

FREE GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

15

conflicts between your specs, drawings and contract

Where each one hides, how to check for it, and the real project where it was caught.



Charles Goulet
Co-founder and CEO



Vincent Leclerc
Growth Lead

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Most reviews read one document at a time. The costly conflicts hide between them.

The contract, the specifications, the drawings and the reports are each reviewed by someone. Where they disagree, often nobody looks, because nobody reads them side by side. Errors and omissions in contract documents have been the leading cause of construction disputes in North America for several consecutive years (Arcadis, 2023).

Telamont reviews construction documents for contractors, comparing contracts, specifications, drawings, reports and minutes against each other. We went back over the conflicts Telamont flagged on our users' projects and kept the 15 that taught the most. Each one became a check your team can run, with or without software.

HOW TO USE IT

- 1 Find your stage.** The checks follow the project, from bid to construction.
- 2 Read one check at a time.** Each names the risk, where it hides, who owns it, how to check it and what to do.
- 3 Short on time?** Run the five checks marked Priority first.
- 4 Print the matrix.** Page 4 fits all 15 checks. Give each one an owner and a date.

THE CROSS-CHECK MATRIX

Print it. Give every check an owner.

✓ Priority check: run these five first

#	CHECK	OWNER	DATE	DONE
 BID				
1	Insurance limits raised in another document ✓	_____	_____	☐
2	The same item, specified differently by phase	_____	_____	☐
 AWARD AND SIGNING				
3	No cap on your liability	_____	_____	☐
4	Money withheld with no cap and no end date	_____	_____	☐
5	A struck clause that comes back elsewhere	_____	_____	☐
6	Scope the subcontractor priced out ✓	_____	_____	☐
7	A quality clause that stops at your contract	_____	_____	☐
 BEFORE WORK STARTS				
8	Changes that arrive without an addendum ✓	_____	_____	☐
9	An element the structure never drew ✓	_____	_____	☐
10	Elevations that leave water nowhere to go	_____	_____	☐
11	Services that do not fit in the slab	_____	_____	☐
12	A soil requirement missing from the drawings	_____	_____	☐
 DURING CONSTRUCTION				
13	A meeting decision the drawings never got	_____	_____	☐
14	Equipment that cannot do what the system needs	_____	_____	☐
15	A missed notice deadline ✓	_____	_____	☐

Project: _____ Stage: _____



STAGE 1 OF 4

Bid

Before you submit your price

The estimator prices what the documents say. These checks make sure the documents agree on what that is.

1

Insurance limits raised in another document

PRIORITY

2

The same item, specified differently by phase

Insurance limits raised in another document

 **WHERE IT HIDES**
General conditions vs supplementary conditions

 **OWNER**
Estimator

SAME CLAUSE, TWO DOCUMENTS

This one governs. \$3M more to carry.

SUPPLEMENTARY CONDITIONS SC-11

SC-11.2 · DELETE AND REPLACE

COVERAGE

Auto

General liability

Umbrella

Supplementary conditions Page 4

GENERAL LIABILITY

\$5,000,000

per occurrence

GENERAL CONDITIONS SAID

\$2,000,000 per occurrence

General conditions: \$2M **Governs: \$5M**

THE RISK

You price the limits you read. If another document raises them, the extra premium comes out of your margin, and your bid may not even comply.

ON A REAL PROJECT

At bid, the general conditions called for \$2M of general liability. A table in the supplementary conditions took precedence: \$5M per occurrence and \$10M per policy period. Caught before the bid went in, so the extra premium went into the price, not the margin.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Open the general and supplementary conditions side by side.
- ☐ List every amount in the general conditions: insurance limits, bonds, retainage, liquidated damages.
- ☐ Search the supplementary conditions for each one, and for “delete and replace” and “amend as follows”.
- ☐ Check the order of precedence to see which number governs.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Price the higher limit, or ask which one governs before bid closing.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts



During construction

The same item, specified differently by phase

 WHERE IT HIDES
Specification sections across phases

 OWNER
Estimator

SAME SECTION, TWO PHASES

Same item. A different requirement.

SPECIFICATION Overlay of both phases

SECTION 01 50 00 · TEMPORARY FACILITIES

1.4 Temporary stair.

One configuration to install, maintain and remove.

A different configuration and different responsibilities.

Specification, phase 1 and later phases overlaid

01 50 00 · 3

Same item, a different requirement per phase

— Phase 1 — Later phases

THE RISK

You price the first phase and assume the others match. When they do not, the difference in scope, duration or responsibility is yours.

ON A REAL PROJECT

A temporary stair, two flights and an 11-foot rise, had to be installed, maintained and removed. The phase 1A specification described it one way, the phase 1B and 1C specifications another. The estimator caught it during the bid and priced the right scenario instead of finding out on site.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Open the Division 01 sections of every phase side by side.
- ☐ Compare each temporary works item: configuration, quantity, duration.
- ☐ Note who installs, maintains and removes each item, phase by phase.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Price the scenario each phase asks for, or ask which one applies before bid closing.



STAGE 2 OF 4

Award and signing

Before you sign the contract and the subcontracts

Once you sign, your leverage is gone. These checks find what to negotiate while you still can.

3

No cap on your liability

4

Money withheld with no cap and no end date

5

A struck clause that comes back elsewhere

6

Scope the subcontractor priced out

PRIORITY

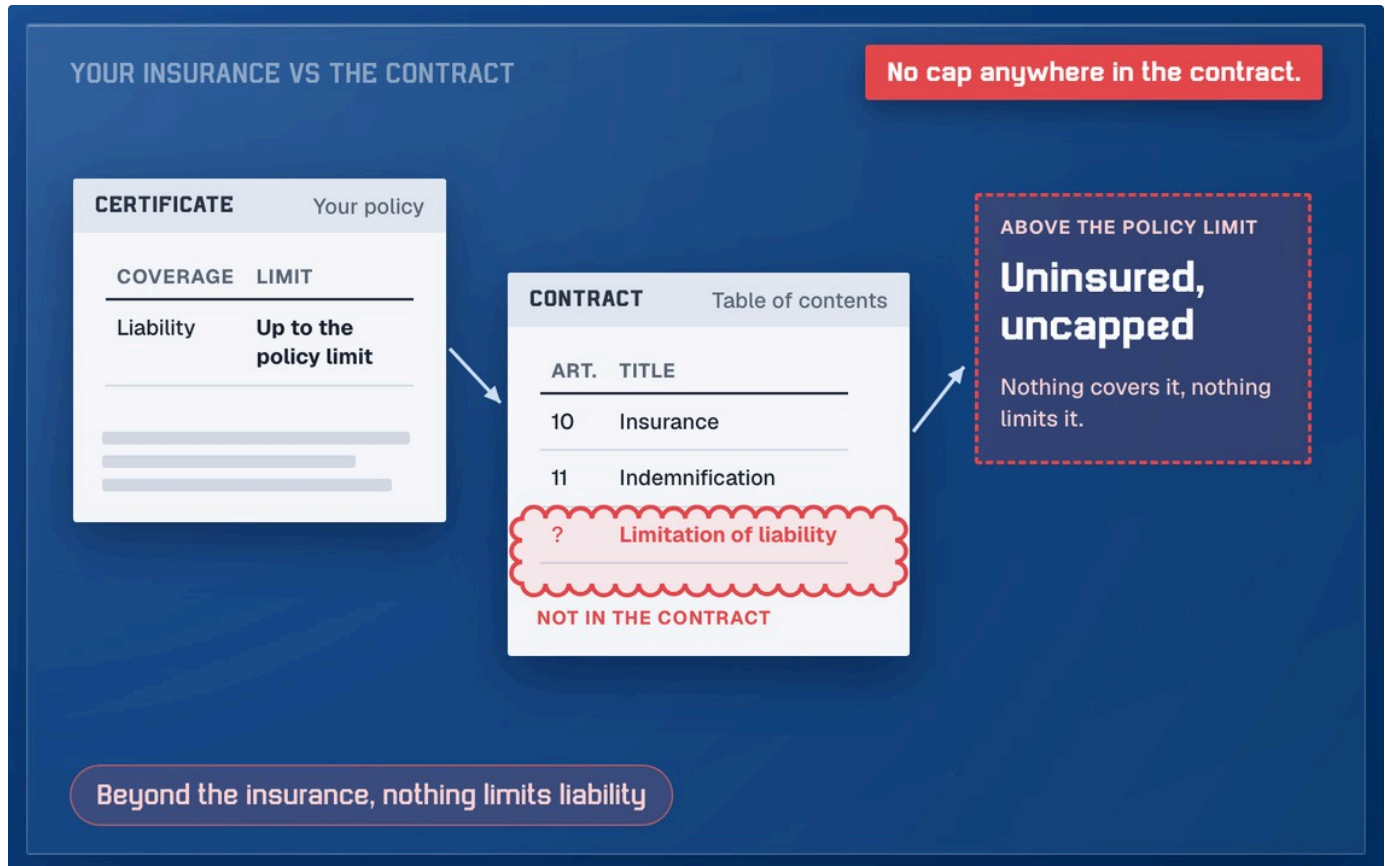
7

A quality clause that stops at your contract

No cap on your liability

 WHERE IT HIDES
Contract and annexes vs your insurance

 OWNER
Legal, risk manager



THE RISK

If the contract does not limit your liability, a claim can go past your insurance limits, and the rest comes out of the company.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The contractor carried \$5M to \$10M of insurance, but nothing in the contract capped its liability beyond that. In the same package, the domestic materials annex had its number left blank, so no one could tell which parts it covered. Both points were raised before the contractor committed.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Find the limitation of liability clause. If there is none, your exposure has no ceiling.
- ☐ Put the cap next to your policy limits. Anything above your coverage is uninsured.
- ☐ Read the indemnity clause for “any and all”, “arising out of”, “regardless of negligence”.
- ☐ Open every annex the contract cites, and flag any left blank.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Raise it with your legal or risk team before you sign, and ask for blank annexes to be completed.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts



During construction

Money withheld with no cap and no end date

 WHERE IT HIDES
Contract, administrative clauses

 OWNER
Legal, finance

ONE CLAUSE, THREE MISSING LIMITS

Any claim. No cap, no end, no release.

CONTRACT

Marked up in review

ARTICLE 9 · PAYMENT

9.7 Special holdback. The owner may withhold payment on any claim or dispute, until it is resolved.

Check 9.7:

Max amount X

End date X

Release trigger X

0 of 3

Contract, administrative clauses

Page 18

0 of 3 limits in place

THE RISK

The owner can hold your money on any claim or dispute, with no limit on the amount or the time, until the last dispute closes.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The contract let the owner withhold payment on any claim or dispute, with no maximum amount, no end date and no release mechanism. Flagged before signing, it gave the contractor the leverage to ask for a cap and release conditions, instead of seeing its cash tied up until the last dispute closed.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Find every clause that lets the owner hold money, not just standard retainage.
- ☐ For each one, look for a maximum, an end date and a release trigger.
- ☐ Read how the contract defines “claim or dispute”. The broader it is, the more can be held.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Raise the cap and release conditions before signing, while you still have leverage.

A struck clause that comes back elsewhere



WHERE IT HIDES

Edited contract vs the standard form



OWNER

Legal, contract administrator

SAME CONTRACT, TWO SECTIONS

Struck here. Restated there.

GENERAL CONDITIONS Page 12

ARTICLE 8 · TIME

~~8.4 Penalty clause:~~

struck by hand

Standard form, edited Page 12

ARTICLE 14 · CLAIMS Page 38

14.6 Penalties restated for the same event.

Page 38

Same contract, contradicting itself

THE RISK

You get a clause struck out, but another section still applies it. In a dispute, the contradiction works against you.

ON A REAL PROJECT

A standard-form contract edited by hand. A penalty clause was struck in the general conditions, then restated for the same event in a later section. The contradiction was caught before work started, and the contractor's claim rights stayed intact.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Ask for a redline against the unmodified form. On AIA documents, request the Additions and Deletions Report.
- ☐ For each struck clause, search the rest of the contract for wording that restates or contradicts it.
- ☐ Compare notice periods, penalties and liquidated damages with the standard form.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Get the contradiction resolved in writing before you sign.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts

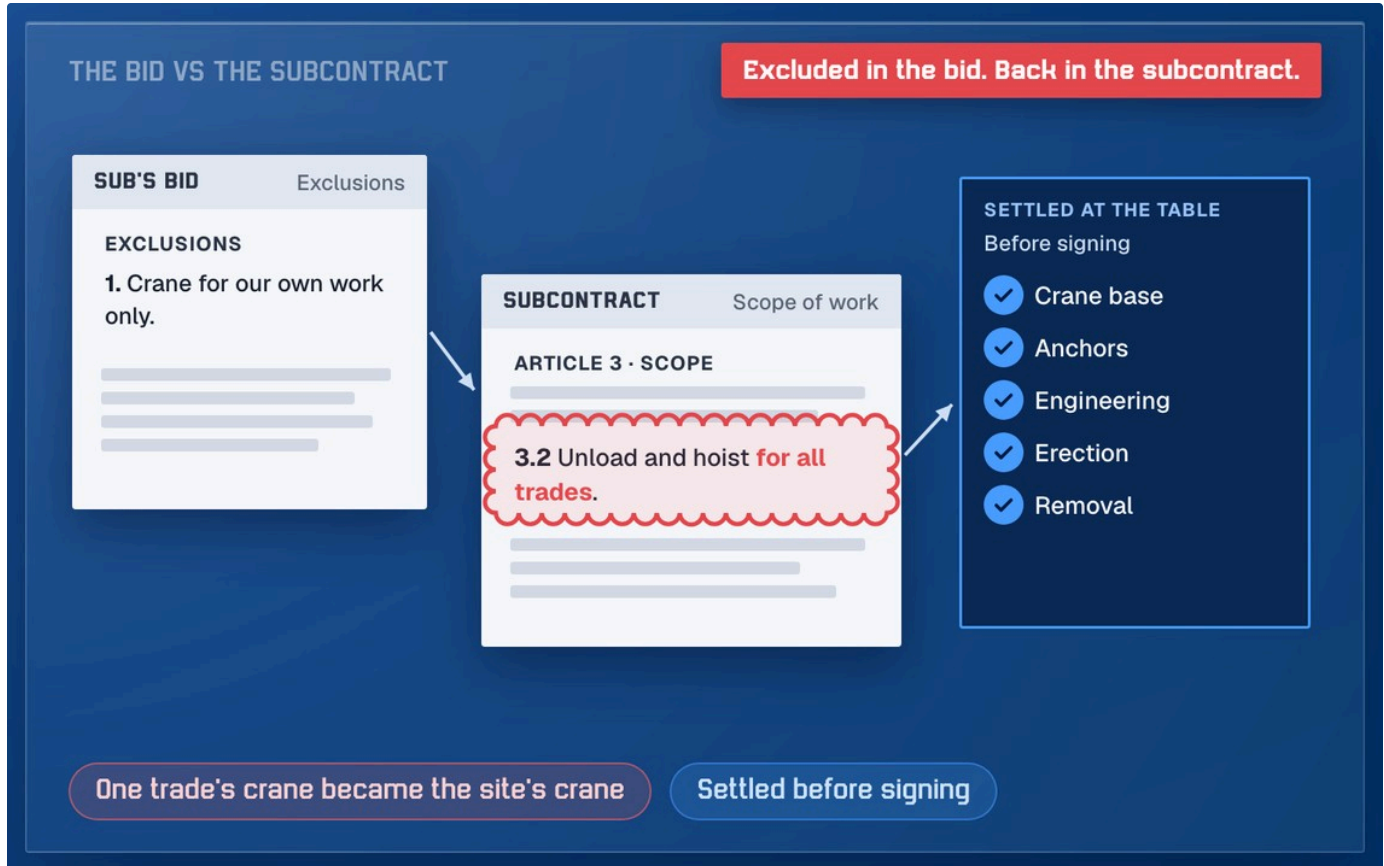


During construction

Scope the subcontractor priced out

 WHERE IT HIDES
Subcontract vs the subcontractor's bid

 OWNER
Project manager, buyer



THE RISK

If the subcontract asks for scope the bid excluded, someone ends up paying for it, and it is usually the general contractor.

ON A REAL PROJECT

A subcontractor bid its crane for its own work only. The subcontract asked it to unload and hoist for every other trade, which made it the whole site's crane. Caught before signing, the crane base, anchors, engineering, erection and removal were settled at the table.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Put the bid's exclusions page next to the subcontract scope.
- ☐ For each exclusion, find the clause that covers the same item.
- ☐ Search the subcontract for "for all trades", "as required", "complete system".
- ☐ List the shared services (crane, hoisting, scaffolding, temporary power, cleanup) and write who provides each one.

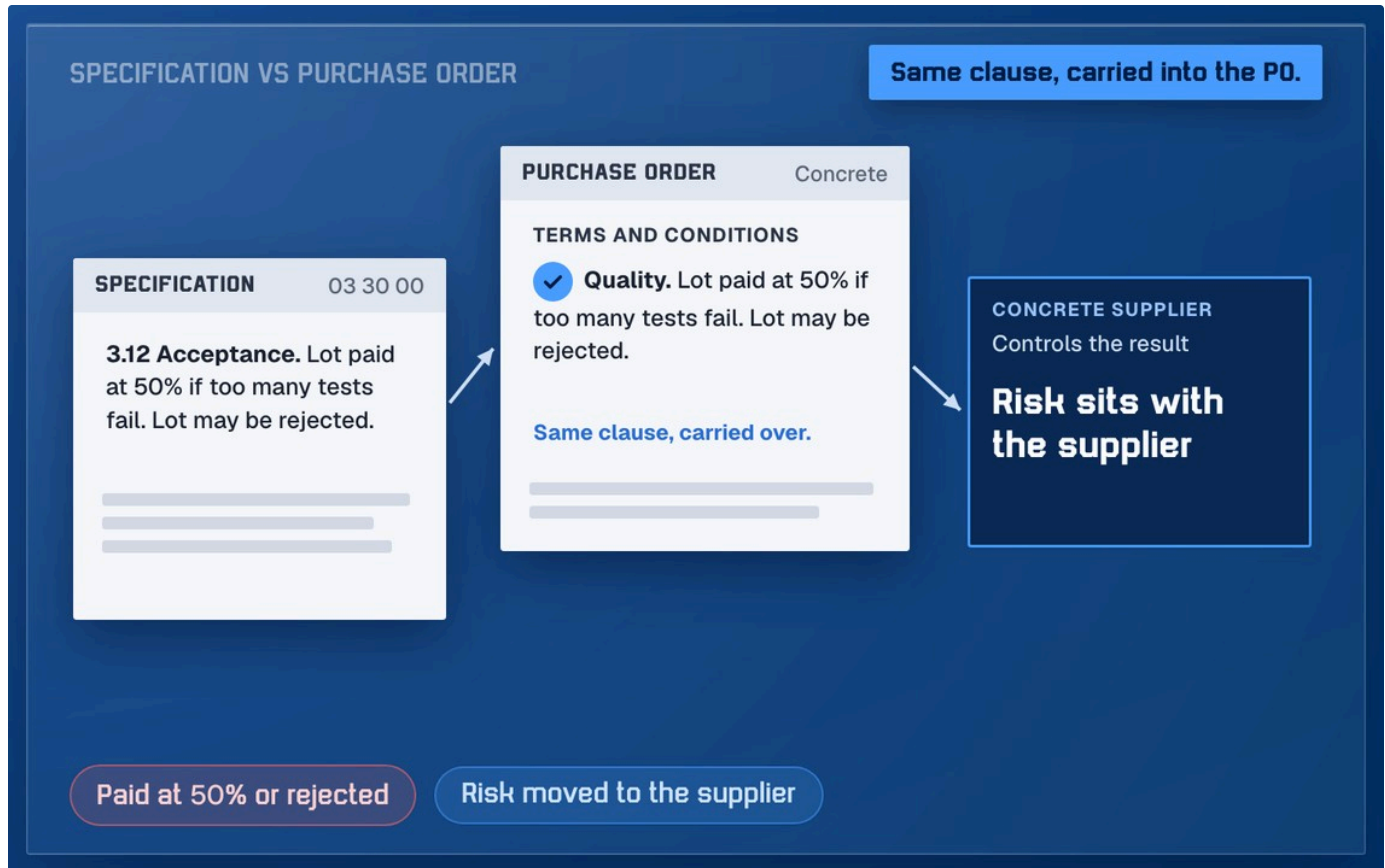
WHEN YOU FIND IT

Settle each exclusion at the table, before signing.

A quality clause that stops at your contract

 WHERE IT HIDES
Specifications vs purchase orders

 OWNER
Buyer, project manager



THE RISK

The owner can cut payment or reject work based on test results. If that clause is not in your purchase order, you carry a risk your supplier controls.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The specification paid a 650-cubic-yard lot at 50% if more than 45% of the test results failed, and let the owner reject the lot outright, which means demolition. The contractor carried the clause into its purchase order, so the risk moved to the supplier who controls the result.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Search the technical specification for payment reductions, rejection and removal tied to tests.
- ☐ Check that each one is in the purchase order, word for word or by reference.
- ☐ Compare the specified warranty and acceptance tests with what the supplier offers.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Flow the clause down into the purchase order before you sign with the supplier.

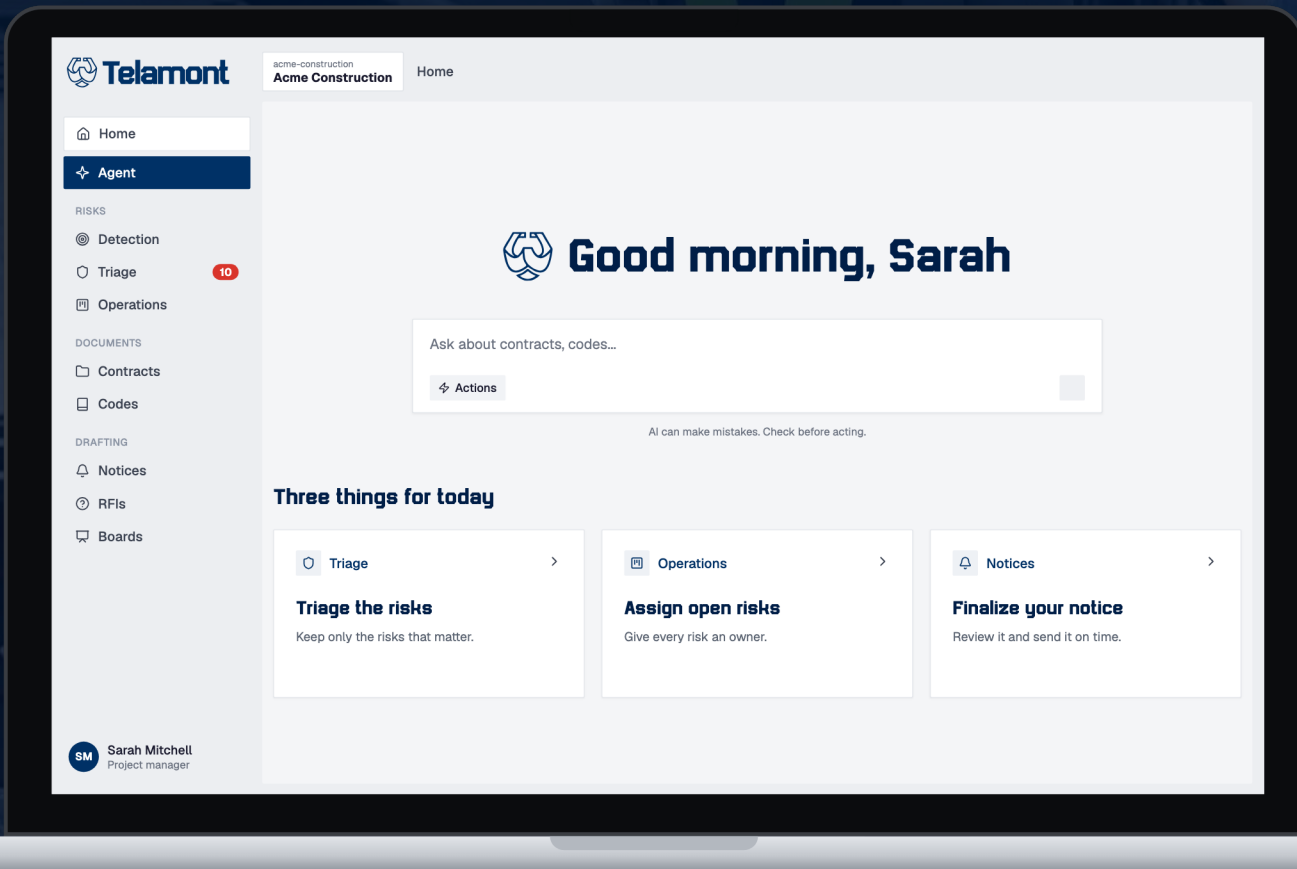
FOR READERS OF THIS GUIDE

Pick a live project, and we run Telamont on it

Walk through what it finds, with the sources. Every conflict in this guide was flagged by Telamont.

Book a call →

telamont.com/book-a-demo





STAGE 3 OF 4

Before work starts

Once the construction set is issued

The construction set is rarely the set you priced, and each discipline drew its own part. These checks find the gaps before the field does.

8

Changes that arrive without an addendum

PRIORITY

9

An element the structure never drew

PRIORITY

10

Elevations that leave water nowhere to go

11

Services that do not fit in the slab

12

A soil requirement missing from the drawings

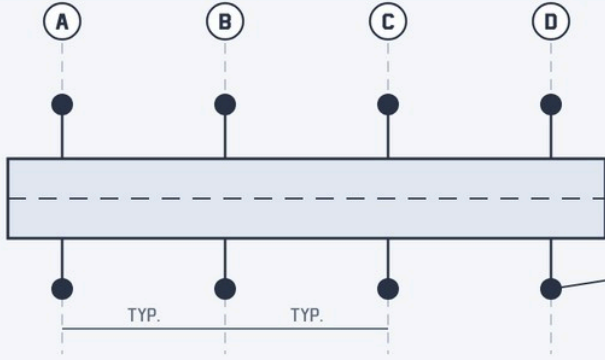
Changes that arrive without an addendum

 **WHERE IT HIDES**
Bid set vs construction set

 **OWNER**
Project manager, estimator

SAME SHEET, TWO ISSUES
One note changed. No addendum.

E-101 OVERLAY



Bid set vs construction set

GENERAL NOTES

NOTE 4

LIGHT POLES:
STANDARD-MODEL

LIGHT POLES:
UPGRADED ORNAMENTAL MODEL

E-101
Sheet

Site lighting
Bid set and construction set overlaid

Rev
0

Same note, different model

About \$450,000

Bid set
 Construction set

THE RISK

One added note can upgrade a product you priced, with no addendum and no revision cloud to flag it. If you miss it and the notice deadline passes, the upgrade is yours to pay for.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The bid priced standard light poles at \$15,000 each. The construction set added one note: forged poles to the transportation department's standard, at \$30,000 each. No addendum, no revision cloud. Notice went out and the extra, \$15,000 on each of 30 poles, about \$450,000, was granted.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Compare each construction sheet with its bid version, including sheets with no revision cloud.
- ☐ Read every note, model, quantity and dimension on each sheet.
- ☐ Log each change with both sheet numbers and the addendum that explains it, if there is one.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Log every change with both sheet references, then send notice as the contract requires.

An element the structure never drew

 **WHERE IT HIDES**
Architectural vs structural drawings

 **OWNER**
Project manager, coordinator



THE RISK

When the architecture shows something the structure does not support, the gap shows up on site, and the added scope falls on whoever finds it last.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The architectural plans showed an elevator and a stair tower. The structural plans had no pit, no slab openings and no reinforcement. The contractor documented the design omission, and about \$400,000 of added scope was billed to the project instead of found mid-construction.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ List every shaft, pit, stair, elevator and slab or roof opening on the architectural plans.
- ☐ Find each one on the structural plans, at every level it crosses.
- ☐ Check equipment pads and walls that shift between levels for loads and transfer elements.

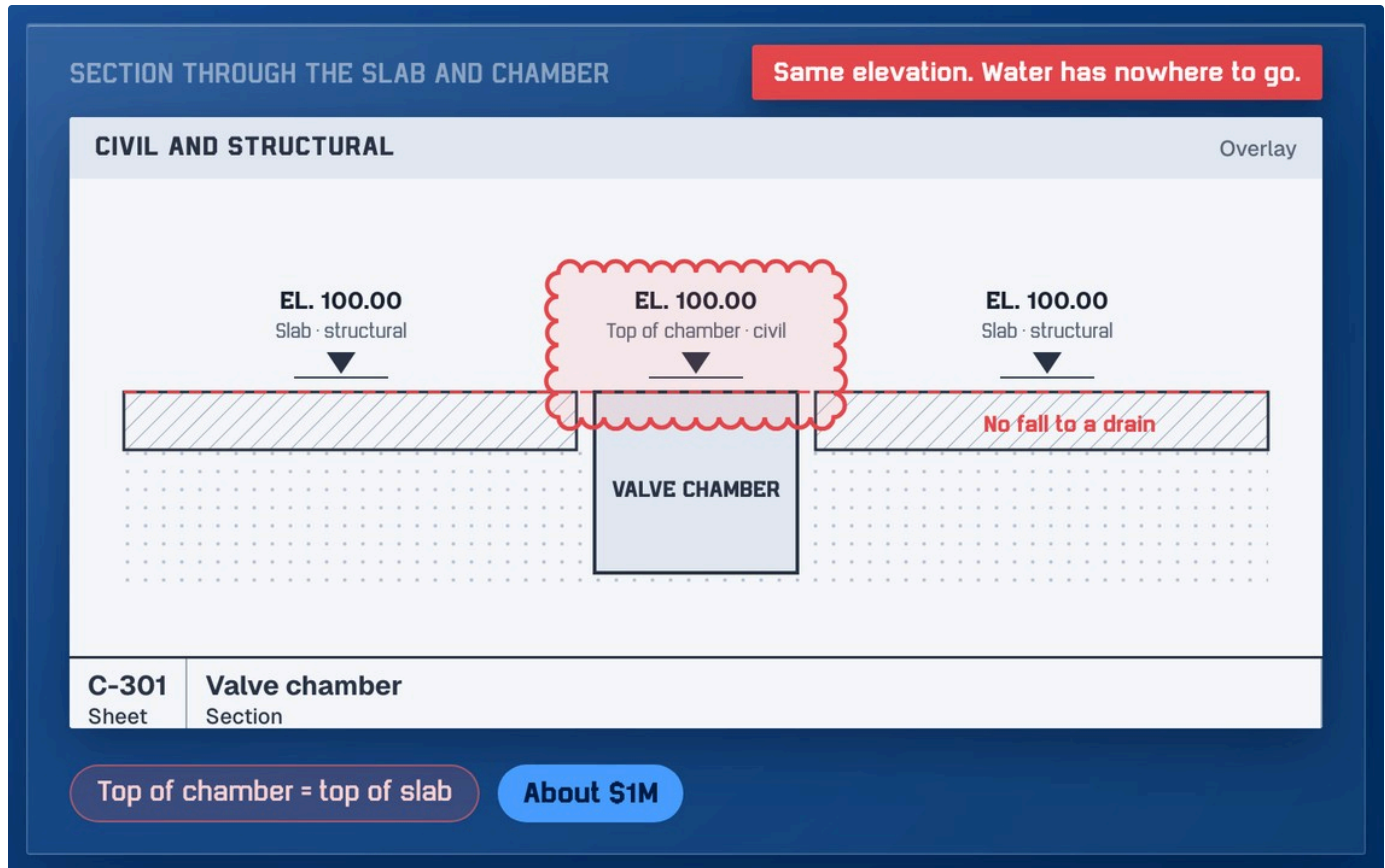
WHEN YOU FIND IT

Document the gap with both sheets and send an RFI before the work starts.

Elevations that leave water nowhere to go

 WHERE IT HIDES
Civil vs structural elevations

 OWNER
Project manager, coordinator



THE RISK

Each drawing looks right on its own. Built as drawn, the water has nowhere to go, and the fix gets much harder once the concrete is poured.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The valve chambers sat at the same elevation as the concrete slabs around them, so water had nowhere to drain. The conflict was documented as a design error, with the sheets to back it, and about \$1M in change orders was paid by the project instead of absorbed.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Mark every low point: chambers, drains, ramps, door thresholds.
- ☐ At each one, compare the civil elevation with the slab and finished grade elevations.
- ☐ Trace where the water goes from there, and confirm the slope runs that way.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Raise it with the design team, with the sheets that show it, before the pour.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts



During construction

Services that do not fit in the slab

 WHERE IT HIDES
Mechanical and electrical vs structural

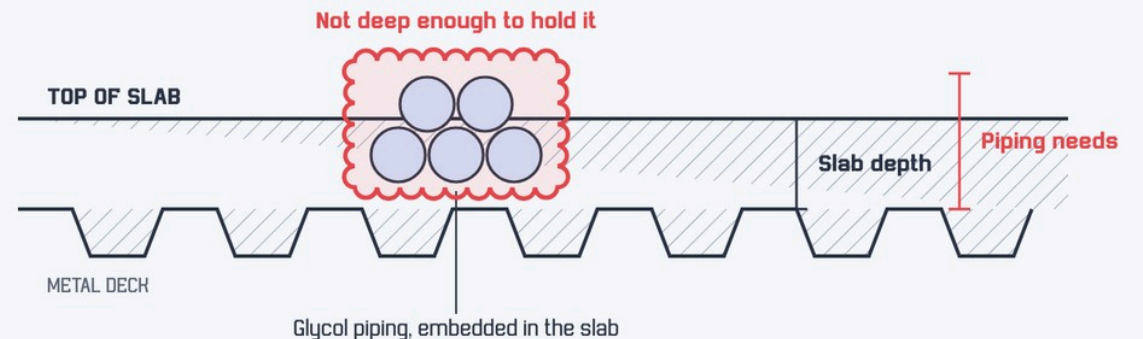
 OWNER
Project manager, coordinator

SECTION THROUGH THE SLAB ON METAL DECK

The piping does not fit in the slab.

MECHANICAL OVER STRUCTURAL

Overlay



S-301
Sheet

Slab on metal deck
Section

Mechanical drawings: piping in slab

Sleeve schedule: none

THE RISK

Piping is drawn through a slab too thin to hold it. Found after the pour, it means coring, slab repair and delay.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The mechanical drawings ran glycol piping through slabs on metal deck. The structural slab was not thick enough to hold it, and no schedule gave the quantity or size of the sleeves. The question went out before the pour: no coring, no slab repair and no delay.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ Find every pipe and conduit embedded in a slab, and compare its size with the slab depth.
- ☐ Ask for a sleeve schedule with quantity, size and location. If none exists, that is your first question.
- ☐ Check penetrations through beams and walls, and the equipment loads the structure must carry.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Send the question before the pour, not after.



Bid



Award and signing

**Before work starts**

During construction

A soil requirement missing from the drawings



WHERE IT HIDES

Geotechnical report vs foundation drawings



OWNER

Project manager, superintendent

REPORT VS DRAWINGS

In the report. Not on the drawings.

GEOTECHNICAL REPORT Recommendations

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3 Replace existing material before heavy equipment travels on it.

FOUNDATION PLAN S-101

No soil requirement shown

Only the report said so **Corrected before excavation**

THE RISK

If a requirement from the report never reaches the drawings or the price, you find it under the equipment, with rework and a dispute.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The geotechnical report required replacing the existing material before any heavy equipment drove on it. The foundation drawings said nothing. One question to the engineer, and a \$25,000 correction was made before the first excavation, instead of rework under the equipment and a dispute.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ List every “must”, “shall”, “before” and “shall not” in the report, including soil replacement, dewatering and equipment access.
- ☐ Find each one in the drawings, the specifications or your estimate.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Ask the engineer to correct the drawings before the first excavation.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts



During construction



STAGE 4 OF 4

During construction

While the project runs

Decisions, submittals and site events keep changing the picture. These checks keep the documents and your claim rights in step.

13 A meeting decision the drawings never got

14 Equipment that cannot do what the system needs

15 A missed notice deadline

PRIORITY

A meeting decision the drawings never got

 **WHERE IT HIDES**
Meeting minutes vs drawings and shop drawings

 **OWNER**
Project manager, superintendent

MINUTES VS RACKING DRAWINGS

Decided in the meeting. Not on the drawing.

MEETING MINUTES		Owner meeting
ITEM	DECISION	ACTION BY
4.1	Schedule review	GC
4.2	Racking: keep the agreed sprinkler clearance. Do not anchor racking to the structure.	Racking supplier
4.3	Finishes	Architect
4.4	Site access	GC

RACKING DRAWINGS R-201

8 in. short of the agreed clearance.

No anchoring restriction.

Owner meeting, minutes

Page 2

8 in. short, no anchoring restriction

THE RISK

The client decides in a meeting, the drawings do not change, and the trade builds what is drawn. Then it comes down and gets built again.

ON A REAL PROJECT

In a meeting, the client set a sprinkler clearance and ruled out anchoring the racking to the structure. The racking drawings came in 8 inches short of that clearance, with no anchoring restriction. Both gaps were caught before installation: no racking levels to take down, no failed sprinkler inspection.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ List every client decision in the minutes that changes a dimension, a clearance or a method.
- ☐ For each one, name the drawing or shop drawing that must change, and check that it did.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Hold the shop drawing until the decision appears on it.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts



During construction

Equipment that cannot do what the system needs

 **WHERE IT HIDES**
Equipment submittals vs the system specified

 **OWNER**
Project manager, mechanical coordinator

SPECIFICATION VS EQUIPMENT SCHEDULE

Designed for it. Scheduled without it.

EQUIPMENT SCHEDULE

TAG	EQUIPMENT	CAPACITY
P-1	Pump	On file
HP-1	Heat pump	On file
P-2	Pump	On file

HP-1 · HEAT PUMP

HEAT RECOVERY

None

SPECIFICATION

23 21 13 · 2.3

≠

Glycol loop designed for heat recovery.

Equipment schedule

M-601

Same system, two different requirements

THE RISK

A unit can match its schedule line and still miss what the system is designed for. Once installed, it never does the job.

ON A REAL PROJECT

The glycol loop was designed for heat recovery, but the heat pump in the equipment schedule had none. The mismatch was flagged, the notice went out and the extra was claimed, instead of installing equipment that would never do the job.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ List what the system design depends on, such as heat recovery, from the specification and the sequence of operations.
- ☐ Check each submitted unit against that list, then its capacity, voltage and connections.
- ☐ Confirm the same model and options appear in the specification, the schedule and the submittal.

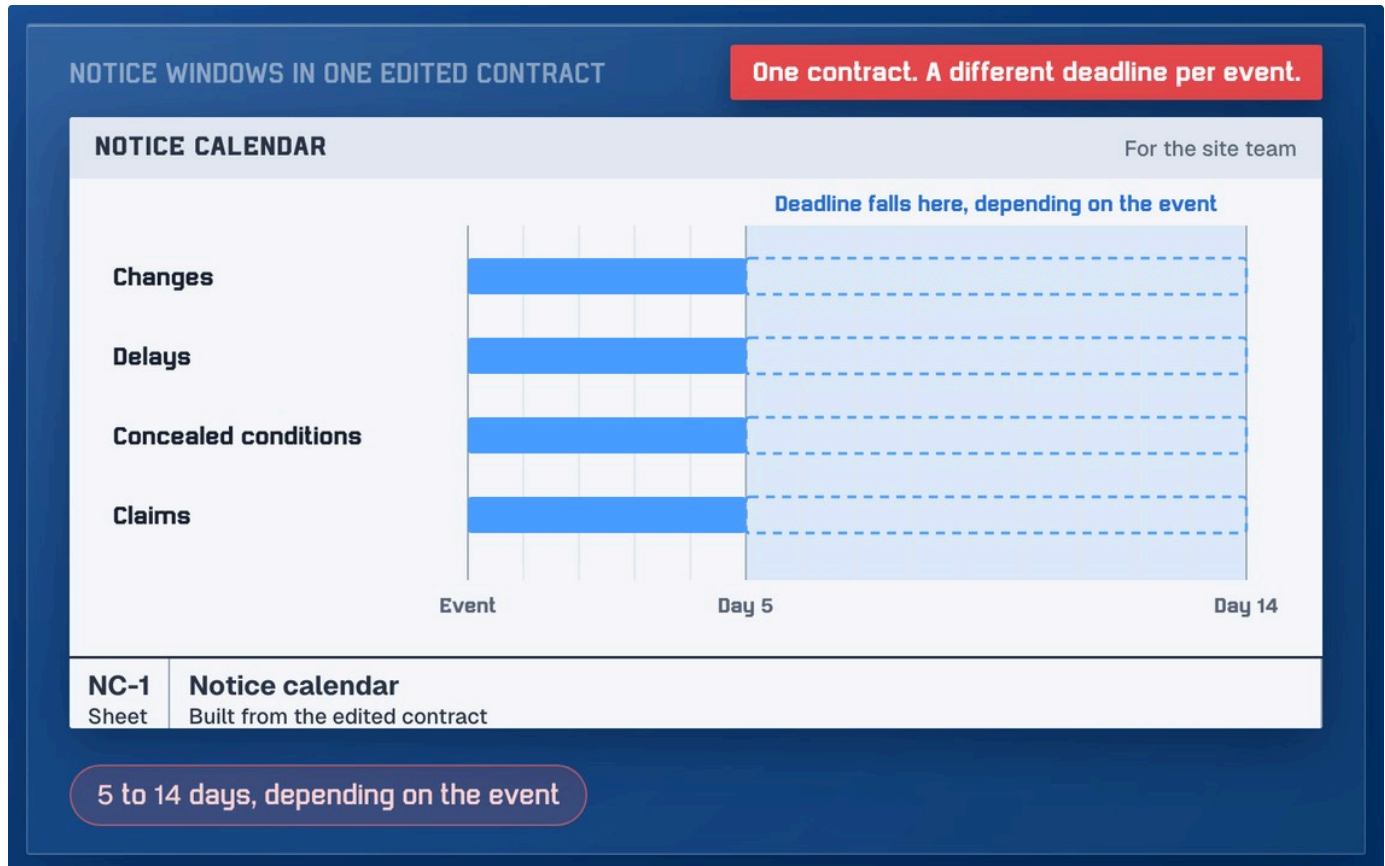
WHEN YOU FIND IT

Send notice as the contract requires, before ordering, not after installing.

A missed notice deadline

 **WHERE IT HIDES**
Contract notice clauses vs site events

 **OWNER**
Project manager, contract administrator



THE RISK

Notice periods vary by event and by contract.
Miss one, and a valid claim can be refused.

ON A REAL PROJECT

A standard-form contract edited by hand set notice periods from 5 to 14 days, depending on the event. The team built a notice calendar with every event type, its deadline and its recipient. Every site event got its notice on time, and the claims stayed admissible.

HOW TO CHECK IT

- ☐ List every event that needs notice: changes, delays, concealed conditions, claims.
- ☐ For each one, note the deadline from the edited contract, the recipient and the required form.

WHEN YOU FIND IT

Build a notice calendar before mobilization and give it to the site team.



Bid



Award and signing



Before work starts



During construction

SCORE YOUR TEAM

How many of the 15 does your team run on every project?

Go back to the [matrix on page 4](#) and check the ones you run every time, not the ones you run when someone remembers.

0 to 5

Most conflicts on your projects are found in the field, if at all. Start with the priority five.

6 to 10

Your team catches the usual ones. The gaps are in the checks that take the longest by hand.

11 to 15

Your review is thorough. The question is how many days it takes on every project.

Start on Monday, on the project you have now

1

Pick one live project

Print the matrix and circle the stage that project is in.

2

Give every check an owner

One name and one date per check. A check without an owner does not get run.

3

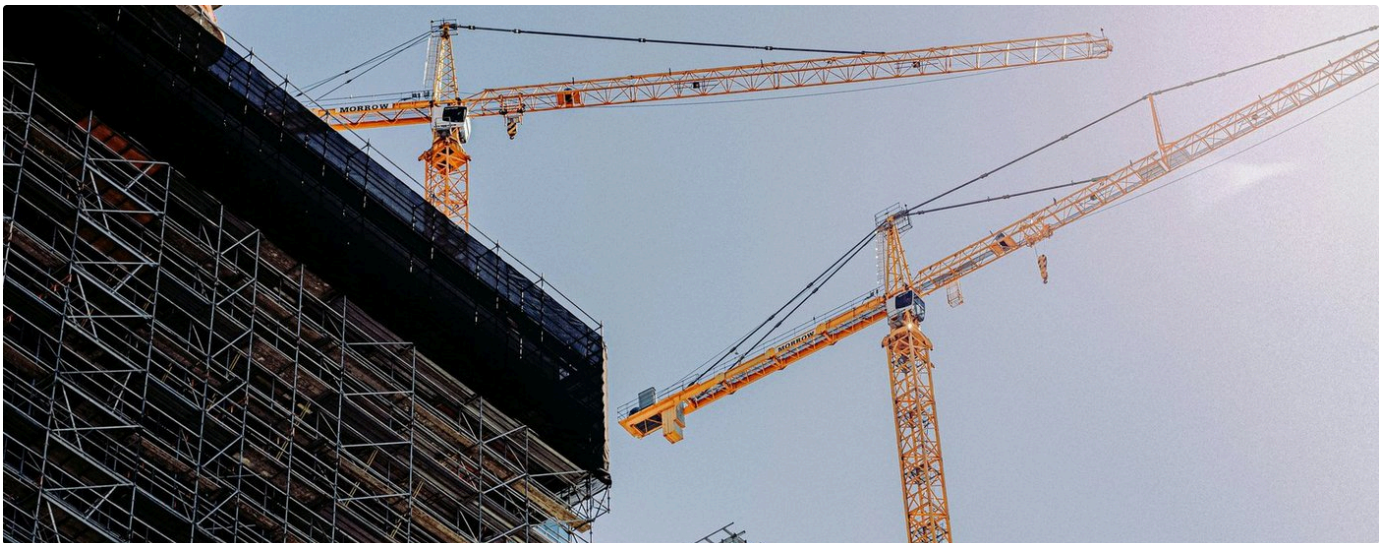
Log what you find

Write down every conflict with both document references. That log is the start of your notices and change orders.



Telamont runs these cross-checks for you, across the whole project

Telamont flagged every conflict in this guide. It is an AI platform for general contractors that compares project documents and shows where they disagree. By hand, these checks can take days.



Compares, not just reads

Contracts, specifications, drawings, reports and minutes, checked against each other across the full project.



Every finding sourced

Each conflict links to the exact place in each document, so your team can verify it in seconds.



From bid to construction

At bid, at award, before work starts and during construction, on the same project.



Your data stays yours

Zero retention at AI model providers. Your documents are never used to train models.

See Telamont catch risks on a full project

In a 30-minute demo, we show you how Telamont compares a complete set of project documents, what a finding looks like with its sources, and how teams use it from bid to construction.

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+1 418-905-0520