# Fast Track Estimating Software

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# Fast Track Estimating Overview

The Fast Track Estimating system provides a fast, easy way to produce an accurate estimate and material purchase list.

## The Cost Database

The key to accurate unit cost estimating is creating assemblies with all the labor, materials, sub-contract and other costs necessary to build one of that assembly. Once these assemblies are created, the estimating process is a matter of selecting the assemblies necessary for the job and the software does the arithmetic.

The most difficult task is creating those assemblies. Construction Programs & Results has largely eliminated this time consuming process by including a comprehensive database, designed specifically for residential contractors which, because of its unique database design, is easy to keep current. It is also very easy to add assemblies as needed.

To create accurate assemblies, we have four cost databases. They are:

- Labor Rate Table
- Material Cost Table
- Assemblies
- Bills of Material

***Labor Rate Table***: The Labor Rate Table is a list of labor categories and associated hourly rates. For example, finish carpentry at $35.00 per hour or clerical at $12.00 per hour. These hourly rates are easily updated to reflect rates for your area. It is also extremely easy to add new labor categories as needed.

***Material Cost Table***: The Material Cost Table lists items commonly used in residential construction. These material items are purchased in units of measure such as sheet or roll but are frequently used in units of measure such as square feet or lineal feet. Therefore, two costs are kept, Purchase Cost (or Price) and Estimating Cost. We have provided a purchase cost, but you need to make sure this cost is current and accurate for your area. The Estimating Cost is calculated, using a Conversion Factor (explained later).

***Assemblies***: The Assemblies are items which describe tasks or assemblies that are the components of the job. An example of line items in this file would be:

| ***Assembly Item*** | ***Unit of Measure*** |
|---|---|
| 2" x 4" x 8' exterior load-bearing wall | Lineal Feet |
| Building Permit | Each |
| Tear out 4" concrete slab floor, w/o rebar, haul away | Square Feet |

The Assembly Unit of Measure is the unit of measure actually used in the estimating process and all costs are based on it. Four costs are associated with each Assembly item: Labor, Materials, Subcontract and Other. The assembly items are arranged in sections like "Demolition", "Framing", by using Section Headers.

***Bills of Material***: The Bills of Material are actually included in the Assembly database. The Bill of Material for each assembly names the materials needed for that assembly. For example, in our Exterior load bearing wall, the Bills of Material consists of:

| ***Material Used*** | ***Purchase Unit of Measure*** | ***Estimating Unit of Measure*** |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1" x 2" S&B, fir, 8' | Piece | Lineal Feet |
| 4" x 8" S&B, fir, 8' | Piece | Lineal Feet |
| 1/2" x 4' x 8' plywood, CDX | Sheet | Square Feet |
| 3 1/2" R-11 kraft faced batts (50 SF roll) | Roll | Square Feet |
| 16d green vinyl coated nails | Lb | Lb |
| 6d casing nails, bright | Lb | Lb |
| 2" x 4" S&B, fir, 12' | Piece | Lineal Feet |

## The Estimating Process

With the databases in place, the estimating process can begin. Estimating in the Fast Track Estimating software requires entering basic information about the estimate, including name and address, plus markup, tax and add-on charge information. Then, on a room by room or area by area basis, you select items from the assembly database to include. As each item is selected, the Quantity is entered so the computer can compute the estimated costs and the marked up prices.

When assemblies are added to an estimate, the standard cost (for material, labor, subcontractor and other costs) and markup level is assumed. However, each item can be adjusted if desired to reflect a non-standard cost and markup level.

There are also two tables that must be kept current for the estimating process.

***Markups***: The Markup factor is added to the job cost estimate to cover the overhead and profit needs of your business. The Markup factor is kept in a separate table. (To calculate your markup, you can use the Markup Calculator software, available separately, or read the book "Markup & Profit: A Contractor's Guide" by Michael Stone.) The Fast Track Estimating software allows up to five different markup factors for each cost component (Labor, Materials, Sub-Contractor Cost, Other Costs). While we recommend using the same markup for all cost components, the software is flexible to meet your specific needs.

***Tax Tables***: Taxes are also kept in a separate table of Taxing Districts or Authorities. When you create an estimate, you can name the applicable tax district which will "point to" the appropriate tax rates. Taxes are computed on the marked up estimates, after add-ons are applied.

## Reports

Estimate reports are broken into two categories -- Estimate Information and Client Information. All reports will appear on for preview prior to printing.

### *Estimate Information*

Reports available under the Estimate Information show cost information. (The Full Detail report also shows price information.) The Estimate Info reports are:

Full Detail --
Individual cost and price detail for each item on the estimate, including Labor, Material, Sub-contract and Other costs. Labor detail and Bill of Material detail is also included.

Estimate by Detail --
Cost detail for each item on the estimate, broken down by Labor, Material, Sub-contract and Other costs. These reports are available in two groupings: by estimate Room/Area, or by Work Type (Section Header). A cost by square foot calculation is included.

Estimate Summary --

For each item, quantity and total cost is printed. This report is also available grouped by estimate Room/Area or grouped by Work Type (Section Header).

Summary, Total Only --
Total cost by Work Type (Section Header).

Material Purchase Lists --
List of materials to purchase, available in three levels of detail. These reports are provided for use in the field. These Material lists break down the material components of the job and lump like materials together for purchase. Quantities are rounded up to purchase units of measure if desired (i.e., sheets of plywood or squares of roofing).

Labor Reports --
Labor requirements for this estimate, available in two levels of detail.

***Client Information***

Reports available under the Client Information show price information only. These reports are available in two groupings: by estimate Room/Area, or by Work Type. Each format has four levels of detail: Detailed, Summary, Totals Only or Totals only with Quantity.

## Flexibility

The Fast Track Estimating System was designed for maximum flexibility. We have included a material and assembly database for residential contractors, with limited coverage in specialty fields (drywall, roofing, plumbing, electrical, demolition, concrete, masonry, framing, windows/doors, sheet metal, HVAC, cabinetry). For specialty contractors, it is easy to build upon this limited coverage, adding the material and assembly items necessary to meet the needs of your business.

# Assembly List

The Assembly list contains the actual descriptions of work to be done.

Items are ordered by Section Header. Section Headers are organized in the order a job generally progresses, for example, Permits, then Excavation, Concrete, Framing, Roofing, Doors, Windows, Siding, Mechanical (Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC), Drywall, Floor Covering, Lighting, Painting and Clean-up. This order makes it easier to build your estimate - simply move down the list as you walk through the steps of the job.

The table shows the Section Header, Assembly Item Number and Description. Use the "Go To" to jump to a specific Section, or "Search For" to find a specific phrase.

## Menu Commands

**Edit** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the assembly detail area.)

***Add New Assembly***
Add a new Assembly item.

***Edit Assembly***
Edit the selected Assembly item or see additional detail.

***Delete Assembly***
Delete the selected Assembly item. Be aware that if you delete an Assembly item that has been used in estimates, that Assembly item will remain in the estimate and costs/prices for that Assembly will be included in the Price Quotation. But Material and Labor information will no longer be available for reports and standard costs cannot be updated. We recommend making sure an assembly is not used in any current estimate before deleting that assembly.

***Clone Assembly***
Clone the selected Assembly item. Cloning makes an exact copy of the selected item. You will need to assign the Section Header and a new Assembly Item Number to it, then make changes as desired. Cloning is the easiest way to add a number of similar assemblies to the database.

**Show Detail**

When you highlight an assembly, you can review the cost detail for that assembly by using Show Detail on the menu. There are four cost categories for each assembly - Material Cost (which is the sum of the cost of all Bill of Material items for that assembly), Labor Cost (the hours required for that assembly times the hourly rate), Sub Cost (Sub-Contract cost for that assembly) and Other Cost (any miscellaneous cost that might be incurred for that assembly). In addition, Labor Detail is provided - the number of hours, the hourly rate, and the applicable labor category. This box can be moved around the screen with the mouse if necessary. Close the box by using Hide Detail on the menu.

**Maintenance**

The Maintenance menu provides the ability to resequence the Assembly database, adjust Sub costs or adjust Other costs.

It is possible to resequence (or re-number) portions or all of the database. This is especially helpful when adding items to the database by creating open space in the numbering scheme to allow room for additional assemblies in the order desired. You can renumber Assembly items by as few as 5

(i.e., each assembly item will be an increment of 5), or by as much as 20 (i.e., if there are 3 assembly items in a Section, their Assembly Item Numbers will be 20, 40, and 60). When resequencing, existing estimates will automatically be updated using the new assembly item numbers.

A message box will appear suggesting the database be optimized after resequencing assemblies. Database Optimization is available from the main Fast Track Estimating screen, using the Maintenance menu command.

Costs for both Subs and Other items can be increased (or decreased) by Section (or for the entire database) using the Adjust Sub Costs or Adjust Other Costs function. Select the sections to update and provide the percent change.

**Print**

A printed report, showing all detail for the Assembly List is available under Print. Specific Sections can be printed, or the entire Assembly List. The report will be previewed on the screen prior to printing.

# Assembly Details

All addition and edits to an Assembly Item are done on the Assembly Details Page.

In order, the following fields appear:

***Section Header***. The Section Header for this assembly. If adding a new Assembly Item, the caption will read "Select Section", with a dropdown list to select from (only Section Headers with a code of "A" for Assemblies or "B" for both will appear).

***Assembly Item Number***. The Assembly Item Number assigned to this assembly. Each Assembly has a unique Section Header and Assembly Item Number combination. When adding a new Assembly, if you input a Assembly Item Number that is already in use for that Section, you will be told that the number is in use and a different number must be selected. The Assembly Item number must be numeric with no decimals, 7 digits or less.

***Description***. A free-form description of this assembly, maximum 70 characters. This description will appear on the Estimate, but can be edited for each estimate if desired.

***Assembly Unit of Measure***. The Unit of Measure used at the Estimate level for this Assembly. If the Assembly is to install decking materials, the assembly unit of measure will likely be SF (Square Feet). If the Assembly is for windows, the assembly unit of measure will likely be EA (each). If the Assembly is to build an wall, the assembly unit of measure will likely be LF (lineal feet).

***Low Quantity / High Quantity***. The Low quantity and High quantity fields are used as a check when building an estimate. Input the lowest quantity usually expected for an item (i.e., a window assembly would have a low quantity of 1), and the highest quantity usually expected for an item (i.e., a window assembly might have a high quantity of 9).

When assemblies are added to an estimate, the quantity is checked against the Low / High Quantity in the Assembly List. If the quantity is outside this range, a warning will appear that the quantity is outside the normal range and ask if the quantity is correct. If it is correct, say yes, this is only a warning intended to prevent input errors when building an estimate.

***Labor Category***. If labor is added to this assembly item, a labor category must be specified. These labor categories come directly from the Labor table. If you wish to change the labor category specified, use the "Choose New Labor Category" selection. If you wish to delete the labor from this assembly item, use the "Delete Labor" selection. When adding a new assembly item, use the dropdown box to select the category. (This field is optional.)

***Labor Hours***. Add the applicable labor hours to complete one Assembly Unit of Measure for this assembly item. If the assembly item is an exterior wall with the unit of measure of LF (lineal feet), the assembly time might be .75 hours for each Lineal Foot. (This field is optional.)

***Sub-Contractor Cost***. If applicable, add the expected sub-contractor cost for one Assembly Unit of Measure of this assembly item. (This field is optional.)

***Other Cost***. The Other Cost field is designed to catch any miscellaneous costs you might wish to attach to this assembly. It is seldom used, but available if needed. (This field is optional.)

***Bill of Material Table***. The materials necessary to build one Assembly Unit of Measure of this assembly item will appear in this table. To add, edit, or delete a Material Item, use the Bill of Material menu command at the top, or use the right mouse click. (This field is optional.)

## Menu Commands

**Bill of Material Items** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the bill of material area.)

***Add New***
Add Material Items to this Assembly Item.

***Edit Selected Item***
The Edit command will allow you to change quantities only. If you wish to use a different material, use the "Add New" to add the new material, and "Delete Selected Item" to delete the existing Material Item.

***Delete Selected Item***
Delete the selected item.

**Save Record**
Save changes to this Assembly Item. If changes have been made but have not been saved, you will be prompted to save changes before closing this Assembly Item.

# Add or Edit Material to an Assembly

## Add New Material

Select a Material Item from the list at the left. If you know the Section Header, type it in the box at the top and the list will jump to that Section. If you know part of the description, type it in the "Search" box at the bottom to jump to that item.

Double-click the Material item - that will add the details to the table on the right. Input the quantity desired, and select the Save Record button (or use the Edit, Save Record menu commands at the top).

After adding this material item to the estimate, you have the option of adding another material item (New Record button), or close to return to the Assembly Details page.

## Edit Material

Edit the quantity of the selected material item, choose the Save Changes button, then close.

# Material List

The Material list contains the material items on file. It is a key part of the costing system and accuracy is important.

Items are ordered by Section Header. Section Headers are organized in the order a job generally progresses, for example Permits, then Excavation, Concrete, Framing, Roofing, Doors, Windows, Siding, Mechanical (Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC), Drywall, Floor Covering, Lighting, Painting and Clean-up. Material items are listed in the Section Header where they are most commonly used - for example, lumber is listed in Section 61, Subs and Materials, a sub-set of Section 60, Framing.

The table shows the Section Header, Material Item Number and Description. Use the "Go To" to jump to a specific Section, or "Search For" to find a specific phrase.

## Menu Commands

**Edit** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the material detail area.)

***Add Material Item***
Add a new Material item.

***Edit Material Item***
Edit the selected material item.

***Delete Material Item***
Delete the selected Material item. You will not be allowed to delete a Material item that is used in any Assembly Items. A list of the Assembly Items using that Material Item will be provided, giving you the option to delete the material individually from each Assembly prior to deleting the material from the database. It is also possible to print a list of Assembly Items using a particular material - simply select the material with the cursor, then go to Print, Material Use List.

***Clone Material Item***
Clone the selected Material item. Cloning makes an exact copy of the selected item. You will need to assign the Section Header and a new Material Item Number to it, then make changes as desired. Cloning is the easiest way to add a number of similar materials to the database.

**Show Detail**

When you highlight a Material Item, you can review the cost detail for that material by using Show Detail on the menu. With Show Detail, a box will appear, showing the Purchase Price, the Purchase Unit of Measure, Estimate Unit of Measure, Conversion Multiplier, Cost per Estimating Unit of Measure (a calculated field), whether or not this material should be rounded in report for each estimate, and the date of last cost update. This box can be moved around the screen. Close the box by using **Hide Detail** on the menu.

**Maintenance**

The Maintenance menu provides the ability to resequence the Material database or adjust Material costs.

***Resequence Material***. It is possible to resequence (or re-number) portions or all of the database. This is especially helpful when adding items to the database by creating open space in the numbering scheme to allow room for additional material in the order desired. You can renumber Material items by as few as 5 (i.e., each material item will be an increment of 5), or by as much as 20 (i.e., if there

are 3 material items in a Section, their Material Item Numbers will be 20, 40, and 60).

A message box will appear suggesting the database be optimized after resequencing. Database Optimization is available from the main Fast Track Estimating screen, using the **Maintenance** menu command.

***Adjust Material Cost***. Material Cost can be increased (or decreased) by Section (or for the entire database) using the Adjust Material Cost function. Select the sections to update and provide the percent change.

**Print**

Two reports are available. Both reports are previewed first - you can choose to print them after preview if desired.

***Print Material List***. Print Material List will preview a report showing all detail for the Material List. Specific sections can be printed, or the entire Material List.

***Material Use List***. First select a material item. This command will provide a report showing all assemblies using that material item.

This report is valuable if you want to delete a material item, or if you want to change the Estimating Unit of Measure. For example, if you are changing the Estimate Unit of Measure from LF (lineal feet) to SF (square feet), the quantity of this material item used in assemblies might change, and those assemblies will need to be updated.

# Material Items Detail

All additions and edits to an Material Item are done on the Material Items Detail Page.

In order, the following fields appear (all fields are required):

***Section Header***. The Section Header this material belongs to. If adding a new Material Item, the caption will read "Select", with a dropdown list to select from (only Section Headers with a code of "M" for Materials or "B" for both will appear).

***Material Item Number***. The Material Item Number assigned to this material. Each Material has a unique Section Header and Material Item Number combination. When adding a new Material, if you input a Material Item Number that is already in use, you will be told that number is in use and a different number must be selected. The Material Item number must be numeric with no decimals, and less than 9,999,999.

***Description***. A free-form description of this material, maximum 65 characters.

***Purchase Unit of Measure***. The Unit of Measure used to purchase this material. For additional details, see Purchase Unit of Measure.

***Estimate Unit of Measure***. The Unit of Measure used by this material in assemblies. For additional details, see Estimating Unit of Measure.

***Conversion Multiplier***. The multiplier (factor) used to convert the Purchase Unit of Measure to the Estimate Unit of Measure. For details, see Conversion Factor.

***Purchase Price***. The price paid for each Unit of Measure of this material. When the Purchase Price is updated, the Date of Last Price Update field will automatically change to the current date.

***TIP***: The best way to keep purchase prices current and accurate is to periodically review material invoices. Review each invoice and compare the given price with the purchase price in your Material List. If the invoice price is higher, then update your Material List. If the invoice price is lower, leave it as is. This provides confidence that the prices generated for each estimate will cover your cost.

***Cost per Estimate UOM***. This is a calculated field. It is generated by multiplying the Purchase Price by the Conversion Multiplier.

***Round?***. When this material is used in an estimate, a Material Purchase Report is available, detailing the quantity of each material to be purchased. If this field says "Y", the Material Purchase Report will round that material to the next Purchase Unit of Measure. If it says "N", it won't.

For example: blanket insulation. This insulation is purchased by the roll, but is used by the square foot in each assembly. If this field is set to "Y" and a roll has 50 square feet but the estimate only uses 6 square feet, the Material Purchase Report will say to purchase 1 roll. If the field is set to "N", the Material Purchase Report will say to purchase 6 square feet. Almost always, this field is set to "Y".

***Date of Last Price Update***. Not editable - automatically updated when the Purchase Price is changed.

# Estimates

New estimates are created and existing estimates are edited, reviewed and/or printed from the Estimates page.

The list of All Estimates is sorted by date created, with the most current estimate at the top. For ease in finding a specific estimate, this list can also be sorted by Estimate Number, Customer Last Name, or Estimator Initials by clicking on the heading of the specific column.

Each Estimate has at least one Room/Area assigned. View the Room/Areas for each estimate by selecting that estimate with the cursor (or use the Up/Down arrow keys to move between estimates.

## Menu Commands

**Customer/Estimate** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the "All Estimates" area.)

***New Customer/Estimate***
This is the first step when adding a new customer. This is where you assign an Estimate number and provide basic contact and other information concerning this estimate.

***Edit Customer Info***
Select the estimate to edit, and update the basic contact and other information.

***Delete Customer/Estimate***
Select the estimate to delete. This will delete ALL information concerning an estimate, you will be asked to confirm your deletion request before proceeding. The deletion request will tell you the Estimate Number, Estimate Description and Customer First and Last Name - be sure these are correct before proceeding. A deleted estimate can not be recovered.

***Clone Customer/Estimate***
To clone an Estimate, select an estimate and then use the Edit menu or the right mouse button. Cloning makes an exact copy of the selected estimate. You will be asked to assign a new Estimate Number, and will be given the opportunity to make changes to the basic contact and other information before proceeding. You will also be given the option of cloning all estimate items, or just cloning the basic customer information. Cloning is an easy way to use a previous estimate to create a similar new job.

**Room/Area** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the "Room/Area Detail for Estimate . . . " area.)

***Add New Room/Area***
Use this to add a Room/Area to an existing estimate.

***Edit Room/Area Info***
Select a Room/Area, then edit the description or square footage.

***Add/Review Line Items***
Select a Room/Area, then use this command to add assembly items to that Room/Area, review assembly items assigned to the Room/Area and edit those assembly items as needed. This command can also be executed by double-clicking on the selected Room/Area.

If no assembly items have been added to this Room/Area, the Add Assembly Items screen will appear. If assembly items already exist, the Review/Edit Detail screen will appear.

***Delete Selected Room/Area***
Select the Room/Area to be deleted. You will be asked to confirm your deletion request before proceeding. This will delete all information related to that Room/Area. Deleted Room/Area information can not be recovered.

**Print**

***Print Estimate Info*** will open a second form. Use the first dropdown box to select the estimate to be printed. Then, decide the type of report desired. In all instances, reports will appear on the screen for previewing prior to sending them to your printer.

Reports available under ***Estimate Info*** show cost information as well as price information. These reports are:

Full Detail --
Individual cost and price detail for each item on the estimate, including Labor, Material, Sub-contract and Other costs. Labor detail and Bill of Material detail is also included.

Estimate by Detail --
Cost detail for each item on the estimate, broken down by Labor, Material, Sub-contract and Other costs. These reports are available in two groupings: by estimate Room/Area, or by Work Type (Section Header). A cost by square foot calculation is included.

Estimate Summary --
For each item, quantity and total cost is printed. This report is also available grouped by estimate Room/Area or grouped by Work Type (Section Header).

Summary, Total Only --
Total cost by Work Type (Section Header).

Material Purchase Lists --
List of materials to purchase, available in three levels of detail. These reports are provided for use in the field. These Material lists break down the material components of the job and lump like materials together for purchase. Quantities are rounded up to purchase units of measure if desired (i.e., sheets of plywood or rolls of insulation).

Labor Reports --
Labor requirements for this estimate, available in two levels of detail.

Reports available under ***Client Info*** show price information only. These reports are available in two groupings: by estimate Room/Area, or by Work Type. Each format has four levels of detail: Detailed, Summary, Totals Only or Totals only with Quantity.

# New Customer

When adding a new customer, the following fields are available for input. Required fields are marked with an asterisk.

***Estimate Number***. By default, the Estimate Number is numeric. You can input your own Estimate code if you wish using any combination of alpha-numeric characters, with a maximum of 10 characters.

***Date Created***. This field is not available for input. It will default to the current date.

***Estimator Initials***. A three-digit code identifying the person creating the estimate.

**Prospect Information / Spouse Information**. Information concerning the primary contacts for this job can be entered here. A first and last name for one contact person is required - all other information is optional.

**Job Information**. Specific information concerning the job itself. The fields are:

***Brief Description***. A brief description of the job, maximum 60 characters. This field is required, and will be displayed on the main estimate page as the job description.

***Address / City / State / Zip***. Provide a location on the job if it is different from the prospect address above.

***Markup Level***. A required field, use the dropdown box to choose which Markup Level should be used for this job.

***Tax District***. Optional, use the dropdown box to select which Tax District will apply to this job.

***Estimated Square Feet***. Optional, and for informational purposes only. When adding Room/Areas to this job, an estimate of the square footage will be required and will be used to calculate a cost/price per square foot. At the total estimate level, however, the field is for reference only and does not appear in any calculations.

***Insurance Job***. Optional, informational only. When combined with the Fast Track Proposal Writer, certain contract language can be added to the contract for Insurance jobs only.

***Add-On %***. Optional fields, an add-on percent can be added to the total job price if necessary. It is possible to input separate amounts for Labor, Material, Sub-Contract and Other costs.

***Notes***. Optional, a free-form field where various notes concerning the job can be input.

All of these fields (with the exception of Estimate Number and Date Created) can be edited.

After adding a new customer, the Room/Area field will open, asking for information on the first Room/Area for this estimate.

# Add Assembly Items to Estimate

To add assembly items to an estimate, select the assembly to add and either double-click, or use the **Edit** menu command, ***Select Item***.

A screen will appear, asking for the quantity of this item to add. If needed, the "+" button will open a calculator, allowing calculations on the fly (use the "Use Result" button on the calculator to copy the figure appearing on the calculator to the quantity box). The quantity can be changed if needed from the Review/Edit Estimate Items screen.

## Menu Commands

**Edit**

***Select Item***
Add the selected assembly to the estimate.

***Review/Edit Estimate Items***
Review all assemblies added to the Room/Area of this estimate - edit them as necessary.

**Show Detail**

When you highlight an assembly, Show Detail allows you to review the cost detail for that assembly. There are four cost categories for each assembly - **Material Cost** (which is the sum of the cost of all Bill of Material items for that assembly), **Labor Cost** (the hours required for that assembly times the hourly rate), **Sub Cost** (Sub-Contract cost for that assembly) and **Other Cost** (any miscellaneous cost that might be incurred for that assembly). In addition, Labor Detail is provided - the number of hours, the hourly rate, and the applicable labor category. This box can be moved around the screen with the mouse. Close the box by using **Hide Detail** on the menu.

# Review/Edit Estimate Items

All assembly items for the selected Room/Area appear on this form. From here, you can preview the Room/Area cost and price, Job cost and price (the sum of all Room/Areas for this estimate), and the Room Cost and Job Cost per square foot (based on the square foot figures input for each Room/Area).

For each assembly item, the Section and Item number are shown, along with the description, the quantity needed for this Room/Area, the Assembly Unit of Measure, the cost for one Unit of Measure and the Extended Cost (cost times quantity).

To edit the cost information for any assembly item, select the assembly and double-click, right-mouse click and use ***Edit Quantity and Cost***, or use the **Edit** command, ***Edit Quantity and Cost***. The Estimate Details screen will appear.

To add additional assemblies to this Room/Area, use the ***Add Assembly Items*** button in the bottom-left, or use the **Edit** command, ***Add Assembly Items***.

## Menu Commands

**Edit** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the estimate details area.)

***Add Assembly Items***
Add additional assemblies to this Room/Area.

***Edit Quantity and Cost***
Edit the selected assembly item. For more details, see Edit Estimate Details.

***Add Template***
Add an existing template to this Room/Area. As many templates as desired can be added. If the template attempts to add an assembly item that already exists in this Room/Area, you will be notified that it already exists, and you might want to review the quantity input to make sure it is still applicable.

If template items are added that have a zero quantity, you will need to add a quantity before the cost of the template item will be included in the estimate. When closing this screen, if any template items still have a quantity of zero, a warning box will appear notifying you of the first assembly item in the estimate with a zero quantity and asking if you want to change it. Be sure to check all quantities before considering this estimate complete.

***Delete Selected Item***
Delete the selected Room/Area from the estimate.

**Update**

***Standard Costs***
If assembly or material costs have changed in the Assembly database or the Material database, costs are not updated in existing estimates. Use this function to update Standard Cost in this estimate. If the Standard Cost marker was changed to "N", the cost for this assembly item will not be updated.

Costs will be updated for all Room/Areas in the estimate, not just for the Room/Area currently viewed.

***Markup Level***
If the markup level selected for this customer (on the Customer screen) has changed, or if the Markup rates assigned to this level have changed in the Markup Table, changes are not reflected in existing estimates. Use this function to update all assembly items in this estimate that are using Standard Cost (i.e., Standard Cost marker is set to "Y"). If the Standard Cost marker was changed to "N", the cost for this assembly item will not be updated.

Markup Levels will be updated for all Room/Areas in the estimate, not just for the Room/Area currently viewed.

**View**

***View All Rooms***
View assembly items for all Room/Areas in this estimate. The Room/Area for each specific assembly item is shown in the left column. This is for viewing purposes only - changes to individual assembly items can only be made when viewing a specific room.

***Select Room to View***
Use this function to switch from one Room/Area to another, or to return to a specific Room/Area if you had been viewing All Rooms. Select the Room/Area you want to work on.

# Edit Each Estimate Item

When an assembly is added to an estimate, the Description and Standard Cost for that assembly is added. The Markup Level for that estimate is used to calculate the price.

***Description***. The description can be changed for each estimate if desired. The description appears on many of the estimate reports, and a more specific (or less specific) description might be beneficial. There is a maximum of 70 characters allowed.

***Number of.*** The quantity of this assembly item for this Room/Area can also be changed here.

***Use Standard Cost?*** Standard cost is the cost created in the assembly list. Standard markup is the Markup Rate for each cost category (Labor, Material, Sub, Other), from the Markup table.

If the ***Use Standard Cost?*** field is set to "Y", the standard cost and the standard markup are used for this assembly. Cost and price detail cannot be edited.

If the ***Use Standard Cost?*** field is changed to "N", the actual cost and actual markup for this assembly can be changed. Changes must be saved before proceeding.

***Extended cost*** is simply the actual cost times the quantity for each of the four cost categories (Labor, Material, Sub, Other).

***Price*** (shown in the right-hand column) is the Extended Cost times the Actual Markup for each cost category.

***NOTE***: If the Standard Cost is set to "N", material, labor, sub-contractor and other cost changes to the Assembly list or Material list will not be updated for this assembly. Likewise, any changes to the Markup Level will not be updated.

# Templates

Templates are an easy way to add commonly used areas to an estimate.

A few pre-built templates have been included with this program. These include a templates for Room Additions (template details vary based on the square footage of the addition), Kitchens, Baths, Dormer and Deck.

Add new templates and review/edit existing templates from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Templates***.

# Building a Template

Add new templates and review/edit existing templates from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Templates***.

Existing templates are shown on the left - detail for the selected template appears on the right.

## Menu Commands

**Templates** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the "Templates on File" area.)

***Add New***
Add new templates. First, name the template - maximum 30 characters. Click the Save button, and a screen similar to Add Assembly Items to Estimates will appear.

Adding assembly items to a template is accomplished the same way as adding assembly items to a Room/Area. The only difference is that with a template, you can specify a quantity of zero. We recommend setting all quantities to zero.

***NOTE***: When a template is used, the template items are merged with the assembly items that already exist in the Room/Area. The easiest way to make sure all quantities are correct is to set the template quantity to zero. When the Estimate Details screen is closed, a warning will be given that items have a zero quantity, reminding you that the quantity must be changed before the cost for that assembly will be included in the estimate.

***Delete***
Delete the selected template. This will only delete the selected template, it will not impact any estimates that used the template. Deleted templates cannot be recovered.

***Clone***
Clone the selected template. Cloning is an easy way to create multiple similar templates. Clone one template, then add or delete assembly items with the new template as needed.

**Edit Selected Template** (Note: These commands are also available by using the right mouse button when it is located within the "Detail for Template" area.)

***Add Items***
Add additional assembly items to the selected template.

***Delete Selected Items***
Delete the selected assembly item from the selected template.

# Markup Levels

Add new Markup Levels and review/edit Markup Levels from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Markup Levels***.

Markup Levels are the factor used to reach the sales price of the job. Estimated job cost times markup equals the sales price. Markup is applied to the job cost before add-on percentages or taxes.

It is possible to establish up to five Markup Levels, with a different Markup Level for each cost category (Labor, Material, Subs and Other).

Markup Levels must be at least 1. If you use a 50% markup, your markup level will be 1.5. If you use a 30% markup, your markup level will be 1.3.

For more information on how to establish the correct markup for your business, read "Markup & Profit: A Contractor's Guide" by Michael Stone. This book describes how to determine the markup factor you need to pay your bills and make a profit. For more information, visit our website at www.markupandprofit.com or call Construction Programs & Results at 1-888-944-0044.

# Labor

Add new labor categories and review/edit existing labor categories and labor rates from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Labor Detail***.

Labor categories are used to add labor cost to an assembly item. Any change to labor rates is reflected immediately in the Assembly list - but changes are not reflected in existing estimates unless requested. See "Update Standard Costs" under Review/Edit Estimates.

## Menu Commands

**Edit**

***Add New Labor Item***
Add a new labor category. The Labor ID is a 6 digit alphanumeric code used to identify the labor category. Provide a brief description (maximum 30 characters), then the labor rate (cost per hour). (The "+" near the labor rate will open a calculator for quick calculations, if needed.)

***Edit Selected Labor Item***
Edit the selected labor item. Only the description and the labor rate can be edited.

***Delete Selected Labor Item***
Delete the selected labor category. You will not be allowed to delete a Labor category that is used in any Assembly Items. A list of the Assembly Items using that Labor Category will be provided, giving you the ability to change each assembly so the Labor category can be deleted.

**Print**

Preview, then print the labor category table.

# Tax Rates

Add new tax districts and review/edit existing tax rates from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Tax Rates***.

Tax Districts are established to add sales tax and other taxes to jobs as applicable. One district can be applied to each job.

To make changes to a particular district, select the district, then make changes in the boxes below. Taxes are shown as a decimal figure - a 7.6% tax rate will appear as .076 (7.6 divided by 100).

***NOTE***: Changes made to Tax Rates will be reflected immediately in existing estimates.

## Menu Commands

**Edit**

***Save***
Save changes made to a tax district.

***Add New***
Add a new tax district. The Tax District code is a 3 character code. Provide a brief description (maximum 30 characters).

***Delete***
Delete the selected district. You will not be allowed to delete a Tax District that is used in any Estimates. A list of the Estimates using that Tax District will be provided, giving you the option to change those estimates individually if you wish to delete the Tax District.

***Cancel***
Erase any changes that have been made to the selected district prior to saving those changes. Changes can also be canceled by closing the Tax Rates form.

# Units of Measure

Add new Units of Measure and review/edit existing Units of Measure from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Units of Measure***.

The Unit of Measure table is used when adding new materials to the Material List, or new assemblies to the Assembly List.

## Menu Commands

**Edit**
Edit the selected unit of measure.

***Add New***
Add a new unit of measure to the table. Maximum 5 alpha-numeric characters.

***Save***
Save changes to the selected unit of measure.

***Delete***
Delete the selected unit of measure. You will not be allowed to delete a Unit of Measure that is used in any Material or Assembly Items. A list of the Material and Assembly Items using that Unit of Measure will be provided, giving you the option to change those Assemblies and Material items prior to deleting the unit of measure from the database.

***Cancel***
Cancel changes to the selected unit of measure.

# Section Headers

Add new Section Headers and review/edit existing Section Headers from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Section Headers***.

Section Headers are the backbone, the organizing base, of both the Assembly List and the Material List. Each Section Header is assigned a code - "A" means it applies to Assemblies only, "M" means it applies to Materials only, and "B" means it applies to both. Most Section Headers are assigned "B", both Assemblies and Materials.

Any Section Header ending in a "0" is considered a Main Section. Main sections appear in bold. Sub-section descriptions are automatically offset with a " --" for readability in the section header list.

We have organized the Section Headers in the general order a job proceeds. The main Section Headers included with this program are:

| ***Section Header*** | ***Description*** |
|---|---|
| 10 | General Conditions (Plans, Permits, etc.) |
| 20 | Demo/Tear Out |
| 30 | Excavation |
| 40 | Concrete |
| 50 | Masonry |
| 60 | Framing |
| 70 | Roofing |
| 80 | Siding |
| 90 | Windows |
| 100 | Doors |
| 110 | Sheetmetal |
| 120 | Plumbing |
| 130 | Electrical |
| 140 | H.V.A.C |
| 150 | Insulate/Weatherstripping |
| 160 | Drywall/Plaster |
| 170 | Ceiling Tile |
| 180 | Cabinets |
| 190 | Surfacing |
| 200 | Tile |
| 210 | Floor Covering |
| 220 | Kitchen & Bath Accessories |
| 230 | Awning & Patio |
| 240 | Finish Carpentry |
| 250 | Hardware & Metalwork |

| | |
|---|---|
| 260 | Paneling & Fence |
| 270 | Light Fixtures |
| 280 | Paint & Decor |
| 290 | Debris Removal |
| 300 | Miscellaneous |

## Menu Commands

**Edit**

***Add New***
To Add Section Headers, use Edit on the menu. When adding, section headers must be numeric and smaller than 99,999. As sections are added to this file, they are added to the Assembly and Material Lists at the same time.

***Edit***
To Edit Section Headers, select the specific Section Header and use Edit on the menu. The Section Header Number cannot be edited, only the description. As sections are changed in this file, they are changed in the Assembly and Material Lists at the same time.

***Delete***
To Delete a Section Headers, select the specific Section Header and use Edit on the menu. A section header will not be deleted if there are material or assembly items assigned to it. As sections deleted from this file, they are deleted from the Assembly and Material Lists at the same time.

**Print**

***Print All Section Headers***
The Section Header table can be previewed (and printed if desired).

***Print Main Section Headers Only***
Preview (and print if desired) the main Section Headers. A printout of these Section Headers is extremely useful as a reference point when building estimates.

# Company Name

Edit the Company Name from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Edit** menu command, ***Company Name***.

The Company Name will appear on all printed reports. The name can be a maximum of 50 characters.

# Optimize Database

Optimize the database from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the **Maintenance** menu command, ***Optimize Database***.

This function cleans up the database and should be performed on a regular basis. We strongly recommend optimizing the database after making major changes, such as resequencing the Assembly List, resequencing the Material List, or updating Material Cost by Section.

# Printing

In all instances, when a report is requested it is available for preview prior to printing. The preview page has the following functions available -

**Print**

The icon of a printer opens up the print function. Depending on your printer settings, you should see a dialog box asking the print range (pages) to print. You will not be able to set the usual preferences - printing will be performed based on the settings established for the default printer.

**Export**

The export function icon looks like an envelope with a red arrow pointing inside.

We have included export function for those instances where you want to have a report converted to a .pdf file, or you want to see the report in a Word document. There are many more export functions available, but most of them will not create a useable report.

The export functions we recommend using are: Acrobat Format (.pdf), MS Word (.doc), Rich Text Format (.rtf), and Text (.txt). We recommend the export function be used only by those with the computer experience and savvy to know how to find and open their exported files. We will not provide support or assistance if problems are encountered when exporting reports.

**Zoom**

A dropdown box showing the size of the report allows you to zoom in and out of selected areas of the report.

**Page Numbers**

When printing the entire Assembly list, there are 296 pages. In this example, the page number section shows "1 of 296", with two arrows on either side.

The far right arrow will cause the last page to display. The far left arrow will cause the first page to display. The left arrow closest to the page numbers will move back one page - the right arrow closest to the page numbers will move up one page.

**Search**

The binoculars icon is a search function. It will only operate forward - for that reason, it's best to be on the first page prior to doing any search.

***TIP:*** The Company Name will appear on all reports. The Company Name can be edited from the main Fast Track Estimating Screen. Use the Edit menu command, Company Name.

# Add-On Percent

The Add-On percent figure is an arbitrary amount that can be added to any estimate. It is not required. This amount is added to the price after the markup has been applied and before any taxes have been added. It is added to each cost category separately - labor, material, sub and other costs.

Example: An estimate has a total labor cost of $1,000, a markup factor for labor of 1.50, a 10% add-on percent, and a 5% sales tax on labor. The total labor price for that estimate will be:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Labor Cost: | $1,000.00 | |
| Labor Price: | $1,500.00 | ($1,000 x markup factor of 1.50) |
| Add-On Percent: | $ 150.00 | (10% of $1,500) |
| Price: | $1,650.00 | |
| Tax: | $ 82.50 | (5% of $1,650) |
| Total Price: | $1,732.50 | |

The Add-On percent figure should be input as a decimal; for instance, a 10% amount should be input as .10 (10 divided by 100). A 5% add-on figure amount would be input as .05 (5 divided by 100).

## Impact on Reports

***Estimate Info reports*** - The add-on percent figure will appear in the Full Detail Estimate report. All other Estimate Info reports only show cost details, they do not show any pricing figures.

So, using the example above, all other Estimate Info reports will show the $1,000 figure for labor cost.

***Client Info reports*** - The add-on percent figure is included in the price and is not shown separately. In this example, the labor price would print as $1,650 (plus tax).

If detail is requested, each labor item is shown as the total price at that detail level (cost x markup factor + add-on percent). In this example, the sum of all labor items will add up to $1,650.

# Assembly Unit of Measure

The Assembly Unit of Measure (UOM) is the unit of measure used by the assembly when estimating.

Examples:

| ***Assembly Item*** | ***Assembly UOM*** |
|---|---|
| 6" X 12' Hardie Plank, Smooth or W/Grain, 1 story | SF (Square Feet) |
| Interior Handset, No Lock | EA (Each) |
| 3" perimeter perf. drain line, new install | LF (Lineal Feet) |
| Gutter screens, installed, 1 story | LF (Lineal Feet) |
| Re-install existing sprinkler system | HEAD |
| Temporary electric service, 100 amp | MONTH |
| 3 1/2" R-11 kraft faced batts | SF (Square Feet) |

When building an estimate, if the Assembly Unit of Measure is square feet, the quantity input will be the number of square feet of that assembly needed.

If the Assembly Unit of Measure is month, the quantity input will be the number of months that assembly will be needed.

If the Assembly Unit of Measure is lineal feet, the quantity input will be the lineal feet of that assembly needed.

# Conversion Factor

The Conversion Factor is the number used to convert the Purchase Unit of Measure to the Estimate Unit of Measure. The Conversion Factor multiplied by the Purchase Price determines the cost for each Estimating Unit of Measure.

In simplest terms, the Purchase Unit of Measure (UOM) divided by the Estimate Unit of Measure result in the Conversion Factor. If the Purchase UOM and Estimate UOM are the same, the Conversion Factor will be 1. When the Purchase UOM and Estimate UOM are different, the factor must be calculated.

To determine the Conversion Factor, we need to calculate the number of Estimate UOM's in each Purchase UOM. Examples of some of the more difficult items:

| Material Item | Purchase UOM | Estimate UOM |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape Fabric | Roll | SF |
| Pea Gravel, delivered | CY | SF |
| Cedar, 2" x 4" x 10' S&B | PC | LF |
| 1/2" x 6" beveled cedar,4-3/4" exposure | LF | SF |
| 3 tab composition, 20 year | SQ | SF |

***Landscape Fabric*** is purchased by the roll. To determine the number of square feet in each roll, if each roll is 3 feet wide and 300 feet long, there are 900 square feet in each roll (3 feet x 300 feet). Divide the Purchase UOM (1 roll) by the Estimate UOM (900 SF) to arrive at the Conversion Factor of .0011.

If the Landscape Fabric costs $55 per roll, when this material is used in an assembly the cost will appear as $.0605 for each square foot ($55.00 x .0011).

***Pea Gravel*** is purchased by the cubic yard and estimated by the square foot. Note in the description (Material Item 31.510), that there is an 8 yard minimum. The Purchase UOM will be 1 (consisting of 8 cubic yards - the Purchase Price will be the price for 8 yards.)

The Estimate UOM assumes the pea gravel is spread 4" thick. A cubic yard is 36" high, therefore there are 9 layers of pea gravel in each cubic yard (36" high divided by 4" thick), each layer covering 1 square yard. Therefore, each layer will be 9 square feet, times 9 layers equals 81 square feet in each cubic yard. With an 8 yard minimum, there are 648 square feet in one Purchase Unit of Measure.

The Conversion Factor is calculated by dividing the Purchase UOM (1) by the Estimate UOM (648 SF) to arrive at a Conversion Factor of .0015.

If the Pea Gravel costs $150 for 8 cubic yards, the estimating cost is $.225 for each square foot ($150 x .0015).

***Cedar, 2" x 4" x 10'*** is purchased by the piece and estimated by the lineal foot. There are 10 lineal feet in this item - divide the Purchase UOM (1 piece) by the Estimate UOM (10 LF) to arrive at a Conversion Factor of .1.

***1/2" x 6" beveled cedar, 4-3/4" exposure*** is purchased by the lineal foot and estimated by the square foot. One lineal foot of this siding will cover 57 square inches (one lineal foot = 12 inches long by 4.75 inches exposure). 57 square inches is equivalent to .39583 square feet (57 divided by 144 square inches in a square foot). The Purchase UOM (1 lineal foot) divided by the Estimate UOM (.3958 square feet) results in a Conversion Factor of 2.5263.

If this siding costs $1.69 per lineal foot, the estimating cost is $4.27 to cover one square foot ($1.69 x 2.5263).

***3 tab composition roofing*** is purchased by the square and estimated by the square foot. There are 100 square feet in each square of roofing material - divide the Purchase UOM (1 square) by the Estimate UOM (100 SF) to arrive at a Conversion Factor of .01.

If the roofing material costs $27.50 per square, the estimating cost would be $.275 per square foot ($27.50 times .01).

***NOTE:*** The Conversion Factors in the Estimating system do not account for waste or spoilage. If your experience is that each square of roofing material only covers 95 square feet of area, this loss of material needs to be accounted for. There are two ways to account for waste or spoilage -

1.) Change the Conversion Factor accordingly (i.e., the conversion factor for this roofing material would be 1 divided by 95, or .0105, resulting in an estimating cost of $.2889 per square), or

2.) Use the Add-On percentage to add a given percent to all material costs used in an estimate.

# Estimating Unit of Measure

The Estimating Unit of Measure (UOM) is the unit of measure used when estimating. Units can be the piece, sack, box, bundle, foot, gallon, etc.

Examples (the Purchase UOM is shown for reference):

| ***Material Item*** | *Purchase UOM* | ***Estimate UOM*** |
|---|---|---|
| License | Each | Each |
| Jack Rental | Day | Day |
| Landscape Fabric | Roll | SF (Square Foot) |
| Pea Gravel, delivered | CY (Cubic Yard) | SF (Square Foot) |
| Cedar, 2" x 4" x 10' S&B | PC (Piece) | LF (Lineal Foot) |
| 3 tab composition, 20 year | SQ (Square) | SF (Square Foot) |
| 1" x 4" red or white oak, clear(10' PC) | PC (Piece) | LF (Lineal Foot) |

***NOTE***: On occasion, an item might need to have two different estimating units of measure assigned. An example would be wood lath (1-1/2" x 1/4" x 4'). Wood lath is purchased by the bundle. When it is used for lath and plaster repairs in a home, it is used by the square foot, and the unit of measure would be SF. But when wood lath is also used for tenting to provide water protection, wood lath is used by the lineal foot. In this situation, we recommend putting wood lath twice in the material list, once for each estimating unit of measure.

# Purchase Unit of Measure

The Purchase Unit of Measure (UOM) is the unit of measure used when purchasing the item. Units can be the piece, sack, box, bundle, foot, gallon, etc.

Examples (the Estimating UOM is shown for reference):

| ***Material Item*** | ***Purchase UOM*** | *Estimate UOM* |
|---|---|---|
| License | Each | Each |
| Jack Rental | Day | Day |
| Landscape Fabric | Roll | SF (Square Foot) |
| Pea Gravel, delivered | CY (Cubic Yard) | SF (Square Foot) |
| Cedar, 2" x 4" x 10' S&B | PC (Piece) | LF (Lineal Foot) |
| 3 tab composition, 20 year | SQ (Square) | SF (Square Foot) |
| 1" x 4" red or white oak, clear(10' PC) | PC (Piece) | LF (Lineal Foot) |

The Purchase Price must always be the price of one Purchase Unit of Measure. For example, the purchase price for 3 tab composition roofing material will be the price for 1 square of that material. The purchase price for Cedar will be the price for 1 piece of 2" x 4" x 10' Cedar.

***TIP:*** The best way to keep purchase prices current and accurate is to periodically review material invoices. Review each invoice and compare the given price with the purchase price in your Material List. If the invoice price is higher, then update your Material List. If the invoice price is lower, leave it as is. This provides confidence that the prices generated for each estimate will cover your cost.

# Room/Area

The room/area designation is used to separate estimates into rooms or areas for convenience. The Room/Area is simply an arbitrary division in the estimate you can work with separately.

Each estimate must have at least one Room/Area assigned. The square footage input will be used to calculate a cost and price per square foot - it can be adjusted later if needed. For your convenience, the "+" sign will open a calculator if needed.

# Standard Cost

Standard cost is established in the Assembly List and is the Labor, Material, Sub and Other cost created for each assembly.

The standard cost is used when an assembly is added to an estimate. It can easily be overridden by the actual cost for that estimate if desired.

# Backup Your Database

There are two databases supporting the Fast Track Estimating System.

The databases are named FTEC.mdb and FTED.mdb, and are stored in the same directory as the Fast Track Estimating Program.

To backup these files, simply copy them to a separate location, preferably on a CD or tape drive. If anything happens to your computer, or if you are moving to a new computer, reinstall the Fast Track Estimating program, then replace the FTEC.mdb and FTED.mdb files with your backup files (they must be located in the same directory as the Fast Track Estimating program).

# Index