

Triage for RFIs in Construction Project Management



This blog post is part of a series on applying a triage system to different aspects of construction project management. Today's post touches on triage for RFIs. Nowadays, an RFI is one of the most fundamental processes/tools for effective construction management across all project sizes and types.

Every RFI is basically a question to another project stakeholder asking for more information, clarifications, additional details, or anything else that is not clear in any other document (Design Drawing, Specifications, Standards, Contract, etc.). [1]

As with any project, delays and miscommunications can occur, hindering the completion of critical activities and milestones. In any one project, there may be many RFIs that could halt or prevent certain activities. Therefore, having a triage system in place to prioritize and better monitor these referrals makes sense.

What is the intent of triage?

- A. Rapidly identify patients with urgent, life-threatening conditions
- B. Determine the most appropriate treatment area for patients
- C. Decrease congestion in the Emergency Department
- D. Provide ongoing assessment of patients
- E. Provide information to families regarding expected treatment and waiting times
- F. Provide information that helps define departmental acuity

By changing a few words, we create the intent of triage for RFIs.

- G. Rapidly identify RFIs for the urgency of time and importance to project safety and/or quality
 - a. Create a color code for consistent communications of priority easily understood by all stakeholders of the project
- H. Determine the most appropriate stakeholder/person to receive the RFI
- I. Decrease congestion of communications or delays in project execution
- J. Provide tracking of RFI's status:
 - b. submitted
 - c. in consideration
 - d. returned with information
 - e. review of new information
 - f. approved, rejected, and/or further RFI needed

- K. Provide information to relevant stakeholders on RFI's content and status
- L. Provide information to update the schedule and for communications through current progress reports to key decision makers

The triage process does not have to be complex. In fact, the simpler the better. If it is consistently used and easily understood by all project stakeholders, RFIs should receive the necessary attention, and the RFI process should be much smoother than without a process.

We appreciate all comments, likes, and shares!

References:

[1] QualityinConstruction Team; "The Importance of RFI's." October 6, 2015, Quality in Construction <http://www.qualityinconstruction.com/the-importance-of-rfis/>