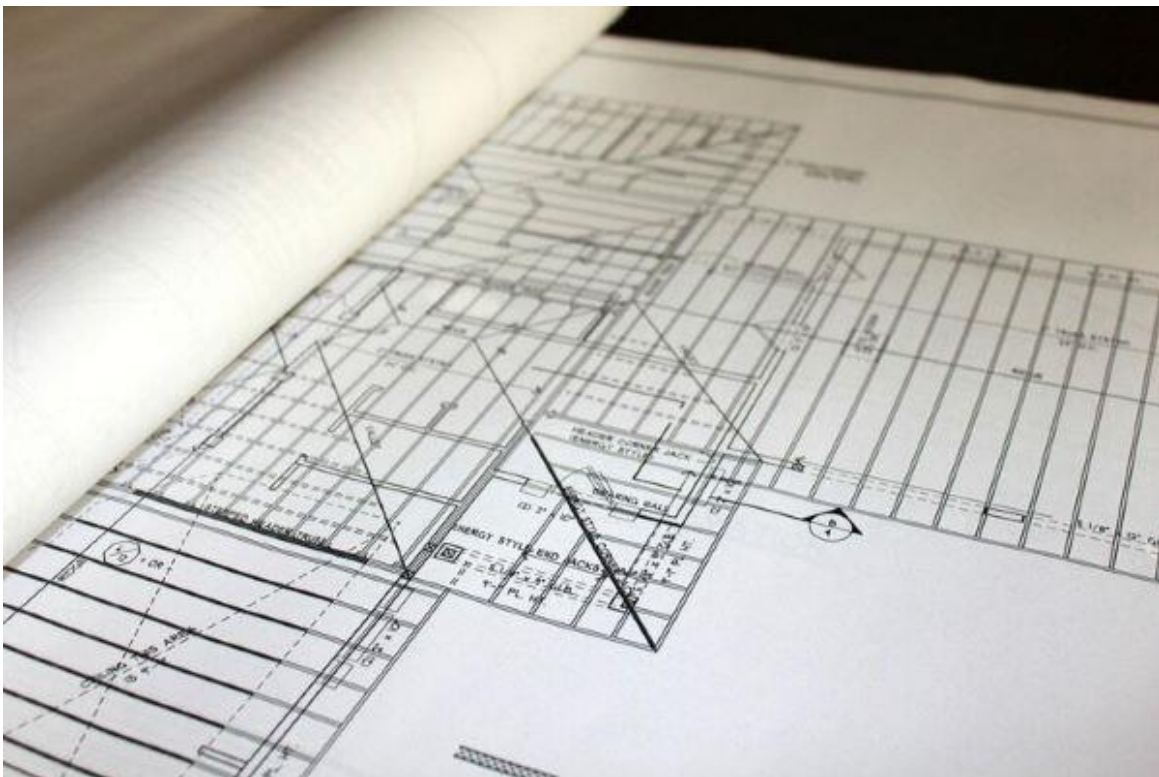




**What information do we need to give you the most accurate estimate?**



**By Bill Abel, PE**  
Preconstruction/Estimator

As the process of bidding a project continues to evolve, we no longer get full sets of drawings

delivered to our office, but rather an electronic set of the latest drawings. These drawings are also usually a work in progress. The customer is looking for a price much earlier in the process than in years past.

Since we are getting these drawings earlier in the process, we sometimes are missing some critical information. With the electronic drawings we typically receive, we are usually able to put a price together even with only basic dimensions. With even just a few dimensions on the document, we can use Bluebeam to scale the drawings and get the dimensions of the areas that we need to price.

In order to completely understand what the architect is trying to achieve, we need not only dimensions, but also building cross sections. Since we are looking at so many unique projects with sloped sites, balconies, mezzanines, etc., we are able to better understand the overall design concept of the building when we have these cross sections.

For load-bearing podium projects, we have the ability to make assumptions about the loading but having the actual loading will ensure that we are using the proper-sized products. The loading demands being put on the precast continues to increase, so making sure we are aware of any design issues that may result in the need to increased product sizes is critical. The increased product sizes will not only have a major impact on the cost, but it may also affect the head height, parking spaces, etc.

When it comes to [wall panels](#), there are several unique items that we require to provide an accurate estimate. Since the appearance of the wall panels can be one of the biggest items determining the price, the desired exterior (painted, sandblasted, form liner, etc.) and interior (float or steel trowel) finishes are critical for an accurate estimate. Does the finish require special cement, pigment, or aggregate? What is the required R-value? Are the panels load-bearing? A 12-foot wide panel is the most efficient size panel for us, so can we adjust the panel layout to be most efficient?

The more information we receive the more accurate we can be, but by providing the above information we will have the best chance at providing an accurate price.

Interested in learning more about how precast concrete can benefit your next project?

[Contact us](#) today!

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## When should I order my precast?



What's your lead time? Seems like a simple question, but there are quite a few details that go into it.

Precast concrete is known for the speed at which it can be erected, but do you know when to order your precast concrete products to ensure you have them for your just in time delivery? At Mid-States Concrete Industries, our goal is to keep our customers' projects on-time, on-budget, and on-target. Getting Mid-States Concrete involved early on in the design process can help you do just that.

During the design phase, it is important to keep in contact with our Preconstruction team to keep updated on lead times. When discussing a potential project, the best we can provide is the current lead time at that moment. Internally, that means our team communicates daily about projects, openings in the production schedule, and what projects we anticipate we'll be awarded in both the short-term and long-term that would impact the production schedule.

When it comes to ordering your precast, it is important that the structural design of the building is determined first. It is helpful to know which precast products will be needed on your project, so we can help narrow down lead times by specific product. Production time varies from product to product, depending on the projects we are working on at that time.

While we are generally able to refer to our typical lead times on our [beam](#), [column](#), and [hollowcore](#) product lines, our [wall panels](#) schedule generally have longer lead times than beams, columns, or hollowcore due to the more involved manufacturing process.

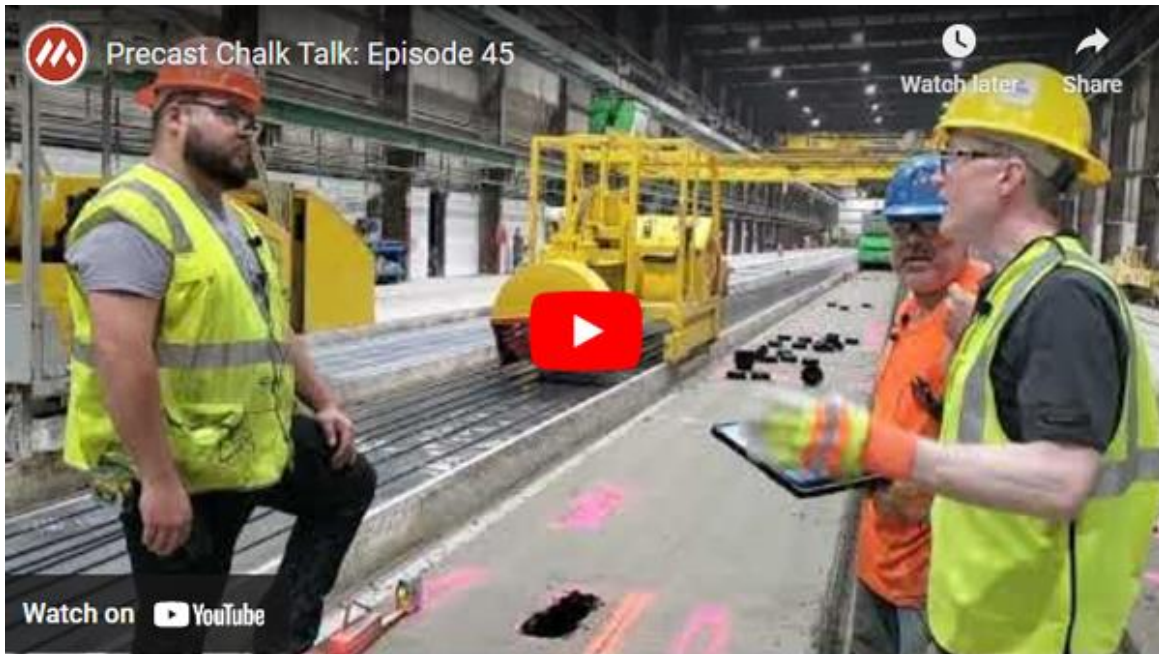
Since many of our customers have used precast before, the importance of getting a spot in the schedule is something they are relatively familiar with. Mid-States Concrete will only hold production space for a customer once we have been awarded a project. Again, when Mid-States Concrete is brought on to a project early, we are able to track lead times and are able to keep our customers updated on what the production schedule looks like if they were to award us a contract at that time, versus two weeks from then (as an example).

Knowing the construction industry is fluid, to ensure you have Mid-States Concrete precast around your desired delivery dates, we encourage an open line of communication leading up to the awarding of the project. To learn how we can help you with your next project, [contact us](#) today.

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## Precast Chalk Talk: Episode 45



In this episode of Precast Chalk Talk, President Hagen Harker talks with members of our Hollowcore team and QC team about how we are incorporating the use of tablets in our QC department.

[Watch now >>](#)

Questions? Comments? Ideas for a future episode? [Email us >>](#)

[Find every episode of Precast Chalk Talk here >>](#)

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## About Mid-States Concrete Industries

Since 1946, we have produced structural and architectural precast concrete systems that provide our partners with high quality building materials with sustaining performance.

The biggest part of our story is you - our clients. For more than 75 years, you have trusted us to help with your projects. Each project offers its own unique goals and opportunities. We partner with you to find the right solutions for your project.

[Learn more >>](#)

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