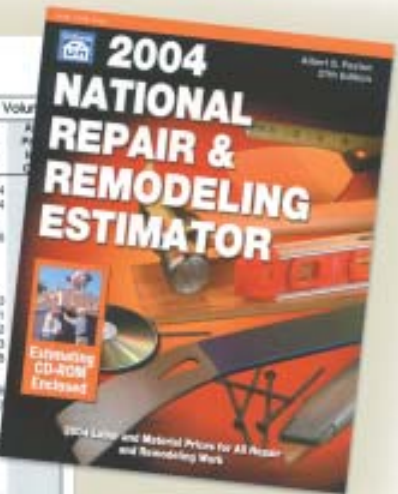


Each book includes a list of items like material cost, labor productivity in hours, labor cost in dollars, equipment cost, and profit and overhead. Material cost is typically shown together with the unit of measure for the item. Sometimes it's difficult to determine exactly which materials the price includes, especially with "assemblies," groups of items that show up as a single entry in the book. For example, does the cost

Labor rates. As with material costs, you need to understand what is and isn't included in the labor rates in the

Overhead and profit. Every cost book publisher seems to handle overhead

2004 National Repair & Remodeling Estimator									
Costs Based On Small Volume								Large Volume	
Description	Qper Unit	Qper Unit	Man-Hours Per Unit	Mat 1 Unit Cost	Lab 1 Unit Cost	Ang Equip Unit Cost	Avg Total Unit Cost	Avg Price Unit O&P	Avg Total Unit Cost
1/2" x 1-1/2"	inst LF	CA	046	.74	1.34	—	2.08	3.08	1.54
1/2" x 1-5/8"	inst LF	CA	046	.84	1.34	—	2.18	3.06	1.64
Ogile skip 3/16" x 1-5/8"	inst LF	CA	046	.83	1.34	—	1.87	2.84	1.38
Crown & cornice									
Crown									
9/16" x 1-6/8"	inst LF	CA	062	1.02	1.80	—	2.82	3.91	2.10
9/16" x 2-1/4"	inst LF	CA	062	1.14	1.80	—	2.94	4.05	2.21
9/16" x 3-1/2"	inst LF	CA	062	1.81	1.80	—	3.61	4.82	2.82
9/16" x 4-1/4"	inst LF	CA	062	2.25	1.80	—	4.05	5.33	3.23
9/16" x 5-1/2"	inst LF	CA	062	3.82	1.80	—	5.42	8.96	4.48
Colonial crown									
9/16" x 3-3/8"	inst LF	CA	062	1.42	1.80	—	3.22	4.37	2.48
9/16" x 4-1/2"	inst LF	CA	062	1.43	1.80	—	3.23	4.38	2.48
Cornice									
1-1/8" x 4-1/2"	inst LF	CA	062	5.96	1.80	—	7.76	9.56	6.0
1-1/4" x 6"	inst LF	CA	062	6.51	1.80	—	8.31	10.20	7.1
Chair rail									
474 Washington	-4%	094	Bergen	-6%	Massachusetts	-7%	870	Parisington	-4%
475-477 Essex	-7%	048	Beth	-4%	890-892 St Louis	-3%	871	San Francisco	-4%
478 Essex	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	872	Waco	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	873	Worcester	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	879	Town of Corp.	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	880	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	881	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	882	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	883	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	884	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	885	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	886	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	887	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	888	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	889	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	890	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	891	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	892	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	893	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	894	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	895	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	896	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	897	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	898	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	899	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	900	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	901	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	902	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	903	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	904	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	905	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	906	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	907	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	908	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	909	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	910	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	911	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	912	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	913	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	914	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	915	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	916	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	917	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	918	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	919	Los Angeles	-4%
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479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	948	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	949	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	950	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	951	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	952	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	953	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	954	Los Angeles	-4%
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479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	988	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	989	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	990	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	991	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	992	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	993	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	994	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	995	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	996	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	997	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	998	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	999	Los Angeles	-4%
479 Lakeside	-4%	047	Northam Area	-4%	930 Westford	-1%	1000	Los Angeles	-4%



The author sometimes uses a cost book (such as Craftsman's *National Repair & Remodeling Estimator*, shown here) to bid a task for which he has no historical job-cost data. He modifies the published numbers by comparing them with numbers for a similar task for which he knows his cost. If you use numbers directly from a cost book, don't forget to apply the area modification factor (left).

and profit differently. Some don't list it at all, assuming you'll add it in at the bottom of the estimate. Others put it in a column next to the labor, material, and other costs. Usually, it's a straight percentage multiplier with an explanation of what it includes.

Proceed With Caution

Given their limitations, you have to use cost books carefully. If you take a number straight from the book, don't forget to use the multiplier for your area. And you should always verify that the material pricing in the book is correct. Compare the listed labor rates and labor burden multipliers to your known costs; both figures can vary wildly from your own payroll costs, even after you've applied the location multiplier. Finally, verify that the listed markup percentages are correct for your company.

So what's the point of using a price book if you have to verify all the costs that are in it? For me, there are two. The first is to find a productivity factor for an unknown task. The second is to price a subcontracted item that it's hard to get a bid on or that I've never priced before.

Like most estimators, I look at my own job-cost data to see how long it takes to do things. If I don't have data

for a particular task, I'll look up its productivity factor in the cost book. Then I'll check the book by looking at its rate for an item that I do have data on.

For example, say I want to estimate running crown but have no historical cost data on it. However, I have a lot of historical cost data for baseboard, so I can check the crown rate by looking up the rate for base. The cost book says that a carpenter can install 100 linear feet of base per hour, while my data shows that my carpenters run 80 feet an hour, or 80% of the rate in the book. So if the book says a carpenter can install 16 linear feet of crown per hour, I'll assume that my crew can do it at 80% of the listed rate, or 12.8 linear feet per hour.

If I can't get a price from a subcontractor for an item I need to estimate, I'll find a similar item in that trade that I have sub pricing on, and compare the book cost for that item to what I've had to pay for it. Again, I apply the percentage variance to the listed cost for the unknown item. Whenever possible, I'll also list that item as an allowance, with the qualification that hard costs for the item couldn't be determined before presenting the estimate. If that's not possible, I'll add some contingency to the

number, to cover any possible variance that may occur from using this method.

Recommended for Remodelers

Which cost book you use is mainly a matter of personal preference. My advice is to head to the library or bookstore and thumb through as many as you can. Find one that has data on the tasks you regularly estimate. Look up the cost data for categories where you know your own costs; choose a book with costs that are as close as possible to your own.

Of all the cost books, I prefer Craftsman Book Company's *National Renovation and Insurance Repair Estimator* or its *National Repair and Remodeling Estimator*. Both books seem to have the best breakdown of items used in remodeling (though they are organized slightly differently and use different rates for the various trades, for some reason). If you consider these books, take a look at both and choose the one that has an item breakdown and labor rates that are close to the ones you use. 

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