

Which scheduling software do I need?

The options in the construction environment include Primavera's **P3**, **Suretrak**, **P3ec/P3e** and **Primavera Contractor**. **Microsoft Project** is also a good solution, in the right place. Anything else on the market is, in our opinion, not in the same league as the products mentioned here.

Where are each of these tools best used? We provide you a quick decision tree followed by more comprehensive details.

Use this product if:

P3 – you have a relatively large project, you need to submit a schedule in P3 format or, you already know P3 and do not want to learn something new. You need to have up to 5 or 6 concurrent users and you may exceed 10,000 activities (50,000 max), you plan to back up often so you're not worried about that btrieve database. Cost: \$4,000.

Suretrak – you need to submit a schedule in P3 format. You will not have to have multiple people working on the schedule at one time. You will not need to open multiple schedules at one time (unless you open all your schedules at once). If you are an advanced scheduler, P3 will give you better control and analysis than Suretrak. But for \$449, this is a solid scheduling tool.

P3ec/P3e – you do not have to submit a copy of your schedule in P3 format (or you do have to submit it in P3e/P3ec format). You will have multiple people working in the database and may have multiple projects open at one time. You might exceed 50,000 activities. You want to learn one tool and not have to switch to something else in a year or two. You want project collaboration (myPrimavera) or you need to integrate with Expedition 9 or 10. Cost: \$2-4,000 per seat (as low as for \$200 for Collaboration)

Primavera Contractor – you do not need to submit a schedule in P3 format (or you do have to submit it in P3e/P3ec format). You do not want to have to learn a new product in a year or two. You want most of the functionality of P3e/P3ec but are on a budget that will not support spending \$4,000. You want to integrate with Expedition 9 or 10. Cost: \$499.

Microsoft Project – you are not submitting a CPM schedule, you are not submitting a schedule in P3 format, you want simple bar charts, you like the integration with MS Outlook, or you have access to Primavera's Project Link and will save your project in the P3e/P3ec database. Cost: \$3-500 per seat and up.

The following comments provide more in-depth detail on the summary information presented on the previous page.

Primavera Project Planner (P3) – This is the “P3” we in the construction environment all know & “love” (or at least have become accustomed to dealing with it’s idiosyncrasies). This tool was introduced in 1983 and much of the underlying code (from 1983) is still there. The database (Btrieve) is limited and sometimes unstable when multiple users are accessing it at the same time. There has not been any new development on this tool for about 5 years, there will not be any new development and support will end sometime in the near future (years not months). At \$3,800, this is a significant investment in a product that is being phased out. You can still migrate from P3 to P3ec at any time at no cost (as long as Primavera continues to support that exchange).

The only reason to continue to use P3 is because you have to. That means that if you are on a project that requires schedules to be submitted in a P3 format (and that’s a lot of projects) or you just don’t want to learn something new, then you may want to stay with P3 (or on smaller projects, use Suretrak).

Yes, P3e/P3ec does export to a P3 file format but it really requires an advanced knowledge of P3e/P3ec to create schedules that convert to P3 with no problems. I don’t recommend this approach to meeting your P3 schedule submittal requirements.

If you are an owner or program/construction manager working in a multiple project environment and you have the ability to specify what format schedules should be submitted in, then there is no reason for you to not go with P3ec (if your contractors have P3 they can trade it in for free. If they have to buy something, the cost is not different than P3/ST has always been. The only reason we see people staying with P3 is because their staff is not up to speed on P3ec. (Many of our clients use their P3ec skills as part of their strategy to win new program and construction management business).

P3 does not integrate with Expedition 9 or 10 except through manual export/import processes. Current version is 3.1, Service Pack 3.

Primavera Suretrak (ST)

This product, like P3, has been around for a while (it was first introduced in the mid-80’s as “Microtrak”). Primavera bought it in the late 80’s, renamed it Suretrak and developed a windows version sometime later. ST supports two file formats, it’s internal native format and the P3 Group format. When you save a ST schedule as a P3 Group file it can be opened by P3 just like a regular P3 file. There are a few P3 capabilities ST does not support (Cost Accounts, extensive reports) but for many contractors this is an inexpensive way (\$449) of meeting that P3 spec requirement. ST will also allow you to open multiple projects at once (you have to open ALL your projects in the file at once) but is designed to run on a local workstation and allows only one user at a time to access a project.

Suretrak does not integrate with Expedition 9 or 10. Current version is 3.1b, Service Pack 3.

Primavera Project Planner Professional (P3ec) also known as Primavera for Engineering & Construction - Commonly known as "P3ec" although the new name is just begging to be called "P4" and some people do call it that. This is the replacement product for P3. This is a true multi-user, multi-project cost and schedule database that runs on MSDE (local installs), MS SQL and Oracle. This is the next generation of Primavera. It has been on the market for 5 years. We (DRMcNatty) have been actively supporting it for 3-1/2 years. This product is mature, stable and ready for anything you want to throw at it (except those really old schedulers who can't learn something new).

If you are a contractor or a subcontractor – this should be your standard. The only caveat is if you have to submit P3 schedules to your client or client's CM who are not up to speed on P3ec yet.

If you are an owner, Program or Construction Manager – if you have the ability to set the specification for schedule submittals, this is where you should be. There are so many benefits with this robust and stable SQL database tool that we have to say in all honesty, the only reason to stick with P3 is because you don't know any different (or your PM/CM doesn't...)

P3ec is licensed by "concurrent users" and has several add on role based tools that are licensed by "named user". These tools include **Methodology Manager** (included with P3ec) that support intelligent templates and best practices for developing new schedules, **Timesheets** for browser based time collection, **myPrimavera** (also referred to as "Primavision") for browser based portfolio management and team collaboration, **Cost Manager** for DoD/DoE level cost and earned value reporting (you can do earned value with P3ec, this just takes it to another level), **Portfolio Analysis** which packages P3ec's Reports & Tracking modules for people who don't need the full scheduling tool, **Primavera Mobile Manager** for people that want to update their activities using a Palm or Windows PDA, and **Primavera Charts** which provides a wide variety of graphics. For report writers, we recommend the SQL Reporting Services (MS SQL) and any of the variety of Oracle based report generators (most organizations who have Oracle have already made this selection).

Current version is 4.1, Service Pack 2. Version 5.0 is scheduled for release the end of August 2005.

Primavera Enterprise or Primavera for Maintenance & Turnaround (P3e) - The only real difference between P3e and P3ec is the way they are licensed. P3e is licensed based on named users. We get calls from people who have talking to a "Primavera expert" and insist there are big differences between P3e and P3ec. But as of August 2005 and P3e/P3ec version 4.1, that is essentially the only relevant difference. Everything that applies to P3ec, all the

add-ons and ability to integrate with Expedition Professional (ver. 9/10), all apply to P3e as well, including latest version number and service pack. With the release of version 5.0 scheduled for the end of August 2005, Primavera will be launching a new "branding" campaign that will likely change and realign some of these product names. When we know (we were the # 2 Primavera dealer in the US last year) what the final "branding" looks like, we will add it to this document.

Primavera Contractor (PC) – This is the "Suretrak" for the Primavera "Enterprise" environment. At \$495, this tool provides all of the P3ec/P3e capabilities needed for creating and managing a project. You can have multiple projects in PC but you can only open them one at a time. A single project is also limited to 750 activities. This tool is intended to be used by subcontractors doing smaller subsets of a larger project, who have to submit copies of their schedules to a General Contractor. Because the price is so attractive (compared to P3ec's \$4,000), many people who really need the full P3ec (multiple users, more than 750 activities), try to use Primavera Contractor (and get frustrated).

If you are doing projects that can be scheduled with less than 750 activities, and/or are submitting your schedules to someone else in a "P3ec" format, or you are a field Superintendent managing your own project on your laptop that was downloaded from your companies main database (in P3ec), then this is a great tool for you. Just remember it's limitations, at some point you may need to be in a full P3ec environment.

Current version is 4.1, Service Pack 3.

Microsoft Project (MSP) – We think this is a great tool, in the right environment. MSP is a single user – single project planning tool (some professional schedulers do not consider MSP as "scheduling" tool), designed to run on a local computer. MSP does NOT create a CPM (critical path method) schedule. There are plenty of consultants who make a living saying they can do CPM schedules with MSP – we respectfully disagree with them.

MSP is a simple to use tool (much in P3ec was designed to be like it) that a lot of people already have because it comes from Microsoft. It does a good job for instance if you want a simple bar chart, maybe even stretch a bit and resource load it. P3e/P3ec imports MSP files (MPX, MPP) very easily (P3e/ec was originally designed to consolidate MSP files). You can also use the **Primavera Project Link** software and let MSP users save their projects in a P3ec database and share a common P3e/P3ec Resource Pool.

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