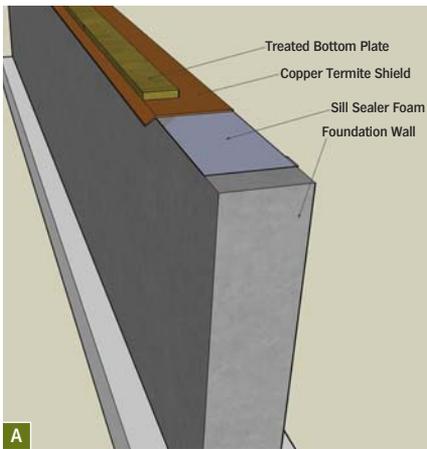
Setting the steel first, before any other deliveries, allows easy access to the work area.

(A) Sill sealer, termite shield, and mud sill plate assembly

(B) Once the steel and plates are set, we start rolling the floor joist into position.

(C) No loads should ever be placed on the deck until all of the plywood decking and blocking is installed—and concentrated loads should always be avoided.

(D) A stable work platform exists once the sheathing, rim joist, and wall plates are in place.



Starting at the mudsill, the first application is a termite shield and sill sealer. This is applied on top of the foundation wall prior to setting the treated sill plates. Wrapping the termite shield down over the concrete (not flush) forces tunneling termites to work around the shield—and this gives homeowners a visual indication of their presence. The sill sealer prevents drafts from the gap between the plate and foundation.

With the new formulations in treated lumber, using aluminum as a termite shield is no longer recommended due to galvanic corrosion from the copper content of the treated lumber. Stapling the foam sill sealer to the bottom of the plate helps to speed installation.

Once the sill plates are set up, if continuous load path strapping is required due to wind or seismic conditions, now is the time to lay out the roof! This seems a little premature, but if strapping is going to be continuous, I need to know where the rafters will sit on the top plate.

By keeping my layout consistent from the start, I eliminate extra top plate strapping. By installing the straps on the roof layout, I can tighten down plate bolts and continue the frame without coming back to relocate them later.

A common mistake on strapping is to connect only to the face of the plate. The strap should be under the plate and nailed on the opposite side. Keep in mind that corrosion-resistant straps are a necessity to prevent the copper in the treated plates from destroying the steel prematurely.

Rolling my floor joists is next on the agenda. I like to start by setting the rim joist on the far side of the building. Setting this up first and butting the joist to it allows the framer to snap a line on the desired length and cut all the joists at one time. Following behind the saw, another crew member stands them up and secures them to the plate. Once the joists are set, the rim is nailed off to the joists.

At this point it's important to remember that the joists, although in position, are very unstable. It's not until all the necessary blocking and plywood is installed that the joists are able to carry their de-

signed loads. Loading drafts of sheathing on the unfinished floor system can be very dangerous. Even when complete, a skid of plywood or lumber can easily exceed the design load of the floor. The final effort of Day 1 is to glue and screw the plywood to the joists.

By late afternoon or early the next day, I'm ready for the next delivery.

Day 2: Material in order of use

1. Top and bottom wall plates—12- to 14-ft. straight plating material
2. Studs for first floor
3. Engineered studs for zone frame areas, (kitchen, bath, gable walls)
4. Headers
5. Structural beams
6. Bracing 12- to 16-ft. 2x4 for wall straightening and bracing
7. Sheathing for exterior walls

Plate layout is critical, and this is the time for the layout carpenter to take his time and make sure everything is where it needs to be. Laying out all interior and exterior partitions will catch any mistakes and give a good visual as to how best to frame the walls.

While the carpenters are snapping lines, helpers can be cutting and assembling corner studs and window packages. Once layout is completed, the plates are laid out for all the exterior and interior partitions. Bottom plates are tacked with 8d hand nails and two tops tacked on top. Laying out and cutting all of the plates while stacked eliminates errors. Wall framing from the back forward provides easy access to the material.

After all of the plating is laid out, window frame packages are distributed to the appropriate locations. Marking each door, size, and swing on the floor, and each window designation along with the rough opening on the floor minimizes mistakes and frequent reference to the prints. Wall assembly goes quickly if everything is laid out ahead of time. We plumb and rack two walls at a time using long 2x4 bracing to keep the walls true. Laser-assisted plumb ➤

(E) Roof rafters stacked and ready to gang cut—production-style.

(F) Plywood stacked with floor sheathing first, then wall sheathing, saves the crew time.

(G) Once all the perimeter walls are up, the deck is clear enough to build interior walls.

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bobs have sped up this process considerably. I personally like to sheath the first-floor walls before heading up to the next level. This stabilizes the wall for the second floor deck assembly. With all of this accomplished, we've made room for the third delivery.

Day 3: Material in order of use

1. Ceiling joist
2. Roof rafters, ridge, valley, and hips or trusses
3. Collar beams
4. Roof sheathing
5. Gable end studs

This delivery is one I like to spell out. I like the rafters on the top of the load. Even though they tend to be the longest pieces, my first job of the day is to rack up my rafters for cutting. While one team is cutting rafters, the other can be installing the ceiling beams. The collars will be installed after the roof is erected and they hit the cut table as soon as the last rafter has been handed up to the assembly crew. It's tough to keep ahead of the crew at this point, so any extra movement of lumber will cause everything to come to a halt.

The speed and efficiency of this segment of the job depends on a number of factors.

First is how well the layout was done when the job got started. Walls that are out of square or not plumb make roof framing tough, if not close to impossible.

Second is the efficient movement of lumber to the cut table, letting us keep a step ahead of the framers.

Third is proper placement of the cut lumber to keep the flow of work going. Once we're on the home stretch, installing the roof sheathing gives the home its shape. That's one of the most rewarding stages of framing, saving the hard part for last.

If my LBM dealer coordinates my deliveries to reflect the framing sequence, it saves a lot of time for us. It does require advance preparation on my part to organize the lists in such a way that the yard can load it in a usable format.

If you're working with a builder who's a little less organized, asking if there is a load preference might help the contractor to get his list together properly, especially once they realize the labor savings.

To me, if given a choice between a yard that will load my deliveries the way I need them as opposed to what is convenient for the yard, I'll prefer to 'have it my way' even if there is a slight premium.

Coordinating deliveries carefully with your clients will result in greater productivity on the job site, and greater productivity means increased sales.

Taking the time to understand and cater to your clients needs will pay off with great dividends.

It's great strategy. ■



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