

Mark Siegwald Highlights Why Project Oversight Should Begin Before Problems Appear

Experienced building consultant Mark Siegwald discusses why consistent observation, documentation, and communication can give property owners a clearer understanding of a project before small concerns become larger problems.



Chicago, Illinois Sep 11, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Construction problems rarely become complicated overnight. In many cases, there are opportunities to ask questions, document conditions, or clarify expectations well before an issue begins affecting schedules, costs, or completed work. Mark Siegwald, a Senior Consultant with Bower Group, believes this is where consistent project oversight can provide some of its greatest value.

With more than 24 years of experience spanning insurance, restoration, property damage, and building consulting, Siegwald has worked with projects from several different perspectives. His current work includes Clerk of the Works assignments in restoration and industrial settings, where regular observation helps owners see what is actually happening in the field.

"Project oversight should not begin when everyone already knows there is a problem," Siegwald said.

"Ideally, you are paying attention throughout the process, asking questions when they come up, and creating a record of what is happening. It is much easier to have a conversation about something while the work is still accessible than after the project has moved several steps beyond it."

Oversight Is About Visibility, Not Finding Fault

Siegwald emphasizes that effective oversight should not create an adversarial relationship between the person observing the project and the contractors performing the work.

Construction involves changing field conditions, multiple trades, scheduling pressures, and decisions that sometimes need to be made quickly. Something that appears unusual to an observer may have a reasonable explanation. For Siegwald, the first step is usually understanding the situation rather than assuming someone has made a mistake.

"If I see something that I did not expect, my first question is usually why it is different," Siegwald explained. "There may be a field condition I was not aware of, or the sequence may have changed for a practical reason. Asking the question gives you the context you need before you reach a conclusion."

That distinction is particularly important in a Clerk of the Works role. The purpose is not to manage the contractor or direct individual trades. Instead, the role provides independent observation, documentation, and communication that can help an owner understand how the project is progressing.

Small Questions Can Become More Complicated Later

Timing can make a significant difference when questions arise during construction. Many conditions remain visible for only a limited period before additional work is installed.

Electrical, mechanical, plumbing, insulation, structural components, and other work may eventually disappear behind walls, ceilings, finishes, or equipment. Once that happens, verifying a condition can require relying on photographs and project records. In some circumstances, completed work may even need to be removed to answer a question that would have been much easier to address earlier.

Siegwald believes this is one reason regular site observation matters.

"A construction project changes every day," he said. "If you only see it occasionally, there can be a lot that happens between visits. Consistent observation gives you context. You know what was there before, what has changed, and what may be about to become inaccessible."

The objective is not to interrupt construction whenever something looks unfamiliar. Siegwald notes that experienced oversight also requires judgment about when to raise a concern and when to allow contractors and tradespeople to continue doing their jobs.

Documentation Creates a History of the Project

Documentation is another important part of early project oversight. Photographs, notes, progress records, and observations can create a history that becomes increasingly useful as construction moves forward.

Siegwald has learned throughout his career that details that seem routine in the moment may become important later. A photograph taken before a wall is closed or a note explaining why work changed can

provide useful context months after the original decision was made.

"People remember projects differently, especially after enough time has passed," Siegwald said. "Having a clear record helps everyone. Documentation is not about building a case against somebody. It is about being able to go back and understand what actually happened."

This can be particularly important on restoration projects, where unexpected conditions may be discovered after demolition begins. It can also matter in industrial environments, where construction may need to occur around employees, equipment, production schedules, and ongoing operations.

Early Communication Can Keep Small Issues Manageable

Construction projects involve people with different responsibilities and priorities. Owners, contractors, consultants, facility personnel, and individual trades may each be looking at the project from a different perspective.

Regular communication can help those perspectives stay connected.

Siegwald believes questions are most productive when they are raised early and with the goal of understanding the situation. Sometimes a conversation confirms that everything is proceeding appropriately. Other times, it reveals a detail that deserves additional attention before the next phase begins.

"The best outcome is often when a question gets answered and the project keeps moving," Siegwald said. "Not every observation needs to become an issue. The important thing is having enough visibility to recognize when something does need attention."

For Siegwald, that is ultimately the purpose of project oversight. It is not about waiting for something to go wrong or searching a job site for mistakes. It is about maintaining enough awareness of the project to understand how the work is progressing and giving owners useful information while decisions can still be made efficiently.

"The earlier you understand what is happening, the more options you usually have," Siegwald said. "Once a problem has affected several other parts of the project, the conversation becomes much harder. Good oversight is about paying attention before you reach that point."

About Mark Siegwald

Mark Siegwald is a Senior Consultant with Bower Group in Chicago, Illinois. He has more than 24 years of experience across insurance, restoration, property damage, and building consulting. His career has included roles with Kemper Insurance, Liberty Mutual, Munters, Belfor USA, Response Team 1, and Young & Associates. His current work includes building consulting and Clerk of the Works assignments in restoration and industrial settings. Siegwald holds a bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University and professional certifications including Applied Structural Drying, Water Damage Restoration Technician, Applied Microbial Remediation Technician, and Associate in Claims.

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