

SUPERBID

SuperBid User Manual

Heavy-civil estimating for Windows

Version 0.31.0

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SuperBid · superbid.ca

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Welcome to SuperBid

SuperBid is a Windows desktop estimating application for heavy-civil work: underground utilities, grading and earthworks, road construction and paving, and concrete. It is written for estimators and owners at small and mid-size contractors who price unit-price schedules for municipalities, Alberta Transportation and private developers. One file, the `.sbid` estimate, carries the whole bid from the owner's Schedule of Prices to the signed proposal, and every number on the bid form can be traced back to a crew, a production rate, a material line, a quote or a markup you typed.

SuperBid is metric first. Unit lists start with `LS`, `EA`, `M`, `LM`, `M2`, `M3`, `T`, `KG`, `L` and `KL`; the imperial codes follow for owners who still use them. The built-in starter library prices bedding stone and ready-mix per `M3` and sizes pipe in millimetres. This manual uses metric examples only.

The core ideas

Two layers: cost and price. Every SuperBid estimate has a *cost layer* and a *price layer*, and they live on different screens. The cost layer, built on the Estimate screen, is your true direct cost: crews, production rates, materials, subcontracts and trucking, plus a pool of indirect costs (general conditions). The price layer, built on the Bid Summary screen, turns that cost into the unit prices on the bid form. SuperBid calls this the *spread*: type markups, overhead, profit, contingency, bid-day adjustment and bond are pooled and shared out across the pay items so that unit price times pay quantity adds up to your target bid to the penny. You never price schedule lines one by one, though you can lock any line at a price, a markup or a margin and let the rest respread.

Pay items drive the estimate tree. A *pay item* is one line of the owner's schedule: number, description, unit and quantity. You enter or import the schedule on the Pay Items screen, and every pay item that has nothing nested under it gets a matching top-level *cost item* on the Estimate screen automatically. Under that row you add detail items, attach a crew and production rate or plug a price, and hang materials, subs and trucking. Each pay item keeps two quantities: **Pay Qty**, the owner's number that appears on the bid form, and **Forecast Qty**, your takeoff quantity that the cost is built on.

Resources and crews. A *resource* is the smallest priced thing in the estimate: a labour class, a machine, a material, a subcontract item or a trucking rate. Labour and equipment are priced per hour and used only through *crews*, named sets of people and machines with a rate per crew-hour. Materials, subs and trucking are priced per unit and attach directly to cost items. Rates can be typed, built up from wage and burden or USACE equipment components, or taken as a percentage of a published rate book. Resources, crews and assemblies can be saved to a `.sblib` library and imported into the next bid.

Continuous save and undo. There is no Save button. Every committed edit is written to the `.sbid` file at once, which is why the top bar shows ✓ **Auto-save** and the status bar reads **Ready — all changes save automatically**. In exchange, every committed edit is one undo step: **Ctrl+Z** and **Ctrl+Y** walk the whole history, which is stored inside the file and survives closing and reopening. An audit trail of every labelled step is kept in the file as well.

Around these ideas sit the supporting screens: Quotes for collecting, leveling and awarding vendor pricing; Proposal for the owner-facing bid form and its terms; Cost History for benchmarking a bid against your own past estimates; and three AI tools that draft takeoff quantities, review a tender package and triage bid boards, all of which write nothing into the estimate until you approve it.

How this manual is organised

The manual follows the order in which you build a bid.

- **Getting started** covers installing, the licence agreement, the 30-day trial and licence key, the welcome screen, the **New Estimate** wizard, and the parts of the main window that are the same on every screen.
- **Pay Items and importing the owner's schedule** covers entering the schedule by hand, from Excel, from an AASHTOWare .col proposal, or with AI from a PDF.
- **The Overview dashboard and the Estimate screen** covers the KPI cards and data-quality checks, cost methods and productivity factors, materials and trucking, the indirect-cost checklist and assemblies.
- **Resources, crews, rate book and libraries** covers rate build-ups, the Crew Builder, the equipment rate book and reusable libraries.
- **Quotes and subcontractor pricing** covers quote folders, vendors, leveling and awards.
- **Bid Summary: markups, bond and the spread** covers the markup chain, bid-day changes, locks, exclusions and pricing rules.
- **Proposal, reports and Excel exports** covers the bid proposal, standard clauses, the seven reports and the Excel workbooks.
- **Cost History and benchmarking** covers history databases and the Benchmark vs History report.
- **AI tools: takeoff, pre-bid analysis and the bid scraper** covers the AI connection and the three AI screens.
- **Undo, audit trail, files and troubleshooting** covers saving, undo, the audit trail, file types, copies and templates, backups, licensing, updates and support.

Two reference chapters close the manual: **Keyboard shortcuts and conventions**, and a **Glossary** of SuperBid terms.

Throughout, labels are shown in **bold** exactly as they appear on screen, menu paths as **Interchange ► Import pay items from Excel...**, and file names, paths, unit codes and values you type in `monospace`. Callouts marked **Note**, **Tip** and **Warning** flag details worth a second look; a **Warning** always concerns data loss or a wrong bid.

If you want to see the screens before reading about them, the **Quick start** chapter that follows builds a small municipal watermain bid from an empty estimate to a PDF proposal in about half an hour.

Getting started

SuperBid is a Windows desktop estimating application for heavy-civil work. This chapter takes you from the downloaded zip to an open estimate: installing, accepting the licence agreement, the 30-day trial and licence key, the welcome screen, the **New Estimate** wizard, and the parts of the main window that stay the same on every screen. Later chapters cover each screen in detail.

What ships

SuperBid is delivered as `SuperBid-v0.31.0-win-x64.zip` for Windows 10 or 11, 64-bit. There is no installer. Unzip the folder anywhere you like. Inside are `SuperBid.App.exe` (a single self-contained program; no separate .NET install is needed), `EULA.txt` (a copy of the licence text), a `LatoFont` folder and a few `.pdb` files. Keep them together. Double-click `SuperBid.App.exe` to start.

Note: Avoid unzipping into a folder whose name contains %, & or ". The built-in updater refuses to update inside such a path.

On the first run SuperBid puts a shortcut named `SuperBid.lnk` on your desktop, once per install. Everything SuperBid remembers about you — licence and trial state, recent estimates, window placement, grid layouts and company catalogs — lives under `%APPDATA%\SuperBid`. Your estimates live wherever you put them, as `.sbid` files. Updates never touch either.

Screen tour

The welcome screen

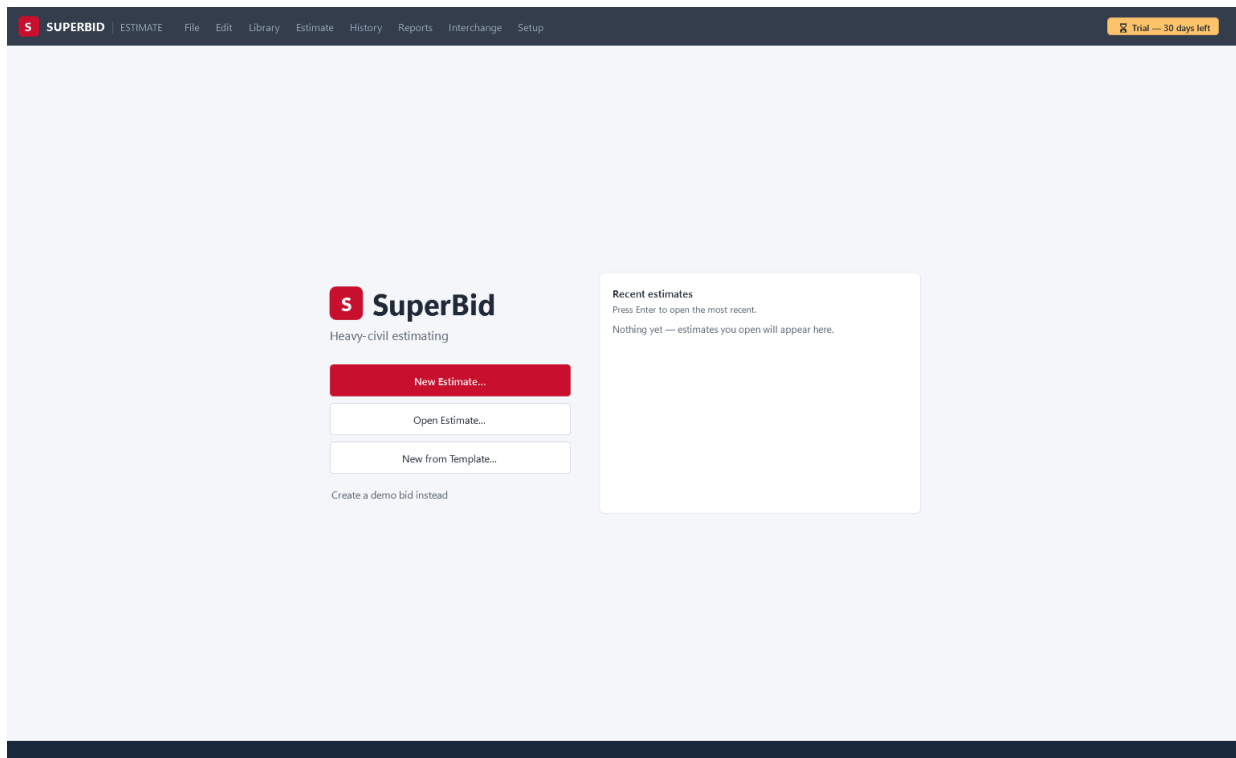


Figure 1. The welcome screen, shown until an estimate is opened.

When SuperBid starts without a file, the main window shows the welcome screen. On the left are the tagline **Heavy-civil estimating** and three buttons: **New Estimate...** (the wizard, same as **File ► New Estimate...**), **Open Estimate...** (a Windows Open dialog titled **Open estimate**, filtered to SuperBid estimate (*.sbid)) and **New from Template...**. Below them, the link **Create a demo bid instead** builds a small sample estimate.

On the right, the **Recent estimates** card lists up to 8 estimates you have opened, each as the file name over its folder path; click one to open it. Files that no longer exist drop out. Before you have opened anything it reads **Nothing yet — estimates you open will appear here**. The hint reads **Press Enter to open the most recent**.

Once an estimate opens, the welcome screen is replaced by the document until you restart SuperBid. Only one estimate is open at a time: opening or creating another replaces the current one. Nothing is lost, because everything was already saved.

The main window

Top bar. The dark bar carries the brand lockup **SUPERBID | ESTIMATE** (ESTIMATE is a fixed label, not your estimate's name), the menu bar, and a group of items at the right:

Item	What it means	You can edit?
 Trial — N days left (amber)	Shown only while unlicensed; click to open the licence dialog. Re-checked whenever the window regains focus. If the trial runs out mid-session it reads  Trial ended — enter license key.	Click only
 Update vX.Y.Z — install & restart (red)	Shown only when the startup check found a newer release; click to install. Tooltip: Downloads the new version and restarts SuperBid. Estimates stay in your .sbid files; if the file format changed, each one is upgraded the first time you open it and a copy of the old file is kept beside it.	Click only
 Auto-save (green)	Shown once an estimate is open. Tooltip: Every committed edit is written to the .sbid file immediately — there is no Save button to forget.	No
Estimate name (white)	The open estimate's file name without .sbid. The window title shows it too, as SuperBid 0.31.0 — name.sbid.	No

Menu bar. File (New Estimate... Ctrl+N, New from Template..., New Demo Bid..., Open... Ctrl+O, Open Recent, Exit), Edit (Undo Ctrl+Z, Redo Ctrl+Y), Library, Estimate, History, Reports, Interchange and Setup. The middle menus are covered with the screens they serve. Most menu commands need an open estimate; some do nothing without one, others tell you **Open or create an estimate first**. Open Recent reads **(no recent estimates)** until you have opened one.

Left rail. Two lists switch screens. **WORKSPACE** holds the ten estimating screens: **Overview** (Ctrl+1), **Estimate** (Ctrl+2), **Pay Items** (Ctrl+3), **Quotes** (Ctrl+4), **Bid Summary** (Ctrl+5), **Proposal** (Ctrl+6), **Resources** (Ctrl+7), **Crew Builder** (Ctrl+8), **Cost History** (Ctrl+9) and **Item Assemblies** (Ctrl+0). **AI TOOLS** holds **AI Takeoff**, **AI PreBid Analysis** and **Bid Scraper**; these have no shortcuts and need an AI connection set up under **Setup ► AI & Bid Scraper settings...**. The version, **SuperBid 0.31.0**, sits at the bottom of the rail. The rail and the status-bar figures appear only once an estimate is open; the welcome screen has neither. The first estimate you open lands on **Overview**, a dashboard of KPI cards and data-quality checks described in its own chapter; opening another estimate keeps whatever screen you are on.

Status bar. The dark strip at the bottom:

Item	What it means	You can edit?
Message (left)	The latest message. Grey is information; the default is Ready — all changes save automatically . Red bold is a problem.	No
Δ +1,250.00 (amber)	How much your most recent change moved the bid total.	No
Margin 10.00%	$(\text{target bid} - \text{base-bid cost}) \div \text{target bid}$.	No

Item	What it means	You can edit?
Total cost: 109,920.18	Direct cost. Reads CALC ERROR: plus the reason if the calculator cannot run.	No
BID TOTAL: 122,133.54 (red pill)	The target bid from the pricing spread. Hidden until pricing has run.	No

Grids everywhere follow one colour rule, printed on the Estimate screen's header: **white = input · gray = calculated · blue = your override**. Blue text is a value you typed over a calculation, such as a plug, a locked price or a quote entry. On the Quotes screen, green marks the low bid and blue the awarded vendor.

Tasks

To accept the licence agreement on first launch

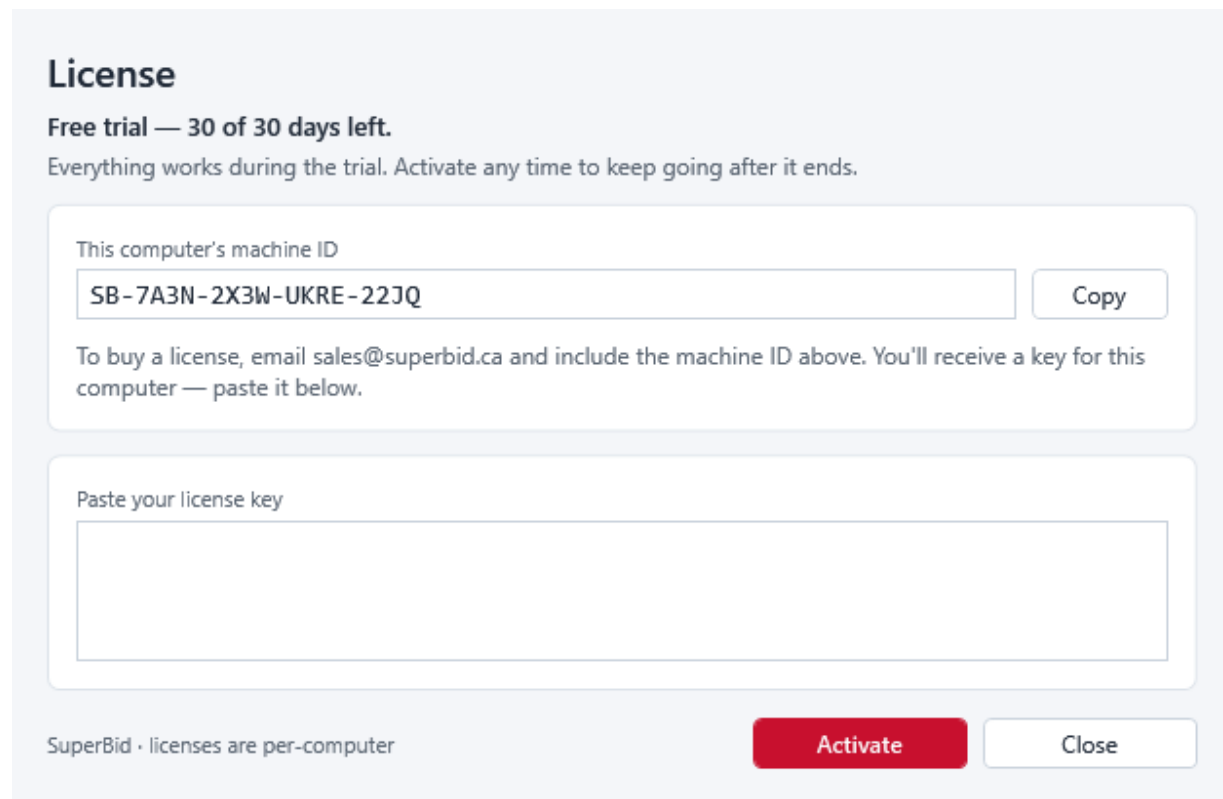
1. The **SuperBid License Agreement** window appears before anything else. It holds the full text of `EULA.txt` (12 sections, governed by Alberta law) with the footer **EULA version 1.0**.
2. Read the terms, then click **I Accept** (or press **Enter**). **Decline** (**Esc**) closes SuperBid without starting it.
3. Your acceptance is stored in `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\settings.json`. You are asked again only if a future release changes the agreement's version.

To reread the terms later, use **Setup ► View license agreement...**; there the accept button is hidden and the close button reads **Close**.

To use the 30-day trial

1. On the first unlicensed launch the trial starts by itself. No sign-up and no internet connection are needed. The start date is written to `settings.json` and mirrored in the registry under `HKCU\Software\SuperBid`.
2. While the trial runs, the amber chip  **Trial — N days left** shows in the top bar. Everything works during the trial.
3. When the days reach 0, the next launch stops at the **SuperBid License** dialog with **Your 30-day free trial has ended**. The only ways forward are **Activate** with a key or **Exit SuperBid**. Your `.sbid` files are untouched.

To buy and activate a licence key



License

Free trial — 30 of 30 days left.

Everything works during the trial. Activate any time to keep going after it ends.

This computer's machine ID

SB-7A3N-2X3W-UKRE-22JQ Copy

To buy a license, email sales@superbid.ca and include the machine ID above. You'll receive a key for this computer — paste it below.

Paste your license key

SuperBid · licenses are per-computer Activate Close

Figure 2. The SuperBid License dialog.

1. Open **Setup ▶ License key...** or click the amber trial chip. The **SuperBid License** dialog shows your status, for example **Free trial — 12 of 30 days left**. The footer reads **SuperBid · licenses are per-computer**.
2. Under **This computer's machine ID**, click **Copy**. The ID looks like SB-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX.
3. Email sales@superbid.ca and include the machine ID, as the dialog itself says. You receive a text key beginning SB1..
4. Paste the whole key into **Paste your license key**. Line breaks and spaces picked up from the email do not matter.
5. Click **Activate** (or press **Enter**). The status changes to **Licensed to** your name and company, with the edition, licence number, issue date and either **perpetual** or an expiry date. The trial chip disappears. Click **Close**.

Activation is checked on your computer; nothing is sent over the internet. If the key is rejected, the dialog says why in red. If it later says **Your license has expired**. or **Your license was issued for a different computer.**, email support@superbid.ca with the machine ID shown for a replacement key. A Windows reinstall changes the machine ID; renaming the PC or rebooting does not.

To create a new estimate

New estimate
Name it, pick where it lives, choose what to start from.

Estimate name
New Estimate

Folder
C:\Users\Brayd\Documents Browse...

Start from

- ☒ Blank estimate
- ☐ Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)
- ☐ Copy of a template / master estimate: Pick...
- ☐ Demo bid (Maple Street sample data)

Cancel Create estimate

Figure 3. The New Estimate wizard.

1. Choose **File ► New Estimate...** (**Ctrl+N**) or click **New Estimate...** on the welcome screen. The **New Estimate** dialog opens.
2. Type an **Estimate name** over the selected default `New Estimate`, for example `2026-047 Maple Street Storm Sewer`. This becomes both the file name and the estimate's title. Characters not allowed in file names are replaced with `_`.
3. Check **Folder**. It defaults to the folder of your most recent estimate, or, before you have one, to `%USERPROFILE%\Estimates` (for example `C:\Users\<you>\Estimates`), a local folder SuperBid creates for you. **Browse...** opens a picker titled **Choose the estimate's folder**. A folder that does not exist yet is created.
4. Under **Start from**, pick one:
 - **Blank estimate** (the default): empty, with your company's default proposal terms seeded.
 - **Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)**: adds the built-in metric starter library — six labour classes, six machines, two materials in M3, four crews (`PIPE1`, `GRADE1`, `CONC1`, `CURB1`) and three parametric assemblies (`PIPE-TRENCH`, `CONC-FLAT`, `CURB-GUTTER`). The rates are illustrative defaults; edit them on the Resources screen.
 - **Copy of a template / master estimate**: click **Pick...** and choose any `.sbid` or `.sblib`. You get an independent deep copy with fresh IDs, and the template's proposal terms come along.

- **Demo bid (Maple Street sample data):** the sample estimate described below.
5. Click **Create estimate**. The `.sbid` is written to disk immediately, opened and added to Recent. If a file of that name already exists, a box titled **New Estimate** asks `<name>.sbid already exists here. Create a new one? The existing file is kept beside it as <name>.replaced-<date>.sbid`. Answer **Yes** to go ahead. The new file is built as `<name>.sbid.sb-tmp` beside the old one and swapped in only when it is complete, so a bad template or a failed create leaves the old file exactly as it was. The old file is not deleted: it is renamed `<name>.replaced-<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.sbid` in the same folder, the status bar reads **Previous <name>.sbid kept as <name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid in the same folder.**, and **File ▶ Open...** lists it like any other estimate.

Note: Answering **Yes to Create a new one?** keeps the existing estimate as `<name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid` beside the new one. Delete that copy yourself once you are sure you no longer need it.

File ▶ New from Template... (and the welcome-screen button) is the shorter route to the template option: pick the `.sbid` or `.sblib` in **Choose a template estimate (master)**, then name the new file in **Create estimate file** (suggested name `estimate.sbid`; the dialog opens in the same default folder as the wizard). If you pick a name that already exists, the Windows save dialog asks whether to replace it, the old file is kept as `<name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid` in the same way, and the status bar reports where it was kept. Naming the template itself as the new file is refused with **The new estimate cannot be the template itself — choose a different file name**. A template that is itself write-protected (an email attachment, a file on a USB stick) works as a source even though it cannot be opened for editing.

To try the demo bid

1. Choose **File ▶ New Demo Bid...**, click **Create a demo bid instead** on the welcome screen, or pick the demo option in the wizard.
2. In the **Create estimate file** dialog accept `demo-bid.sbid` or rename it, then click **Save**. The dialog opens in the same default folder as the wizard; if the name already exists, Windows asks whether to replace it, the old file is kept as `<name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid` and the status bar says so.
3. **Demo Bid — Maple Street Improvements** opens with 4 pay items, 8 resources, 2 crews, 4 cost items, a quote folder with two vendors, 10% profit and 1% bond. Its totals are **Total cost: 109,920.18** and **BID TOTAL: 122,133.54**.

Note: The demo bid is built in imperial units (LF, SY, CY, 18" pipe). It shows how the screens fit together, but for metric examples start from **Blank + starter library**, which uses M3 and millimetre pipe sizes.

To open an existing estimate

1. Choose **File ▶ Open... (Ctrl+O)** and pick the `.sbid`; or choose it under **File ▶ Open Recent**; or click a row in **Recent estimates**; or press **Enter** on the welcome screen to open the most recent one. You can also start `SuperBid.App.exe` with the file's path as the argument.

2. If the file cannot be opened, a box titled **SuperBid — cannot open estimate** explains why, for example **Estimate file not found**.

A write-protected file — an email attachment still in its attachment folder, a file on a USB stick, or one with the read-only attribute set — is refused with **This file is read-only (attachment / USB / locked by another program). Save a copy to a local folder to edit it**. Copy it to a local folder and open the copy. Such a file still works as a template for **New from Template...** and as a library to import from. An estimate that is already open in another SuperBid window — even one sitting idle — is refused at once with **This estimate is open in another SuperBid window. Close it there first**. (it still works as a template or library source, and a window that crashed releases its file by itself). A file that some other program is holding is refused after a short wait with **This estimate file is locked by another program — another SuperBid window, a sync client (OneDrive/Dropbox) or antivirus scanning it. Close that window or wait a moment, then try again**.

When an estimate you open or create sits in a OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive or iCloud Drive folder, or is a cloud placeholder file not fully on this disk, the status bar shows a one-time red warning:

Warning: this estimate is in a OneDrive folder. SuperBid writes the file as you work — pause syncing while it is open, or keep estimates in a local folder such as C:\Users\<you>\Estimates. Nothing is blocked; the warning appears once per file per session and never as a pop-up.

An estimate saved by an older SuperBid is upgraded in place when opened. Before upgrading, SuperBid leaves an untouched copy beside it named `<name>.sbid.v<N>.bak`, where N is the old file version. An existing copy of that name is never overwritten; if the file has changed since that copy was made, a second copy named `<name>.sbid.v<N>.<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.bak` is written instead. Rename the newest such copy back to `.sbid` if you ever need the file in the older SuperBid. A file saved by a newer SuperBid is refused with **Estimate file version N is newer than this SuperBid (12) understands.**, followed by advice to update SuperBid or to rename the newest `.bak` copy left beside the file back to `.sbid`.

To keep SuperBid up to date

1. Every launch, SuperBid quietly checks the public release feed; without internet the check fails silently. If a newer version exists, the red chip **↓ Update vX.Y.Z — install & restart** appears. To check by hand, use **Setup ▶ Check for updates...**, which answers with **Update available, You are on the latest version (vX.Y.Z).** or **Could not reach the update feed:** and the reason.
2. Click the red chip. The **Install update** box asks **Install SuperBid vX.Y.Z now?** and explains that the app closes, updates itself and reopens; that your estimates stay in your `.sbid` files; and that if this version changes the estimate file format, each estimate is upgraded the first time you open it and, where the folder allows, a copy named `<name>.sbid.v<old>.bak` is left beside it so you can go back — older SuperBid builds cannot open an upgraded file. Answer **Yes**. SuperBid downloads the update, closes, copies the new files over its own folder and reopens. While the files are swapped, a copy of the old install folder sits beside it as `<folder>.old`; it is removed once the update has succeeded. If a folder of that name already holds files (a copy you kept, or the previous version left by an earlier failed update), it is left alone and the copy goes to `<folder>.old-<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>` instead.

3. The updater refuses to start while another SuperBid window is open: a box titled **Update failed** reads **Another SuperBid window is open (N more). Close every other SuperBid window, then click the update again** — do that and click the chip again. The same box appears if the downloaded package is incomplete or is not the version the feed announced; nothing has been touched. It also appears, before anything is downloaded, when the updater cannot create a folder beside the install folder: **The updater cannot write beside the SuperBid folder (<parent>), so it could not keep the previous version safe while the files are swapped (<reason>). If SuperBid lives in a folder you cannot write to (Program Files, a shared drive), move it to a folder you own or unzip the new version by hand.** If the swap itself fails after SuperBid has closed, the previous version is put back automatically and the next launch shows **Update failed — previous version restored** in a box titled **SuperBid update**. If the message names a folder path containing %, & or ", download the zip yourself and unzip it over the existing folder. Every attempt is logged to %APPDATA%\SuperBid\update.log.

To move between screens and undo changes

1. Click a screen name in the left rail, or press **Ctrl+1** to **Ctrl+9** for **Overview** through **Cost History** and **Ctrl+0** for **Item Assemblies**. The shortcut first commits any cell you are editing, so a half-typed value is saved rather than lost.
2. Press **Ctrl+F** on the **Estimate**, **Pay Items** or **Resources** screen to jump to that screen's filter box. On other screens it does nothing.
3. Use **Edit ► Undo (Ctrl+Z)** and **Edit ► Redo (Ctrl+Y)**, or the **Undo** and **Redo** buttons on the Estimate screen. Each committed edit is one step; the status bar reports **Undone.** or **Redone.** The undo history is stored inside the .sbid, so it survives closing and reopening.

To save, close and back up (there is no Save command)

1. There is nothing to save. Every committed edit is written to the .sbid at once; the ✓ **Auto-save** chip and the status message **Ready — all changes save automatically.** are the reminders. The **File** menu has no Save or Save As.
2. Close with **File ► Exit** or the window's close button. No prompt appears. SuperBid remembers the window size, position and maximized state in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\window.txt.
3. To back up or share an estimate, copy its .sbid file. Open a different estimate or exit first: SuperBid keeps the open file in use while you work, so do not move or rename it while it is open. While an estimate is open, an empty <name>.sbid-journal file sits beside it and disappears when you close the estimate; leave it alone and do not sync it separately (one left behind after a crash is harmless). The only copies SuperBid makes on its own are the <name>.sbid.v<N>.bak written before a file-format upgrade and the <name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid kept when you create a new estimate over an existing file name; see "Backups" in the last chapter. Keep estimates in a local folder such as %USERPROFILE%\Estimates rather than a OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive or iCloud Drive folder, or pause syncing while an estimate is open; SuperBid warns you once on the status bar when it sees a sync folder.

To show, hide or reset grid columns

1. Right-click a column header on the Estimate, Pay Items, Bid Summary pricing or Resources grid.
2. Tick or untick column names to show or hide them (the first column always stays). Drag headers to reorder and drag edges to resize.
3. Choose **Reset columns** to restore the default layout. These four grids keep their layout across launches in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\grids.txt; other grids reset each launch.

Tips and gotchas

- The first run opens maximized. After that SuperBid restores your last window placement, unless the saved position no longer touches any monitor, in which case it opens centred at 1500 × 850.
- Keyboard shortcuts need exactly **Ctrl**. **Ctrl+Shift** and AltGr combinations are ignored on purpose so typing on non-US keyboard layouts is not hijacked.
- Every dialog that takes a number (**New Pay Item**, **Haul Cycle Calculator**, **Indirect Costs**, **Insert Resources**, **New Resource**, **Rate Book**, the assembly builders and the AI schedule import), the free-text grid cells that take one (**Lock value** on the Bid Summary, **Plug \$/U** and **Plug Total** on the Estimate screen, **4 · Vendor Unit Price** on Quotes) and the **Set base bid to \$** box accept 2.5 or 2,5 whatever the Windows language, and read 1 200,5, \$1,250,000 and 1 250 000,50 too. The one ambiguous case is a lone comma followed by exactly three digits, such as 1,250: it follows the Windows region setting (1250 on an English machine, 1.25 on a French one). Type 1250 or 1,250.00 to be explicit. In those grid cells, text that is not a number is refused on the status bar (""**abc**" is not a number — lock value unchanged.", or "... plug unit cost unchanged.", "... plug total unchanged.", "... quoted price unchanged.") and the cell keeps its stored value; a blank still clears it.
- **Enter** on the welcome screen opens the most recent estimate only when the focus is not in a text box, button or menu.
- Deleting %APPDATA%\SuperBid does not restart the trial: the start date is also in the registry, and the earlier of the two wins. Setting the PC clock back more than 3 days ends the trial.
- Copying the unzipped folder to a second PC gives that PC its own 30-day trial, but your key will not activate there. One key covers one computer.
- If you delete the desktop shortcut, startup never recreates it; **Setup ► Add desktop shortcut** brings it back and confirms with **Shortcut added to your desktop**.
- AI API keys and the Bid Scraper password in settings.json are encrypted for your Windows user, so a copied settings.json loses them on another PC or account.
- **Library ► Save resources to library...** is not a save command. It exports your resources and crews to a .sblib library file for reuse in other estimates.
- An unexpected error does not close SuperBid. A box titled **SuperBid** reads **Something went wrong, but your estimate is safe — every change is already saved in the .sbid file. You can keep**

working., shows the error text and names the log file, %APPDATA%\SuperBid\crash.log. Attach that file when you report a problem.

Quick start: your first estimate in 30 minutes

This walkthrough builds one small bid end to end: a City of Edmonton tender for 1,200 m of 300 mm PVC watermain replacement with four schedule items. It uses the built-in starter library so you do not have to create labour, equipment or crews first. Every label below appears on screen exactly as written. Where a step is optional, it says so.

Start SuperBid and create the estimate

1. Unzip SuperBid-v0.31.0-win-x64.zip and double-click SuperBid.App.exe. On the first launch, read the **SuperBid License Agreement** and click **I Accept**. The amber chip ⌚ **Trial — N days left** in the top bar means the 30-day trial is running; nothing else is needed today.
2. On the welcome screen click **New Estimate...** (or choose **File ▶ New Estimate...**, **Ctrl+N**). The **New Estimate** dialog opens.
3. Type the **Estimate name**: 2026-051 118 Avenue Watermain Replacement. This becomes the file name. Check **Folder**; click **Browse...** to put it somewhere else.
4. Under **Start from**, pick **Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)**. This seeds six labour classes, six machines, Mat-BEDSTONE and Mat-READYMIX priced per M3, and the crews PIPE1, GRADE1, CONC1 and CURB1.
5. Click **Create estimate**. The .sbid is written to disk and opens on the **Overview**. The green ✓ **Auto-save** chip in the top bar means every edit from here on is saved the moment you commit it. There is no Save command anywhere.

Enter the owner's schedule

1. Press **Ctrl+3** for **Pay Items** and click **Add Pay Item**.
2. In the **New Pay Item** dialog type **Item number** 1, **Description** Mobilization and demobilization, **Unit** LS and **Owner quantity** 1. Click **Add pay item**. The status bar reads "Added pay item 1 (and its estimate item)."
3. Repeat for the other three lines:
 - 2, Supply and install 300 mm PVC watermain, LM, 1200
 - 3, Hydrant assembly, complete, EA, 6
 - 4, Asphalt pavement restoration, M2, 3600
4. Look at the grid. Each row shows the same number in **Pay Qty** and **Forecast Qty**. If your own takeoff says the asphalt is really 3,900 m², type 3900 in **Forecast Qty** on item 4. The cost is built on the forecast; the owner's **Pay Qty** stays at 3600 and is what prints on the bid form.

Tip: If the schedule arrived as an .xlsx, **Interchange ▶ Import pay items from Excel...** does steps 6 to 8 in one go. A PDF schedule can be transcribed with **Import with AI...** once an AI connection is set up under **Setup ▶ AI & Bid Scraper settings....**

Cost the work

1. Press **Ctrl+2** for **Estimate**. Each pay item already has a top-level cost item with the same code, description, unit and quantity. White cells are yours to type in, gray cells are calculated, and blue text is a value you overrode.
2. Select row 2 (the watermain). Leave **Method** as Detail. Click the **Crew** cell and pick PIPE1. Set **Fac** to UH (units per crew-hour) and type **Prod Rate** 30. **Crew Hrs** reads 40.00 and **Labor+Equip** fills in from the crew's rate.
3. The starter library has no pipe, so add one. Press **Ctrl+7** for **Resources**, click the **Materials** pill, then **Add Resource**. Change the minted code to Mat-PVC300, type a Description such as 300 mm PVC watermain pipe, change Unit from HR to LM, and type 95.0000 in **Effective Rate**. Rate Source stays **Manual**.
4. Press **Ctrl+2**, select row 2 again, and in the lower grid **Materials / subs / trucking on the selected item** click **Add Resource**. Set **Resource** to Mat-PVC300, **Qty per Unit** 1 and **Waste %** 2. Click **Add Resource** again and set **Resource** Mat-BEDSTONE, **Qty per Unit** 0.45 and **Waste %** 5. The row's **Mat/Sub** and **Total Cost** update as you leave each cell.
5. Select row 3 (hydrants). Set **Method** to Plug and type **Plug \$/U** 9500. The value shows in blue.
6. Select row 4 (asphalt). Set **Method** to Subcontracted and type **Plug \$/U** 48. Subcontracted dollars take the **Subcontract %** markup on the Bid Summary later.
7. Select row 1 (mobilization). Set **Method** to Plug and type **Plug Total** 18000.
8. Click **Indirect Costs**. Tick the general-conditions lines that apply to this job, type each lump sum, choose **Spread across items** and click **Apply**. Each ticked line becomes a Plug cost item coded IND-... and marked **Ind**; the markup chain spreads them over the pay items.
9. Press **Ctrl+1**. **Data-quality checks** on the Overview should read ✓ **All clear — every cost is carried, every pay item is costed**. If a ⚠ line appears, click it: SuperBid jumps to the row that needs attention.

Level a supplier quote (optional)

1. Press **Ctrl+4** for **Quotes**. Under **1 • Folders** click **Add**, then click the **Folder** cell and rename Folder 1 to Watermain pipe.
2. In the **2 • Lines & leveled comparison** bar pick Mat-PVC300 in the first dropdown and click **+ Resource**. **Qty** shows 1,224.00: the estimate's demand for the pipe including the 2% waste.
3. Under **Vendors** click **Add** and rename Vendor 1 in the **Vendor** cell. Pick that vendor beside **+ Quote** and click **+ Quote**.
4. Click the quote row under **3 • Vendor quotes in this folder** and type the quoted price on the line in **4 • Vendor Unit Price**. Tick **Reviewed** once you have checked it against the vendor's paperwork.
5. Select the line in the comparison grid and the quote row, then click **Award Line → Selected Vendor**. On the Resources screen Mat-PVC300 now has **Rate Source Manual** and the vendor's price as its **Effective Rate**, and row 2 on the Estimate screen has repriced. **Ctrl+Z** reverses the whole award if you change your mind.

Price the bid

1. Press **Ctrl+5** for **Bid Summary**. In the **Markups** card type **Overhead %** 8, **Profit %** 10 and **Bond %** 1, pressing Tab after each. Every commit re-runs the chain and respreads every unit price; **BID TOTAL:** in the status bar updates at once.
2. Set **Balance item** to 1. A lump-sum item with quantity 1 absorbs the rounding pennies exactly.
3. Expand **Full chain (audit view)** and confirm Residual reads 0.00.
4. Read **Unit Price** and **Extended** on each line of the pay-item pricing grid. To hold a line at a price the market expects, set its **Lock** to **Price** and overtype **Lock value**. The other lines respread and **BID TOTAL:** does not change.
5. Click **Check bid**. SuperBid jumps to the Overview and the status bar reads "Bid readiness: all checks clear." or a count of checks needing attention. For a deeper scan, choose **Estimate ► Estimate Check...** and click **Run check**.

Produce the proposal

1. Press **Ctrl+6** for **Proposal**. Expand **Terms & conditions** · **print on every proposal**, click **Standard clauses...**, tick the clauses this bid should carry (for example **Validity** and **Payment & holdback**) and click **Apply to proposal**.
2. Click **Refresh** to re-render the preview, then **Print / Save PDF....** In the Report Preview window click **Save as PDF...** and save `bid-proposal1.pdf`, or click **Print....**
3. For a review copy in Excel, choose **Interchange ► Export estimate to Excel workbook...** and save `estimate.xlsx`. The **Pay Items** sheet lists Number through Extended with a **TOTAL BID** row.

After bid day

1. Choose **History ► Capture estimate to history...** and save the snapshot to `company-history.sbhst`. On the next watermain bid, **History ► Benchmark vs history...** shows each unit cost, production rate and bid unit price against the low, average and high of what you have captured.
2. Close with **File ► Exit**. No prompt appears, because nothing is unsaved.

Note: The whole walkthrough is one undo history. If a step goes wrong, press **Ctrl+Z** until the status bar shows the state you want, then carry on. The history is stored in the `.sbid`, so it is still there tomorrow.

Pay Items and importing the owner's schedule

The **Pay Items** screen holds the owner's bid schedule: the Schedule of Prices, Form of Tender or Schedule of Quantities you were sent. In SuperBid a *pay item* is one line of that schedule: item number, description, unit and the owner's quantity. The pay-item list drives the estimate. Every pay item that has no items nested under it (a *leaf*) automatically gets a matching top-level item on the Estimate screen with the same code, description, unit and quantity, and that is where you build cost. This screen is about structure and quantities only. Unit prices, extended amounts, price locks and the No Mkp / No Bond / No Ind exclusions are not here; they live on the Bid Summary pricing grid.

Open it from the left rail (**Pay Items**) or press **Ctrl+3**.

The screenshot shows the SuperBid interface with the 'Pay Items' screen active. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Overview, Estimate, Pay Items (selected), Quotes, Bid Summary, Proposal, Resources, Crew Builder, Cost History, Item Assemblies, AI TOOLS, AI Takeoff, AI PreBid Analysis, and Bid Scraper. The main area displays a table of pay items with columns: Number, Description, Unit, Pay Qty, Forecast Qty, Alternate, Block, Direct Cost, and Unit Cost. The table lists 11 items, including Mobilization and demobilization, Traffic accommodation, Remove existing asphalt pavement, Trench excavation and backfill, 300 mm PVC watermain, Hydrant assembly, 300 mm gate valve, Pipe bedding, Asphalt pavement 100 mm, Granular base 250 mm, and Topsoil and hydroseed. The bottom section shows 'Cost allocated to the selected pay item' with a table for Cost Item, Description, Share %, and Allocated \$.

Number	Description	Unit	Pay Qty	Forecast Qty	Alternate	Block	Direct Cost	Unit Cost
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	LS	1.00	1.00		Base bid	25,000.00	25,000.0000
0200	Traffic accommodation	LS	1.00	1.00		Base bid	18,000.00	18,000.0000
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	M2	3,600.00	3,600.00		Base bid	9,626.85	2,6741
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	M3	4,200.00	4,200.00		Base bid	143,509.11	34,1688
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	LM	1,200.00	1,200.00		Base bid	206,253.08	171,8776
0600	Hydrant assembly	EA	6.00	6.00		Base bid	52,157.26	8,692,8767
0700	300 mm gate valve	EA	8.00	8.00		Base bid	29,171.51	3,646,4384
0800	Pipe bedding	M3	650.00	650.00		Base bid	53,754.11	82,6986
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	T	1,150.00	1,150.00		Base bid	197,225.00	171,5000
1000	Granular base 250 mm	M3	900.00	900.00		Base bid	62,078.13	68,9757
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	M2	2,400.00	2,400.00		Base bid	16,894.32	7,0393

Cost Item	Description	Share %	Allocated \$
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	15.00	25,325.14

Figure 4. The Pay Items screen with the sample 118 Avenue watermain estimate open.

Screen tour

The **Pay items** section bar holds the toolbar:

- **Block:** a dropdown that filters the grid to **All blocks**, **Base bid** or one change-order number. It is only visible once the estimate has at least one change order.
- **Change Orders...** opens the **Change Orders** dialog (add, lock, status, markup, totals).
- The search box filters rows by number or description as you type. **Ctrl+F** jumps to it when this screen is active. The search and block filters combine.
- **Import with AI...** opens the **Import pay items with AI** dialog (see Tasks).

- **Add Pay Item** opens the **New Pay Item** dialog for a top-level item.
- **Add Subordinate** opens the same dialog, titled **New Subordinate Pay Item**, to nest an item under the selected row. Nesting has no depth limit.
- **Delete** removes the selected item and everything nested under it.

When the schedule is empty the grid shows the hint "No pay items yet. Import the owner's Schedule of Prices with AI from a PDF or Excel, add items by hand, or import from Excel / DOT .COL (Interchange menu)." with an **Import pay item schedule with AI...** button.

Parent rows are bold on a tint and roll up their children; the **Number** and **Description** columns stay frozen when you scroll sideways.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Number	The owner's item number exactly as printed (0200, 10.011, A-3), indented by nesting level. It is the join key for every import: matching ignores case but is otherwise exact, so 0100 and 100 are different items. Keep numbers unique; the New Pay Item dialog refuses a duplicate, but the grid does not check. If two items do share a number, imports match against the first of them (the Excel, AI and DOT .COL imports warn "Duplicate item number '...' already in the schedule — matching against the first occurrence."), and Write prices to DOT (.COL)... refuses to run until they are renumbered. Renaming also renames the mirrored estimate item if it still carries the old code.	Yes
Description	Item description. Edits flow to the mirrored estimate item if it still shows the old text.	Yes
Unit	Unit code, stored as text. The in-grid editor is a pick list of the standard codes plus any unit already used in the estimate.	Yes (dropdown)
Pay Qty	Owner's bid-schedule quantity. Unit price × Pay Qty is the extended amount on the bid form.	Yes
Forecast Qty	Your takeoff quantity, what you expect to actually build. The estimate costs against this number; if it is 0 the Pay Qty is used instead.	Yes
Alternate	Alternate or option group label (for example ALT-1). Blank means base bid. Each alternate is priced stand-alone on its own markup chain, separate from the base bid (see the Bid Summary chapter), and the Bid Proposal prints it as its own schedule with its own total. Labels are matched ignoring case (ALT-1 and alt-1 are one alternate) but print as typed.	Yes
Block	Base bid or a change-order number. Only visible when change orders exist. Picking a value moves the item between blocks.	Yes (dropdown)
Direct Cost	Total direct cost rolled up from the cost items assigned or allocated to this item. Zero shows as a dash.	No
Unit Cost	Direct cost per unit, four decimals. This is cost, not the bid unit price.	No

The standard unit list is metric first: LS, EA, M, LM, M2, M3, M2CM, M2DM, MM, KM, HA, T, KG, L, KL, followed by the imperial codes (LF, SY, SF, CY, CF, TON, LB, STA, AC, MI) and HR, DAY, WK, MO, GAL, MGAL, CWT. Use the code the owner's schedule uses and keep it consistent across the estimate; Excel exports store units exactly as written. Wherever SuperBid compares units (cost-history bands, the AI takeoff import, the PreBid schedule join), M and LM count as the same unit, so history captured per M still applies to an item priced per LM. Both codes stay in the unit lists and nothing stored or displayed changes.

The lower panel, **Cost allocated to the selected pay item**, lists shares of top-level cost items that feed the selected pay item. It has a dropdown of top-level cost item codes, **+ Allocate** and **Remove**.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Cost Item	Code of the top-level cost item being shared.	No
Description	That cost item's description.	No
Share %	This pay item's share of the cost item, typed as a whole percent (50 = 50%).	Yes
Allocated \$	Share % × the cost item's total cost.	No

Colour conventions apply here as everywhere: a white cell is yours to type in, a gray cell is calculated, and blue text is a value you overrode. A cell you edited this session gets an amber tint with a tooltip showing the previous value ("was ...").

Tasks

To add a pay item by hand

1. Click **Add Pay Item**. The **New Pay Item** dialog opens with **Item number** pre-filled with the next free ITEM-1, ITEM-2 ... number and selected, so typing replaces it.
2. Type the owner's number exactly as on the bid form, for example 0200.
3. Type the **Description**, for example Common excavation.
4. In **Unit** pick a code or type the schedule's own spelling. Typed text is folded to the canonical code on add: m³ becomes M3, tonne becomes T, each becomes EA.
5. Type the **Owner quantity**, for example 7550. Blank means 0.
6. Optionally type a **Forecast quantity**. Blank means the same as the owner quantity.
7. Optionally pick or type an **Alternate group**. Blank means base bid.
8. Click **Add pay item** or press Enter.

The pay item and its mirrored estimate item are created together as one undo step, and the status bar reads "Added pay item 0200 (and its estimate item)." If the estimate item cannot be written, the pay item is not added either: the grids reload and the status bar shows the reason in red. A blank number, a duplicate number or a non-numeric quantity is refused with a message titled **New Pay Item**.

To add a subordinate pay item

1. Select the parent row.
2. Click **Add Subordinate**. The dialog is titled **New Subordinate Pay Item** and its subtitle reads "Added under item ...".
3. Fill in the fields and click **Add pay item**.

Only leaf items are priced, mirrored into the estimate, exported to the Excel **Pay Items** sheet or written to a .COL file. Once an item has children it becomes a roll-up row and no longer prices itself.

To edit, find and delete pay items in the grid

1. Click a cell and type. **Unit** and **Block** open their dropdowns on a single click.
2. Press Delete on a selected text cell (not in edit mode) to clear it. Numeric cells are left unchanged.
3. Paste a block copied from Excel with **Ctrl+V** starting at the current cell. Read-only columns and the **Block** column are skipped; **Unit** accepts pasted text as written. The status bar reports "Pasted N cell(s)", or "Pasted N cell(s) — M skipped (read-only, dropdown, or not a valid value)." when some cells could not take their value; the rest still land. If any cell cannot be saved to the file (the disk is full, the file is locked), the whole paste is undone, the grids reload and the status bar shows the reason in red instead of the count.
4. Press **Ctrl+F** and type part of a number or description to filter. Clear the box to show everything.
5. To delete, select the row and click **Delete**. The status bar reads "Deleted pay item ...".
6. Undo with **Ctrl+Z**, redo with **Ctrl+Y**.

Edits to number, description, unit and quantities flow to the mirrored estimate item only while that item still shows the old value. An estimate row you edited by hand is never overwritten. If the item's block is locked, the edit is refused with a status-bar message such as "The base bid is locked — unlock the block to edit 0200."

Warning: **Delete** asks no confirmation and also deletes every subordinate item. Cost items assigned to the deleted pay item are kept but unassigned; a cost item that allocates a share to it loses only that share, keeps its other shares, and shows on the Overview until its shares total 100% again.

Ctrl+Z restores everything, shares included.

To import the schedule from an Excel workbook

1. Prepare an .xlsx in which a worksheet has a header row within its first 20 rows. It need not be the first sheet, so a takeoff workbook with a Summary tab first, or a tender with a cover sheet, imports as it is. The row must contain an item-number header (Number, Item, Item Number, Item No, Item No., Item # or Item#) and a quantity header (Quantity, Qty, Pay Qty, Approx. Quantity or Approx Quantity). A description header (Description, Desc, Item Description) and a unit header (Unit, Units, UOM, Unit of Measure) are optional. Header matching ignores case. Which sheet is read is decided in this order: a tab named Pay Item Import is the schedule and every other tab is ignored; failing that, a sheet whose header row is exactly Number, Description, Unit

and Quantity with nothing else beside them; failing that, every worksheet with a recognised header row is imported, in workbook order.

2. Choose **Interchange ► Import pay items from Excel...**, pick the workbook and click Open.
3. Read the **Excel import** summary: "Added n pay item(s), updated m." plus a line for estimate items created and any warnings. When several sheets were read, the warnings start with "No 'Pay Item Import' tab — imported N sheets in workbook order: 'A', 'B'. Check the counts, or put the schedule on one flat sheet and re-import." and every row reference reads "Sheet 'X' row r" instead of "Row r".

Rows with a blank number are skipped silently. Item numbers are read as the sheet displays them, so a number cell formatted 0000 imports as 0100 and one formatted 0.00 as 1.10. A quantity stored as a number is read as a number; a quantity typed as text is read the same way on every machine, whatever its Windows number format: 1,250 is 1250, 2,5 is 2.5 and 1 250,75 is 1250.75. Each text quantity that contains a comma or a space gets a note in the summary, for example "Row 2: quantity '1,250' is text — read as 1250 (a comma before three digits groups thousands, whatever this machine's settings). Type it as a number if it meant something else." A non-numeric quantity produces the warning "Row r: quantity '...' not numeric — skipped." An item number that repeats within the workbook is imported once: later rows with the same number, on the same sheet or a later one, are skipped with the warning "Row r: item 'n' already imported from row s — skipped (give repeated numbers a part prefix in the workbook first)." A schedule that restarts its numbering in each part therefore needs a part prefix added in the workbook before import. If the estimate already holds two items with the same number, the import continues, matches against the first of them and warns "Duplicate item number 'n' already in the schedule — matching against the first occurrence." Units are stored exactly as written in the sheet. No alternate column is read, and existing items keep their description and unit. The whole import is one undo step, and if it fails part-way nothing is written.

If no worksheet has a header row, the import stops with an error that names the sheets it scanned and the columns it was looking for.

To import the schedule with AI from a PDF or Excel

The AI import transcribes the owner's schedule into a review grid. It never measures anything and never guesses a quantity. That is different from AI Takeoff, which measures your own forecast quantities and never changes Pay Qty.

1. Make sure a provider key and model are saved under **Setup ► AI & Bid Scraper settings...**. Without them the button shows a message titled **AI pay-item import**.
2. Click **Import with AI...** (or **Interchange ► Import pay items with AI (PDF/Excel)...**).
3. Click **Choose PDF / Excel...** and select the Schedule of Prices pages: any number of PDFs and/or one .xlsx. If you pick several spreadsheets only the last one is kept. Each choice replaces the previous selection; the label beside the button shows what is selected.
4. Click **Extract schedule**. **Cancel** stops the run. Errors appear in the footer.

- Review the grid. Amber rows need attention. **Conf** is H, M or L; L means the AI struggled to read the line. A blank **Quantity** means the AI could not read it; type it yourself. **Source** is OWNER_STATED for transcribed lines and ASSUMED only for a lump sum with no printed quantity, which is returned as 1 LS. **Alt** carries any alternate or schedule label the AI found. **Notes** explains problems.
- Tick or untick **Import**. Rows with a quantity and confidence other than L are pre-ticked. A row with no **Item #** is skipped on import and listed in the warnings; add the number in the grid first.
- Leave **Update items already in the schedule** ticked to let matching numbers take the owner's quantity, description and unit from this document, or untick it to leave existing items alone.
- Click **Import checked**. The summary appears in a box titled **AI pay-item import** and the dialog closes. If ticked rows still lack a quantity, the box warns you instead, the imported rows untick, the dialog stays open and the footer reports how many rows still need a quantity.

Import pay items with AI

Choose the tender's Schedule of Prices as a PDF and/or an Excel file. The AI transcribes the owner's bid schedule — item number, description, unit, and quantity — into pay items you review before importing.

1 · Schedule document

Choose PDF / Excel...
no file selected

Extract schedule

Import	Item #	Description	Unit	Quantity	Alt	Conf	Source	Notes
☒	0400	Trench excavation and backfill	m3	4200		H	OWNER_STATED	
☒	0500	300 mm PVC watermain	LM	1200		H	OWNER_STATED	
☒	0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	T	1150		H	OWNER_STATED	
☒	0100	Mobilization and demobilization	LS	1		M	ASSUMED	lump sum
☐	1200	Illegible	EA			L	OWNER_STATED	smudged

5 item(s) extracted, 1 need review. Check the rows to import.
☒ Update items already in the schedule

Import checked

Close

Figure 5. The Import pay items with AI dialog after extraction.

New items get Pay Qty = Forecast Qty = the owner's quantity, a normalised unit and the alternate tag. PDFs are limited to about 24 MB raw in total (a 32 MB request cap after encoding) and 600 pages per run; split a large tender set and keep the schedule in every pass. Only .pdf and .xlsx are accepted. Each run gives the model a 64,000-token answer budget; a schedule long enough to use it up ends with **The model ran out of output room** in the footer — split the PDF set into smaller passes (keep the schedule in each), or choose a model with a larger output limit, and run again. On Anthropic, a model whose

output limit is below that budget does not fail: the footer shows **Model rejected the 64,000-token output budget — retrying at 32,000...** and the run continues at the smaller budget, which the out-of-room message then names. The import is one undo step, and if it fails part-way nothing is written.

To import an agency proposal (.COL) and write prices back

Agencies that bid through AASHTOWare Project Bids issue electronic proposals as .ebsx files. SuperBid does not read .ebsx directly. **Interchange ► About DOT .ebsx files...** shows the round trip: export the proposal from AASHTOWare Project Bids as Fixed Column (.col), import it here, price the bid, write prices back, then re-import in AASHTOWare and submit there.

1. Choose **Interchange ► Import DOT proposal (.COL)...** and pick the .col file.
2. Read the **DOT import** summary: "Profile: Default", then "Added a item(s), updated u, unchanged s." If the estimate already holds two items with the same number, the import still runs and matches against the first of them; the box then ends with a **Warnings:** section reading "Duplicate item number '...' already in the schedule — matching against the first occurrence." and the status bar reads "DOT import (Default): a added, u updated, n warning(s)."
3. Build and price the estimate.
4. Choose **Interchange ► Write prices to DOT (.COL)...** and pick the same .col file. The file dialog is titled **Write unit prices into a DOT .COL file.**
5. Read the **DOT price export** message. It reports how many unit prices were written and that a backup was saved as <name>.col.bak. That first backup is the agency's original file and is never overwritten: every later run that changes the file adds a dated copy named <name>.col.<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.bak beside it (a re-run with unchanged prices changes nothing and adds no copy). When the file needs attention the message continues with a **CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING:** section, and the status bar turns red with the first of its points:
 - **NOT PRICED** — item lines in the .col that no priced pay item matched. They are still blank in the file, and a blank unit price is a non-responsive bid. Import the .col again to pick up addendum items, or check parent/child, change-order and renamed items.
 - **QUANTITY CHANGED** — lines whose .col quantity differs from the estimate's pay quantity, so the unit price was spread on the old quantity. Re-import the .col, re-price, and write back again.
 - **QUANTITY NOT NUMERIC** — matched lines whose quantity field in the .col is blank or not a number (a hand-added lump sum with LS in the quantity column, for example). The price was written, but the quantity could not be checked against the estimate; confirm the line before submitting.
 - **NOT IN FILE** — priced pay items with no line in the .col; their price went nowhere.
6. If two priced pay items share a number, the export refuses instead, with a message beginning **Cannot write prices: more than one pay item is numbered** that names the numbers; nothing is written, not even the .bak. Renumber or delete the duplicates in the grid and try again. A unit price too wide for the profile's price field also refuses the whole write: the message names the item and the field width and tells you to widen the field in <name>.col.profile.json (or reduce the unit-price decimals); nothing is written.

7. Re-import the `.col` in AASHTOWare Project Bids and submit with your Digital ID.

The built-in **Default** profile reads item number in columns 1–15, unit 16–25, quantity 26–40, unit price 41–55 and description from 56. The import ignores lines with a blank item number or a non-numeric quantity (headings, separators); the write-back prices any line whose number matches a priced pay item, numeric quantity or not. If your agency's layout differs, place a JSON profile named `<name>.col.profile.json` beside `<name>.col`; it names the layout, gives the number of header lines to skip, and the start column and length of each of the five fields. A profile that cannot be read stops the import with an error message.

Warning: Write-back rewrites the `.col` file in place. The agency's original survives every re-run as `<name>.col.bak`, which is never overwritten, and each later run that changes the file leaves a dated `<name>.col.<stamp>.bak` beside it; delete the dated copies yourself when the bid is submitted. Only the unit-price field of lines whose number matches a priced base-bid leaf pay item is changed; every other byte is preserved. An item you renamed after import, a parent item, or an item moved to a change order is left unpriced and listed under **NOT PRICED**. This is a file operation and cannot be undone with **Ctrl+Z**.

To re-import an addendum

1. Run the same import again (**Import pay items from Excel...**, **Import DOT proposal (.COL)...** or the AI import) with the amended document.
2. Items whose number matches get a new Pay Qty. Numbers not yet in the estimate are appended.

Forecast Qty follows the new Pay Qty only if the two were still equal, meaning you had not overridden it. A forecast you typed never moves. Excel and .COL re-imports leave description and unit alone; the AI import replaces them when **Update items already in the schedule** is ticked. The .COL import counts items with an identical quantity as unchanged.

To share one cost item across several pay items

1. Select the pay item.
2. In the lower panel pick a top-level cost item code and click **+ Allocate**. The cost item's first row appears at 100%; a further row on another pay item defaults to whatever share is still unallocated. The status bar reads "Allocated ... to ... at N% (edit the % — allocations replace its simple assignment)." When the cost item is already fully allocated the new row is still added, at 0%, and the status bar reads "Added X to N at 0% — it is already fully allocated (100% before this row). Lower another share, then set this one; the dashboard flags any total that is not 100%."
3. Type the **Share %** (for example 50). Repeat on the other pay item so the shares add up to 100%.
4. To drop a share, select its row in the lower panel and click **Remove**.

Allocations replace the cost item's simple pay-item assignment. Only top-level cost items can be allocated, and a cost item can be allocated to a given pay item only once. The shares must total 100%:

until they do, the Overview's **Data-quality checks** shows a  line naming the cost item (the surplus "is being negated" or the shortfall "is being spread" across other items) and the Estimate Check rule **Allocation totals not 100%** flags it. The bid total still foots either way, so those warnings are the only signal.

To export the priced schedule to Excel

1. Choose **Interchange ► Export estimate to Excel workbook...**, accept the default `estimate.xlsx` or rename, and Save.
2. Open the **Pay Items** sheet: Number, Description, Unit, Pay Qty, Direct Cost, Spread, Unit Price, Extended, with a bold **TOTAL BID** row.

Base-bid leaf items only, at the owner's Pay Qty; change-order items are left out so the rows always sum to **TOTAL BID**. With alternates the sheet takes the proposal's shape: the base-bid rows end in a bold **BASE BID TOTAL**, each alternate's rows follow (each line at its own stand-alone price) and end in a bold **ALTERNATE <code> TOTAL**, a ninth column **Alternate** names the schedule each row belongs to (blank for the base bid), and a final **TOTAL (all schedules)** row closes the sheet. The workbook also holds **Cost Items, Resources, Bid Summary, Job-Cost Budget** and **Budget by Cost Code** sheets. For the owner-facing form use **Reports ► Bid Proposal...**

Tips and gotchas

- The grid ends at **Direct Cost** and **Unit Cost**. For unit prices, extended amounts, the **Lock** and **Lock value** columns and the **No Mkp**, **No Bond** and **No Ind** boxes, go to **Bid Summary (Ctrl+5)**. The **Balance item** dropdown there picks which pay item absorbs the penny-rounding residual; blank means the unlocked item with the largest extended amount. **Pricing rules...** sets the unit-price rounding bands and the bond table; with no bands, unit prices round to two decimals.
- Every add, import and delete is written to the `.sbid` file immediately (the top bar shows  **Auto-save**). There is no Save command.
- An import (Excel, AI or `.COL`) is all-or-nothing, mirrored estimate items included: if it fails part-way, nothing is written, the grids reload with **Reloaded after an error.** on the status bar and a box shows the reason; when it succeeds, one **Ctrl+Z** reverts the whole import.
- `TON` folds to the metric tonne `T` when typed in the dialog or read by the AI import, because Alberta schedules write "Ton" meaning tonnes. Excel and `.COL` imports store units exactly as written.
- The in-grid **Unit** editor is a pick list only. To store a unit not in the list, paste it into the cell, use the **New Pay Item** dialog, or import.
- **Ctrl+F** focuses a search box only on the Estimate, Pay Items and Resources screens.
- Warnings on the Overview **Data-quality checks** card and Estimate Check findings that name a pay item jump here and select the row, clearing both filters first. Estimate Check flags forecast-versus-pay gaps over 25%, pay items without a unit, zero-quantity items carrying cost or price, unlocked items whose spread price is below cost or negative, and allocations that do not total 100%.

- Column widths, order and visibility are remembered per grid in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\grids.txt. Right-click a column header to show or hide columns or choose **Reset columns**. The first column cannot be hidden.
- The AI import sends the region "<city>, Alberta" from the **Bid Scraper — region** section of **Setup ► AI & Bid Scraper settings...** (default Calgary) so the model resolves unit codes for your jurisdiction.

The Overview dashboard and the Estimate screen

The Overview and the Estimate screen are the two screens you live on while costing a bid. The Overview (**Overview** in the WORKSPACE rail, **Ctrl+1**) is a read-only dashboard: four lettered cards, two breakdown cards and a list of data-quality checks, all recomputed after every edit anywhere in the program. The Estimate screen (**Estimate**, **Ctrl+2**) is where the cost side lives. SuperBid calls each row of that screen a *cost item*: a work activity with a unit, a forecast quantity, a cost method and either a crew and production rate or a plugged price, plus any materials, subcontracts and trucking hanging under it. Top-level cost items are created for you from the Pay Items schedule; you add detail underneath and cost the bottom rows. The *Item Assemblies* screen (**Item Assemblies**, **Ctrl+0**) holds reusable assemblies you can drop into any estimate; it is covered briefly at the end of this chapter.

Screen tour

The Overview

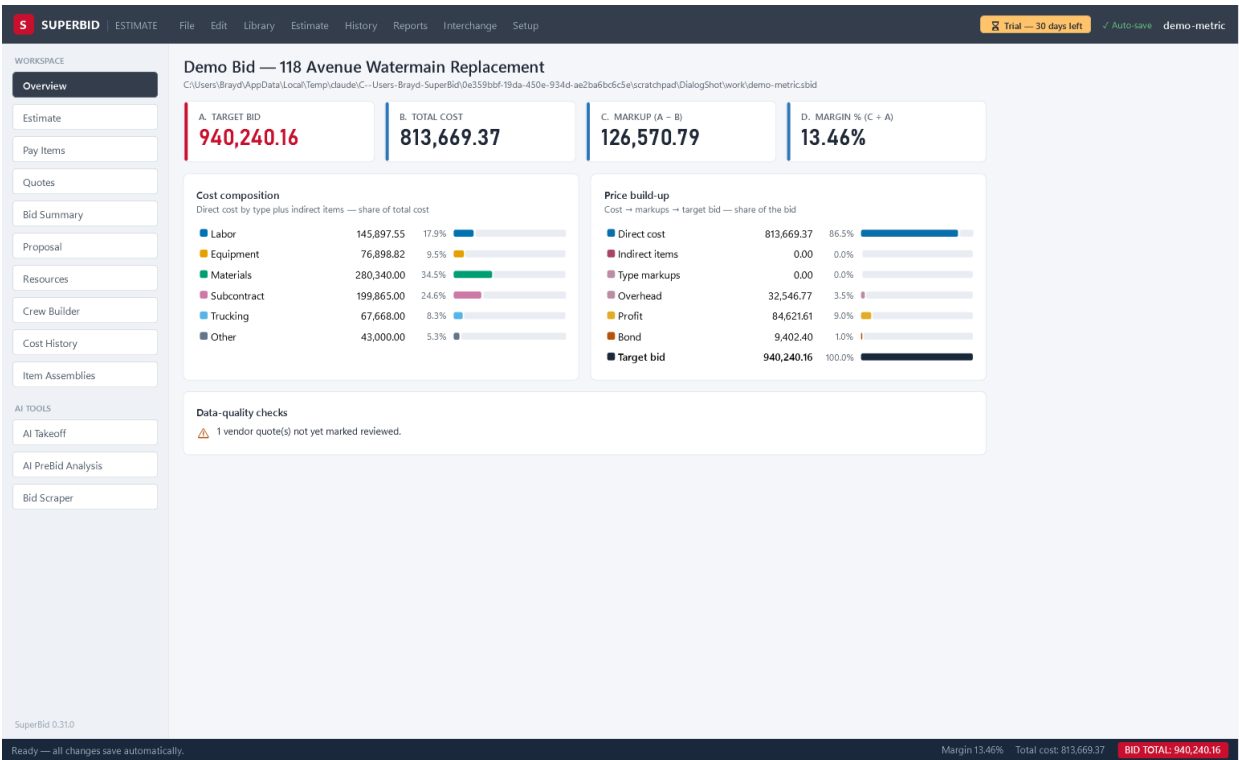


Figure 6. The Overview dashboard with the sample 118 Avenue watermain estimate open.

The page title is the estimate name; the line under it is the file path. Below are four cards:

Card	What it means
A. TARGET BID	The bid total after the full markup chain, including bond. This is the number you submit. With alternates the card is titled A. BASE BID and a small grey line

Card	What it means
	under the figure reads <code><code> +<alternate total></code> for each alternate, then <code>All schedules <total></code> .
B. TOTAL COST	Direct cost of every costed row plus the indirect pool. With alternates the card is titled B. BASE BID COST and its grey line reads <code>Alternates +<cost> · All schedules <cost></code> .
C. MARKUP (A – B)	Everything between cost and bid: type markups, overhead, profit, contingency, escalation, bid-day adjustment and bond combined.
D. MARGIN % (C ÷ A)	Markup as a percentage of the bid.

When the estimate has alternates, the four figures describe the base bid only, because each alternate is priced stand-alone (see the Bid Summary chapter); the grey lines under cards A and B carry each alternate's add-on and the all-schedules totals.

Cost composition ("Direct cost by type plus indirect items — share of total cost") lists one line per non-zero bucket: Labor, Equipment, Materials, Subcontract, Trucking, Other, then Indirect items and, with alternates, **Alternates (stand-alone)**, each with its amount, its share of total cost and a proportional bar. The buckets are the base bid's own cost, so the rows foot to card B even when change orders exist; with alternates the shares are of the all-schedules cost. **Price build-up** ("Cost → markups → target bid — share of the bid") shows how B becomes A: Direct cost, Indirect items, Escalation, Type markups, Overhead, Profit, Contingency, Bid-day adjustment, Bond and a bold Target bid row. Escalation, Contingency and Bid-day adjustment appear only when non-zero. With alternates this is the base bid's chain.

Data-quality checks is the always-on safety net. When nothing is wrong it reads **✓ All clear — every cost is carried, every pay item is costed**. Otherwise it shows one  line per problem, of ten kinds: a cost item carrying cost with no pay item; a cost item whose allocation shares do not total 100% (the surplus "is being negated" or the shortfall "is being spread" across other items); a cost item that has children but still carries a Quick amount or a Calculated percent ("parents roll up only, so it is IGNORED"); a pay item with no direct cost ("priced from spread only"); a pay item carrying cost but ZERO pay quantity; a pay item LOCKED below its direct unit cost; an unlocked pay item with ZERO pay quantity that still carries price ("it prints as Unit 0.00 and the owner's form will not foot"); an unlocked pay item that spreads BELOW its direct unit cost ("price locks elsewhere displaced its markup"); an unlocked pay item that spreads to a NEGATIVE unit price; and vendor quotes not yet marked reviewed. Lines that name a row are links. The list shows at most 8 lines, then **...and N more — clear the checks above and re-run**.

The status bar

The dark bar at the bottom appears on every screen. On the left is the status message, normally **Ready — all changes save automatically**; it turns red for errors. Most confirmations and refusals in SuperBid land here rather than in pop-ups, so watch the bottom-left. On the right: an amber  chip showing how your most recent change moved the bid total (for example $\Delta +1,250.00$), **Margin** as a percentage, **Total cost**: and the red **BID TOTAL**: pill. With alternates the pill reads **BASE BID: <x> · ALL SCHEDULES: <y>**,

where y is the base bid plus every alternate's stand-alone total, and the cost text reads **Total cost (all schedules)**: followed by the base-bid cost plus every alternate's stand-alone cost — the same figure as the **All schedules** note under card B. When a change order carries cost, that text continues · **incl. change orders: <z>**, where z is the whole estimate's cost. Without alternates, **Total cost:** is the whole estimate, change orders included. If the calculator cannot build, the cost text reads **CALC ERROR:** followed by the reason.

The Estimate screen

The screenshot shows the SuperBid Estimate screen. The top bar includes the SuperBid logo and navigation links: ESTIMATE, File, Edit, Library, Estimate, History, Reports, Interchange, Setup. A trial notice indicates 'Trial — 30 days left' and 'Auto-save' is enabled. The left sidebar contains a 'WORKSPACE' section with buttons for Overview, Estimate (selected), Pay Items, Quotes, Bid Summary, Proposal, Resources, Crew Builder, Cost History, and Item Assemblies. Below this is an 'AI TOOLS' section with buttons for AI Takeoff, AI PreBid Analysis, and Bid Scraper. The main area is titled 'Cost items' with a legend: white = input, gray = calculated, blue = your override. It features a table with columns: Code, Description, Pay Item, Unit, Quantity, Total Cost, Method, Fac, Prod Rate, Hr/Sh, Crew, Plug \$/U, Plug Total, Ind, Calc Basis, and Calc %. The table lists various construction items like Mobilization and demobilization, Traffic accommodation, Remove existing asphalt pavement, Trench excavation and backfill, 300 mm PVC watermain, Hydrant assembly, 300 mm gate valve, Pipe bedding, Asphalt pavement 100 mm, Granular base 250 mm, and Topsoil and hydroseed. A summary row at the bottom of the table shows a total cost of 813,669.37. Below the table, there is a section for 'Materials / subs / trucking on the selected item' with a table showing quantities and unit costs for Mat-PVC300 and Mat-BEDSTONE. The bottom status bar displays 'Ready — all changes save automatically.', 'Margin 13.46%', 'Total cost: 813,669.37', and 'BID TOTAL: 940,240.16'.

Figure 7. The Estimate screen with the sample 118 Avenue watermain estimate open.

The top action bar is titled **Cost items** with the legend *white = input · gray = calculated · blue = your override*. White cells are yours to type in; gray cells are computed; blue text is an override you typed (a plug). Cells you edited since opening this file get an amber tint and a tooltip reading "was ..." with the previous value.

Action bar controls: **Undo** and **Redo**; a search box (**Ctrl+F**) that filters rows by Code or Description; **Indirect Costs**, which opens the company checklist of general conditions; **Insert Resource/Assembly**, which drops a two-item menu, **Resources...** and **Assembly...**; **Resource/Assembly Inputs**, which reopens the inputs of an inserted assembly; **Add Detail Item**, which adds a child under the selected row; and **Delete**, which removes the selected row and everything under it with no confirmation (one **Ctrl+Z** restores it).

Rows form a tree. Parent rows are bold on a tinted background and roll up their children; only *leaf* rows (rows with no children) carry cost. A pinned **TOTAL** row under the grid sums Total Cost, Crew Hrs,

Labor+Equip and Mat/Sub. Right-click any column header to hide or show columns (the first column always stays) or choose **Reset columns**; widths, visibility and order are remembered per grid in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\grids.txt.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Code	Cost item code, indented by tree level. Top-level rows take the pay item number.	Yes
Description	Free text. Top-level rows start with the pay item description.	Yes
Pay Item	Which pay item the cost lands in. Only the top-level row's assignment counts; children follow it. A pay item in a locked block cannot be picked.	Yes (dropdown)
Unit	Unit of measure. Metric codes come first: LS, EA, M, LM, M2, M3, M2CM, M2DM, MM, KM, HA, T, KG, L, KL; imperial and time codes follow, plus any unit already used in the estimate.	Yes (dropdown)
Quantity	Forecast (takeoff) quantity — drives cost. Pay quantity lives on the Pay Items screen.	Yes
Total Cost	Leaf: its own cost. Parent: sum of children. Zero shows as —.	No
Method	Detail, Plug, Quick, Subcontracted, Comparison or Calculated. Default Detail.	Yes (dropdown)
Fac	Production factor type: UH units/hr, HU hrs/unit, US units/shift, SU shifts/unit, S total shifts, MU manhours/unit, UM units/manhour, \$U crew-\$/unit, CH total crew-hrs.	Yes (dropdown)
Prod Rate	The rate in the factor's units, e.g. UH 22 = 22 units per crew-hour.	Yes
Hr/Sh	Working hours per shift, default 8.0. Used by shift-based factors only.	Yes
Crew	Crew code from the Crew Builder (Ctrl+8).	Yes (dropdown)
Plug \$/U	Hand-typed unit cost for Plug or Subcontracted. Blue.	Yes
Plug Total	Hand-typed lump sum. Blue. Wins over Plug \$/U when both are filled.	Yes
Ind	Indirect item — kept out of direct cost and spread over pay items by the markup chain.	Yes (checkbox)
Calc Basis	Calculated method only: which cost pool the % applies to (Total Direct, Labor, Equipment, Material, Sub, Trucking, Other).	Yes (dropdown)
Calc %	Calculated method: percent of the basis pool (10 = 10%).	Yes
Crew Hrs	Computed crew hours from Fac, Prod Rate and Quantity.	No
Shifts	Crew Hrs ÷ Hr/Sh. Display only.	No
Labor+Equip	Crew-hours × crew hourly rate.	No
Mat/Sub	Quantity-driven cost from the resource lines below.	No

Select a row and the lower grid, **Materials / subs / trucking on the selected item**, lists its *resource lines*: quantity-driven resources (Material, Sub or Trucking; labour and equipment belong in crews). Each line

costs item Quantity × Qty per Unit × (1 + Waste %) × Unit Cost. Its bar has **Haul Calculator**, **Add Resource** and **Remove**.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Resource	Resource code (Material, Sub or Trucking only).	Yes (dropdown)
Qty per Unit	Resource quantity per one unit of the cost item.	Yes
Waste %	Extra material allowance: 5 = 5%.	Yes
Unit	The resource's own unit.	No
Unit Cost	The resource's current rate, edited on the Resources screen.	No

The Item Assemblies screen

Item assemblies — repeatable work you price once

Code	Description	Inputs	Items
CONC-FLAT	Concrete flatwork — [THICK], [AREA] m2	2	2
CURB-GUTTER	Curb & gutter, slipform — 150 SF curb / 250 gutter profile	2	1
PIPE-TRENCH	Pipe installation, open cut — [SIZE], [LEN] m	3	6

Build once, use on every bid: pick a pattern (per-metre curb & gutter, per-m2 area, gravel by m2 × depth, or straight tonnes), a crew, and the materials per unit. On insert you type the quantity — production rate is the only number left to tune. Assemblies travel with libraries and templates.

Ready — all changes save automatically. Margin 13.40% Total cost: 813,669.37 **BID TOTAL: 940,240.16**

Figure 8. The Item Assemblies screen.

An *assembly* is work you price once and reuse: it asks for typed inputs, then generates a subtree of cost items with crews and materials already attached. The screen lists every assembly in the estimate with **Code**, **Description**, **Inputs** and **Items**, and offers **New item assembly...** (guided builder), **Insert into estimate...** (enabled once you select a row; it places the assembly under whatever is selected on the Estimate screen) and **Advanced editor...** (formulas and lookup tables, also opened by double-clicking a row or from **Library ▶ Assemblies...**). If a save in either editor fails, the status bar shows **Could not save**.

assembly <code>: with the reason and the screen reloads from the file; a failed delete reloads the same way.

Tasks

To cost a schedule line with a crew

1. Add the pay item on Pay Items or import the schedule. Its row appears on Estimate automatically with the same code, description, unit and forecast quantity (the pay quantity when no forecast was given).
2. Select the row and leave **Method** as Detail.
3. Click the **Crew** cell once and pick a crew.
4. Pick **Fac** and type **Prod Rate**. Example: 1,200 LM of 450 mm pipe at UH 30 with a pipe crew gives 40 crew-hours.
5. Read **Crew Hrs**, **Labor+Equip** and **Total Cost**; they recompute as you leave each cell.

To add detail items under a schedule line

1. Select the top-level row and click **Add Detail Item**. A child coded ITEM1 (or the next free number) appears, already assigned to the parent's pay item.
2. Rename it, set **Unit** and **Quantity**, then cost it with a crew or a plug.
3. Repeat. The parent's **Total Cost** becomes the sum of its children.

Note: A row that already has a crew, factor, plug, resource lines, a Quick amount or a Calculated percent refuses children: *carries cost data — parents roll up only. Clear its crew/factor/plugin/materials/Quick amounts/Calc % first.* Clear those cells, then add the detail; inserting an assembly under such a row is refused with the same text. A parent in an older file that still carries a Calculated percent or a Quick amount keeps showing it on the row but contributes only its children's cost. The Overview shows a  line for it without running Estimate Check ("Cost item 'X' has children but still carries a Calculated 5.0% — parents roll up only, so it is IGNORED.", or "...carries a Quick amount of N..."), click-to-jump like the others, and the Estimate Check rule **Parents carrying Quick/Calculated amounts** flags it too.

To plug a price

1. Set **Method** to Plug (own-forces placeholder) or Subcontracted (sub dollars, which take the subcontract markup).
2. Type **Plug \$/U** per unit of Quantity, or **Plug Total** as a lump sum. Both show in blue. 2.5 and 2,5 both read as 2.5 whatever the Windows number format. Text that is not a number is refused with **"abc" is not a number — plug unit cost unchanged.** (or ... **plug total unchanged.**) on the status bar and the cell keeps its stored value; a blank clears the plug.

To hang materials, subs or trucking on a leaf

1. Select the leaf row.
2. For one line, click **Add Resource**. A line pointing at the first material, sub or trucking resource appears with Qty per Unit 1; change **Resource**, **Qty per Unit** and **Waste %**.
3. For several, click **Insert Resource/Assembly ► Resources...**, tick the resources, set **Qty / unit** and **Waste %** on each, and click **Insert. New resource...** creates a material, sub or trucking resource on the spot.
4. Read the row's **Mat/Sub** column. Example: curb and gutter per LM with 0.08 M3 of ready-mix per metre at 5% waste.

To price trucking with the Haul Cycle Calculator

1. Select the leaf that carries the haul (Detail method, Quantity above zero) and click **Haul Calculator**.
2. Pick a **Truck type** to prefill capacity, load and dump minutes and rate, or type a new name and later click **Save as truck type** to keep it in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\trucks.txt.
3. Fill **Quantity to haul**, **One-way haul (km)**, **Truck capacity**, **Loaded speed (km/h)**, **Empty speed (km/h)**, **Load time (min)**, **Dump time (min)**, **Working min / hour** (default 50), **Rate (\$/truck-hr)** and **Trucks (0 = auto)**.
4. Read **CYCLE**, **LOADS**, **TRUCKS**, **TRUCK-HOURS**, **HAUL DURATION**, **TOTAL COST**, **COST / UNIT** and **COST / LOAD**. Use COST / UNIT to sanity-check per-tonne quotes.
5. Click **Apply to item**. A Trucking line coded Trk- plus the truck name in capitals (letters and digits only, e.g. Trk-TANDEM) lands in the lower grid; re-running updates the same line.

To apply the indirect-cost checklist

1. Click **Indirect Costs**.
2. Tick each line that applies and type its lump sum.
3. Choose **Spread across items** (the cost goes into an INDIRECTS group marked **Ind** and is spread by the markup chain) or **Tie to pay item** and pick the pay item.
4. Add company lines with the box and **Add to checklist**; they are saved in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\indirects.txt for every future estimate.
5. Click **Apply**. Each ticked line becomes a Plug cost item coded IND-...; unticking a line and applying again removes it.

To split one cost item across several pay items

1. On Pay Items (**Ctrl+3**) select the first pay item, pick the top-level cost item in the **Cost allocated to the selected pay item** dropdown and click **+ Allocate**.

2. Edit **Share %** (50 = 50%). Repeat on the other pay items. A second row for the same cost item starts at whatever share is still unallocated, and the status bar states the percentage; when the item is already fully allocated the row starts at 0% and the status bar says so ("Added X to N at 0% — it is already fully allocated ...").

Note: Allocations replace the cost item's **Pay Item** column for pricing. The shares must total 100%; until they do, the Overview shows a  line for the cost item and the Estimate Check flags it.

To insert an assembly and change its inputs later

1. Select the schedule line the work belongs to and click **Insert Resource/Assembly ▶ Assembly....**
2. Pick the assembly and fill its inputs. The preview updates live; errors show in red and disable **Insert**.
3. Click **Insert**. A container row with the generated items appears under the selected line.
4. To change the inputs later, select the container or any generated row, click **Resource/Assembly Inputs**, edit, and click **Update**.

To act on a data-quality warning

1. On the Overview, click a  line. SuperBid switches screen, clears that screen's search filter and selects the row.
2. Fix it, then press **Ctrl+1**; the line disappears once the condition clears. **Check bid** on the Bid Summary makes the same trip and reports the real count.

To run the Estimate Check

1. Choose **Estimate ▶ Estimate Check...**, untick rules that do not apply to this job (your choices are remembered; a rule you have never unticked is on), and click **Run check**.
2. Read the status line: **All clear — N rule(s) checked, nothing flagged.** or **N finding(s) from M rule(s)**, with **— h high severity** when any are high. Findings are listed high first, with **Severity**, **Rule** and **Finding** columns.
3. Double-click a finding (or select it and click **Go to selected**) to jump to the row.

The wizard has 20 rules. Hover a rule for its description.

Rule	Severity	What it flags
Unassigned cost items	high	Leaf cost items carrying cost that reach no pay item.
Allocation totals not 100%	high	Cost items whose allocation shares do not sum to 100%.
Uncosted detail items	medium	Leaf cost items with a quantity but zero total cost.
Negative cost items	high	Leaf cost items computing a negative total.

Rule	Severity	What it flags
Pay items without direct cost	medium	Unlocked leaf pay items with no cost behind them.
Zero-quantity pay items carrying cost	high	Cost assigned to a pay item whose pay quantity is zero.
Zero-quantity pay items carrying price	high	Unlocked leaf pay items with zero pay quantity that still carry dollars; they print as Unit 0.00.
Pay items without a unit	low	Leaf pay items with a blank unit.
Large forecast vs pay quantity gaps	low	Forecast differs from the owner's quantity by more than 25%.
Large plug prices	medium	Plug-method leaves of \$10,000 or more.
Parents carrying Quick/Calculated amounts	medium	Cost items with children that still hold a Quick amount or a Calculated percent, which is ignored.
Price locks below cost	high	Locked unit prices below the item's direct unit cost.
Unlocked prices below cost	high	Unlocked items whose spread unit price sits below their direct unit cost because locks elsewhere displaced their markup.
Negative unit prices	high	Unlocked items whose spread unit price is negative.
Locks without a value	medium	A Markup % or Margin % lock with no percentage entered.
Unreviewed vendor quotes	medium	Vendor quotes never marked reviewed.
Quote folders with no award	low	Folders holding quotes where nothing was awarded.
No indirect costs	medium	No indirect cost anywhere in the estimate.
No bond on a large bid	medium	No bond percentage or bond table on a bid with direct cost of 500,000 or more.
Alternates priced stand-alone	low	One finding per alternate, with its item count and direct cost, as a reminder that it prices on its own chain; clicking it jumps to the alternate's first pay item.

Note: The three price-layer rules (**Unlocked prices below cost**, **Negative unit prices**, **Zero-quantity pay items carrying price**) read the current spread. While pricing has failed (the status bar shows **PRICING ERROR**) they are skipped without a message; fix the pricing error and run the check again. If the calculator itself cannot build, the check refuses to run with **Cannot run the estimate check — fix the calculation error first (see the status message)**.

To edit and paste cells

1. Start typing or press **F2** to edit; **Enter** commits and moves down, **Tab** moves right, **Esc** cancels.
2. Press **Delete** on a selected cell to clear it. Text cells empty; numeric cells keep their value. Rows are never deleted by the key.

3. Copy a block in Excel, click the top-left target cell and press **Ctrl+V**. Gray, dropdown and hidden columns are skipped and the status bar reports how many cells landed. A cell whose value is refused (text in a number column) is only skipped and counted in that message. If any cell cannot be saved to the file (the disk is full, the file is locked), the whole paste is undone, the grids reload and the status bar shows the reason in red instead of the count.

Tips and gotchas

- There is no button for a top-level cost item. Top-level rows come from Pay Items; if you delete one, it is recreated on the next open or import while its pay item still has no cost.
- Inserting an assembly with nothing selected puts it at top level with no pay item (the dialog says **Placement: top level**), and the Overview warns that its cost is unassigned.
- Quick and Comparison appear in **Method** but have no input columns in this version; Quick computes 0.00 and Comparison behaves as Detail until a quote award switches it to the vendor's **Plug \$/U**; see the Quotes chapter. Calculated is accepted only on indirect items; on a direct item the status bar shows a **CALC ERROR**.
- **Insert Resource/Assembly ► Resources...** and the Haul Calculator refuse Plug, Quick, Subcontracted and Calculated items. **Add Resource** does not refuse them, but on those methods the line adds nothing to cost.
- Percent fields take whole numbers: Waste % 5, Calc % 10, Share % 50.
- MU and UM divide by the crew's labour count only; a crew with no labour gives 0 hours. \$U produces cost with 0 crew hours.
- Change orders (**Estimate ► Change Orders...**) are priced as their own direct cost $\times (1 + \text{Markup } \%)$. A locked block refuses every edit to its rows with a status-bar message; unlock it there first.

Warning: Delete on the action bar removes the row, its whole subtree, its resource lines and haul plan without asking. Undo restores it, so press **Ctrl+Z** immediately if you meant the Delete key.

Resources, crews, rate book and libraries

A *resource* is the smallest priced thing in a SuperBid estimate: a labour class, a machine, a material, a subcontract item or a trucking rate. Labour and equipment are time-driven (a rate per hour) and are used only through *crews*, named sets of labour and equipment with a quantity of each. Materials, subs and trucking are quantity-driven (a rate per M3, T, EA, LS and so on) and attach directly to cost items on the Estimate screen. The Resources screen (**Ctrl+7**) holds the rates, the Crew Builder screen (**Ctrl+8**) assembles crews, the **Rate Book** dialog prices machines from a published rental rate book, and the **Library** menu moves resources, crews and assemblies between estimates.

Screen tour

Resources screen

Click **Resources** in the WORKSPACE rail or press **Ctrl+7**. **Ctrl+F** jumps to the search box.

The screenshot shows the SuperBid application interface. The top navigation bar includes 'SUPERBID | ESTIMATE' and various menu items like File, Edit, Library, Estimate, History, Reports, Interchange, and Setup. A status bar at the top right indicates 'Trial — 30 days left', 'Auto-save', and 'demo-metric'.

The main workspace is divided into a left sidebar and a central grid. The sidebar contains a 'WORKSPACE' section with buttons for Overview, Estimate, Pay Items, Quotes, Bid Summary, Proposal, Resources (selected), Crew Builder, Cost History, and Item Assemblies. Below this is an 'AI TOOLS' section with buttons for AI Takeoff, AI PreBid Analysis, and Bid Scraper.

The central grid is titled 'Resources' and has tabs for 'All', 'Labour', 'Equipment', 'Materials', and 'Subs & trucking'. The 'All' tab is active, displaying a table of resources. The table has columns for Code, Type, Description, Unit, Rate Source, and Effective Rate. The resources listed include various pieces of equipment (e.g., Dozer, Excavator, Wheel loader), labor (e.g., Form carpenter, Concrete finisher), and materials (e.g., Pipe bedding stone, Granular base, Fire hydrant assembly).

At the bottom of the grid, a card titled 'Rate build-up (selected resource)' is visible, showing the breakdown of the rate for a selected resource.

Figure 9. The Resources screen with the sample 118 Avenue watermain estimate open; the card under the grid shows how the selected rate is built.

- Category pills **All**, **Labour**, **Equipment**, **Materials** and **Subs & trucking** filter the grid by type (**All** is the default) and set the type of the next resource you add; **All** adds labour.
- The search box (tooltip **Filter resources (Ctrl+F)**) filters by Code or Description as you type. A row must match both the pill and the search.
- **Rate Book** opens the equipment rate book picker (below).

- **Add Resource** adds a row in the active category with a minted code (Lab-RES1, Eqp-RES1, Mat-RES1, Sub-RES1), Unit HR and Rate Source **Manual**.
- **Delete** removes the selected row. A resource used by a crew or cost item cannot be deleted; the status bar shows in red **Cannot delete Lab-FOREMAN: it is used by a crew or cost item**.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Code	Short identifier. App-made codes carry a group prefix (Lab-, Eqp-, Mat-, Sub-, Trk-). Assemblies and library import match by code; duplicates are not blocked, so keep codes unique.	Yes
Type	Labor, Equipment, Material, Sub or Trucking . Changing it swaps a known prefix (Mat-X becomes Sub-X); hand-typed codes without a prefix are left alone.	Yes (dropdown)
Description	Free text.	Yes
Unit	HR for labour, equipment and trucking; what you buy it by for materials and subs. The list holds the standard units plus any unit already in the estimate; you can type a one-off.	Yes
Rate Source	Manual, Labor build-up, Equipment (USACE) or Rate book (%) . Picks the panel in the card below.	Yes (dropdown)
Effective Rate	Dollars per Unit used in costing, to four decimals.	Only when Rate Source is Manual

The **Rate build-up (selected resource)** card shows one panel per Rate Source:

- **Manual: Manual unit cost:** is the same number as Effective Rate.
- **Labor build-up: Base wage \$/hr, Fringes \$/hr, Burden %**, then **Effective:**. Effective = base wage × (1 + burden) + fringes. Burden is a whole percent (42 means 42%) on the wage only; fringes are added flat.
- **Equipment (USACE):** the USACE EP 1110-1-8 build-up. Fields: **TEV \$** (total equipment value), **Salvage %**, **Life hrs**, **Tire \$**, **FCCM \$/hr**, **HP**, **Fuel \$/gal**, **Fuel (Diesel or Gasoline)**, **Load factor**, **FOG factor** (filters, oil and grease as a fraction of fuel), **Repair \$/hr**, **Tire wear \$/hr**, then **\$/hr**. The rate excludes the operator, mob/demob, overhead and profit.
- **Rate book (%): Book rate (\$/hr):** × a percent box = the effective rate, plus a grey provenance line such as AB · Hydraulic Excavators g2 · CAT 336 · Current (2021-2026). Until you pick a line it reads **(no book entry picked yet — use the Rate Book button)**.

Every box in the card is live; a change recomputes every crew and cost item using the resource.

Rate Book dialog

Rate Book opens a dialog titled **Rate Book**, headed **Equipment rate book**. SuperBid ships no published guide's numbers: until you import your own extract, the grid holds six generic lines tagged **Sample**.

Equipment rate book

These are GENERIC SAMPLE rates so you can try the picker — not a published book. Import your own rate book export to load real rates.

All books

Book	Section	Grp	Capacity	Age	Basis	\$/hr	Make	Model	
Sample	Crawler Ti	1	up to 15 t	All years	equipment	200.00			Review
Sample	Hydraulic	1	12-20 t	All years	equipment	175.00			Review
Sample	Hydraulic	2	20-30 t	All years	equipment	225.00			Review
Sample	Motor Gr	1	up to 14 ft blade	All years	equipment	190.00			Review
Sample	Rubber Ti	1	2-3 m3	All years	equipment	160.00			Review
Sample	Single Dn	1	up to 10 t	All years	equipment	120.00			Review

% of book rate:
6 of 6 entries

Figure 10. The Rate Book picker before a real book has been imported.

- The dropdown (tooltip **Which book to search**) defaults to **All books** and lists each book tag in the file.
- The search box matches every word you type against section, capacity, make, model, group, age and book. Dashes, spaces and dots in make and model are ignored, so `cat336` finds `CAT 336`.
- Columns: **Book**, **Section**, **Grp** (size group), **Capacity**, **Age**, **Basis**, **\$/hr**, **Make**, **Model**. **Basis** is `equipment` (no operator), `all-found` (operator included) or `bare` (rental only). An orange **Review** flag marks an OCR-extracted line not verified against the printed book.
- **% of book rate**: defaults to `100`; decimals are fine (`87.5` is book less `12.5`). The preview shows, for example, **= 212.50 \$/hr**, or **enter a percentage above zero**, or **no hourly rate on this line** for day/week/month-only rentals.
- **Import rate book...** loads a CSV and replaces the whole stored book, samples included; it does not merge.
- **Add as resource** creates (or re-prices) an Equipment resource and leaves the dialog open so you can add a whole fleet. **Close** dismisses it.

Crew Builder screen

Click **Crew Builder** in the rail or press **Ctrl+8**. The left pane, **Crew builder**, has **Add Crew** and **Delete Crew**. The right pane, **Members of the selected crew**, has **Add Labour ▼**, **Add Equipment ▼** and

Remove. The menu buttons and **Delete Crew** need a selected crew; **Remove** needs a member. A crew assigned to a cost item cannot be deleted.

Figure 11. The Crew Builder screen. Grey cells are calculated; white cells are yours to type.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Code	Crew identifier, the value the Estimate screen's Crew column refers to. New crews are CREW1, CREW2 and so on. Renaming a crew also updates every item assembly that refers to it. A code another crew already uses (ignoring case) is refused with the red status message Another crew already uses the code 'X' — crew codes must be unique.	Yes
Description	Free text.	Yes
Members	Count of member rows.	No
\$/Crew-Hr	Sum of Qty in Crew × each member's rate. Crew hours × this number is the labour-plus-equipment cost of every cost item using the crew.	No

Members grid:

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Resource	The member's resource code. The dropdown lists only Labor and Equipment codes.	Yes (dropdown)
Type	Labor or Equipment.	No

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Rate	The resource's current Effective Rate.	No
Qty in Crew	How many of that resource. Fractions are normal: 0.5 is a foreman split between two crews. New members start at 1.	Yes

Only labour quantities count toward the crew's labour count, the divisor for the manhour factor types (MU and UM) on the Estimate screen. **Reports ▶ Crew Analysis...** lists each crew's members and **Crew rate**, then the cost items that use it (**Crew Hours, Labor+Equip Cost**), or (**not used**).

Library menu and where a new estimate starts

A *library* is a .sblib file of reusable resources, crews and assemblies. It uses the estimate format, so any .sbid can also be a library source.

- **Library ▶ Import resources & crews...** (an estimate must be open) copies every resource, crew and assembly whose code the estimate lacks. Existing codes are skipped; members pointing at a skipped resource use the estimate's own same-code resource. One undo step.
- **Library ▶ Save resources to library...** appends the open estimate's resources, crews and assemblies to a library (default company.sblib), skipping codes it already holds. There is deliberately no overwrite prompt.
- **Library ▶ Create starter library...** writes the built-in starter library (default starter.sblib). A file of the same name is kept beside it as <name>.replaced-<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.sblib once the new one is complete, and the confirmation box then adds **The previous <name>.sblib was kept as <name>.replaced-<stamp>.sblib in the same folder.**

The **New Estimate** dialog (**File ▶ New Estimate...**, Ctrl+N) has a **Start from** choice: **Blank estimate, Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews), Copy of a template / master estimate: with Pick...**, or **Demo bid (Maple Street sample data)**. **File ▶ New from Template...** (also a welcome-screen button) is the two-step version of the template copy.

New estimate
Name it, pick where it lives, choose what to start from.

Estimate name
New Estimate

Folder
C:\Users\Brayd\Documents Browse...

Start from

☒ Blank estimate

☐ Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)

☐ Copy of a template / master estimate:
 Pick...

☐ Demo bid (Maple Street sample data)

Cancel Create estimate

Figure 12. The New Estimate dialog and its Start from choices.

The *starter library* is illustrative metric content meant to be edited: 6 labour classes with wage build-ups (Lab-FOREMAN to Lab-FINISHER), 6 machines with USACE build-ups (Eqp-EXC320 to Eqp-GOMACO), 2 materials (Mat-BEDSTONE at 50.00 per M3, Mat-READYMIX at 215.00 per M3), 4 crews (PIPE1, GRADE1, CONC1, CURB1) and 3 assemblies (PIPE-TRENCH, CONC-FLAT, CURB-GUTTER).

Tasks

To add a labour class with a wage build-up

1. Press **Ctrl+7**, click the **Labour** pill, then **Add Resource**.
2. Type a Code such as Lab-PIPELAYER and a Description.
3. In the **Rate Source** cell choose **Labor build-up**.
4. In the card type **Base wage \$/hr** 38.00, **Fringes \$/hr** 12.00 and **Burden %** 42, pressing Tab after each.
5. Read **Effective:**. Here $38.00 \times 1.42 + 12.00 = 65.96$, and the grid shows 65.9600.

To add a machine with the USACE build-up

1. Click the **Equipment** pill, then **Add Resource**. Set Code (Eqp-EXC320) and Description; leave Unit HR.
2. Set **Rate Source** to **Equipment (USACE)**.
3. Fill the card: **TEV \$ 285000**, **Salvage % 10**, **Life hrs 10000**, **Tire \$ 0**, **FCCM \$/hr 0**, **HP 162**, **Fuel \$/gal 4.00**, **Fuel Diesel**, **Load factor 0.62**, **FOG factor 0.15**, **Repair \$/hr 22**, **Tire wear \$/hr 0**.
4. Read **\$/hr**:. Here it is about 70.09 (25.65 depreciation + 19.51 fuel + 2.93 FOG + 22.00 repair). Put the operator in the crew as a separate Lab- member.

Note: Fuel \$/gal is a price per US gallon; multiply a litre price by 3.785.

To price a machine from the rate book

1. On the Resources screen click **Rate Book**.
2. The first time, click **Import rate book...** and pick your rate-book CSV. The status line reads, for example, **Imported 412 entries (380 verified, 32 to review)**.
3. Optionally pick a book, then search, for example excavator 20-30 or cat 336, and click the machine's row.
4. Type your dial in **% of book rate**:, for example 85.
5. Click **Add as resource**. The status line reads, for example, **Eqp-CAT-336 → 212.50 \$/hr (85% of 250.00)**. Pick the next machine or click **Close**.

Picking the same make and model again re-prices the existing Eqp- row instead of creating a twin. The CSV has 14 columns with the header
 province,section,group,capacity,age,basis,rate_hr,rate_day,rate_week,rate_month,make,model,1,status,source_page; # lines are comments, and a status of verified clears the **Review** flag. The stored book lives at %APPDATA%\SuperBid\ratebook.txt.

To add a material, sub or trucking resource

1. Click the **Materials** pill (or **Subs & trucking**), then **Add Resource**.
2. Set Code (Mat-READYMIX) and Description (Ready-mix concrete, 30 MPa).
3. Change Unit from HR to what you buy it by: M3, T, EA, LM, LS. For trucking, set Type to **Trucking** (the code becomes Trk-...) and keep HR.
4. Leave Rate Source **Manual** and type the rate in **Effective Rate** or **Manual unit cost**:, for example 215.0000.

New material... in the item assembly builder and **New resource...** in the **Insert Resources** dialog open the **New Resource** dialog, which adds the prefix, defaults the unit (**Material M3**, **Sub LS**, **Trucking HR**) and writes the resource with the dialog behind it, in one undo step. It never creates labour or equipment.

To build a crew

1. Press **Ctrl+8** and click **Add Crew**. Rename **CREW1** to something like **PIPE2** and add a Description.
2. With the crew selected, click **Add Labour ▼** and pick from the menu, for example **Working foreman — 110/hr** or **General labourer — 75/hr**.
3. Click **Add Equipment ▼** and pick a machine, for example **Excavator, 320 class (30 t) — 175/hr**.
4. A resource with that code stem is reused with its own build-up rate. Otherwise a **Manual** resource is created at the menu's starter rate: **Added Eqp-EXC320 to the crew — new resource at 175.00/hr, edit it on the Resources screen**.
5. Edit **Qty in Crew** for each member, or click a member's **Resource** cell to swap in another labour or equipment code.
6. Read **\$/Crew-Hr**, then assign the crew in the **Crew** column of the Estimate screen.

The menus come from %APPDATA%\SuperBid\crew-catalog.txt when it exists (one entry per line, L|code|description|rate or E|code|description|rate); otherwise a built-in list is used. The app never writes this file.

To create and reuse a company library

1. Start with **Library ► Create starter library...** and save **starter.sblib**, or choose **Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)** when creating an estimate.
2. With an estimate open, use **Library ► Import resources & crews...** and pick the library. A **Library import** box reports **Imported 14 resource(s) and 4 crew(s). (Existing codes were skipped.)**
3. Edit the rates on the Resources screen, then use **Library ► Save resources to library...** to write them to **company.sblib**.
4. On the next bid, import **company.sblib**. **Ctrl+Z** removes an entire import in one step.

To start a bid from a master estimate

1. Choose **File ► New from Template....**
2. In **Choose a template estimate (master)** pick the **.sbid** or **.sblib** to copy.
3. In **Create estimate file** name the new file (default **estimate.sbid**).
4. The new estimate opens as an independent deep copy of the master: resources, crews, pay items, cost items, change orders, quotes, assemblies, bid summary settings and proposal terms.

Tips and gotchas

- Imported and copied items are snapshots. Editing an estimate never changes the library, re-importing an updated library does not refresh rates on codes you already have, and a new rate-book import does not re-price resources already picked.

- **Add Resource** always sets Unit HR, even under the **Materials** pill. Change it before you price by the cubic metre.
- Typing into **Effective Rate** on a build-up or rate-book row is silently ignored; edit the components in the card.
- The **Rate Book**, **New Resource** and **Insert Resources** dialogs accept 2.5 or 2,5 whatever the Windows language, and read 1 200,5 and \$1,200 too. A lone comma followed by exactly three digits, such as 1,250, follows the Windows region setting (1250 on an English machine, 1.25 on a French one); type 1250 or 1,250.00 to be explicit.
- Type changes only rename codes that start with Lab-, Eqp-, Mat-, Sub- or Trk- in that exact casing; SUB-BASE or LAB-TESTING are left as typed.
- Rate-book lines with basis all-found already include the operator, and the description gets the suffix (all-found – operator included). Do not add an operator to that crew as well.
- **Ctrl+V** pastes a tab-separated Excel block at the current cell as one undo step; **Ctrl+C** copies without headers. On the Resources grid, right-click a column header to hide or show columns or choose **Reset columns**.

Warning: The starter library's equipment rates are bare USACE costs (about \$70/hr for a 320-class excavator); the **Add Equipment** ▾ menu's starter rates are loaded charge-out numbers (\$175/hr for the same machine). A pick reuses an existing starter resource but otherwise creates a charge-out-rate one. Mixing the two bases in one estimate marks up markup and overstates the bid.

Quotes and subcontractor pricing

The Quotes screen is where you collect supplier and subcontractor pricing, level the quotes so they compare apples-to-apples, and award the work. SuperBid calls a package of things to be priced a *quote folder*, each thing inside it a *line*, and each supplier or subcontractor a *vendor*. When you award a line to a vendor, the estimate reprices itself: the vendor's unit price replaces your own cost wherever that material or scope is used. Nothing changes in the estimate until you award, so you can enter and compare quotes freely right up to bid day.

The screenshot shows the SuperBid interface with the 'Quotes' screen active. The left sidebar contains a 'WORKSPACE' menu with options like Overview, Estimate, Pay Items, Quotes (selected), Bid Summary, Proposal, Resources, Crew Builder, Cost History, and Item Assemblies. Below this is an 'AI TOOLS' section with AI Takeoff, AI PreBid Analysis, and Bid Scraper. The main area is divided into three numbered sections:

- 1 - Folders:** A table with columns 'Folder', 'Lines', and 'Quotes'. It shows 'Asphalt paving' with 1 line and 2 quotes, and 'Hydrants and valves supply' with 2 lines and 1 quote.
- 2 - Lines & leveled comparison:** A table with columns: Code, Description, Unit, Qty, Self-Perform, Awarded To, Northside Asphalt, Lafarge Paving, and a 'LEVELED TOTAL' row. It shows 'Sub-ASPALT' with a quantity of 1,150.00 and a leveled total of 171.50 for Northside Asphalt and 178.00 for Lafarge Paving.
- 3 - Vendor quotes in this folder:** A table with columns: Vendor, Status, Reviewed, Adjustment \$, Leveled Total, Priced, and Awarded. It shows quotes from 'Lafarge Paving' and 'Northside Asphalt', both with a status of 'Active' and a reviewed checkbox checked.

At the bottom, there is a '4 - Vendor Unit Price' table showing the unit price for 'Sub-ASPALT' as 178.00. The bottom status bar shows 'Margin 13.46%', 'Total cost: 813,669.37', and 'BID TOTAL: 940,240.16'.

Figure 13. The Quotes screen with the sample estimate's "Asphalt paving" folder selected and two vendor quotes leveled side by side.

Screen tour

Open the screen from the left rail (**Quotes**) or press **Ctrl+4**. It needs an open estimate. The screen has four numbered areas; selecting a folder in area 1 drives everything on the right.

1 - Folders and Vendors (left column)

The **1 - Folders** list holds the quote folders. **Add** creates a folder named **Folder N** and selects it; **Delete** removes the selected folder with all its lines, quotes and prices.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Folder	Folder name, for example Pipe & bedding or Asphalt paving sub	Yes, type in the cell

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Lines	Number of lines in the folder	No (gray, calculated)
Quotes	Number of vendor quotes attached to the folder	No (gray, calculated)

The **Vendors** list is the estimate's vendor list. It is shared by every folder in the estimate and saved in the estimate file. **Add** creates a vendor named Vendor N; **Delete** removes the selected vendor, but only if it has no quotes anywhere.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Vendor	Supplier or subcontractor name. The + Quote dropdown matches on this name, so keep names unique	Yes
Contact	Free text, such as an e-mail address or phone number	Yes

Note: The Vendors list is not connected to **Library ► Contacts....** You type vendor names on each estimate.

2 · Lines & leveled comparison

The bar above the comparison grid adds and removes lines:

- The first dropdown lists every *quantity-driven* resource in the estimate: resources of type **Material**, **Sub** and **Trucking**. **Labor** and **Equipment** resources are hourly and cannot be quoted here. Pick a code and click + **Resource** to add a *resource line*. Its **Qty** is the estimate's total demand for that resource, including waste.
- The second dropdown lists every leaf cost item (one with no children). Pick a code and click + **Cost Item** to add a *cost item line*, which prices a whole scope of work per unit of the item. Its **Qty** is the item's forecast quantity.
- **Auto-fill** adds a resource line for every material, sub and trucking resource with a demand in the estimate that is not already in the folder. The status bar reports Auto-added N line(s) from estimate materials/subs.
- **Delete Line** removes the selected line together with every vendor price entered for it.

The comparison grid itself is read-only and cannot be sorted. Vendor columns are built automatically, one per active quote, ordered lowest leveled total first.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Code	Resource or cost item code. The four footer rows use this column for their labels	No
Description	Resource or cost item description	No
Unit	Unit of the resource or cost item, for example M, M3 or T	No
Qty	Comparison quantity captured when the line was added	No

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Self-Perform	Your own current unit cost for the line: the resource's effective rate, or the cost item's total cost divided by the line quantity	No (gray, calculated)
Awarded To	The vendor the line is awarded to, or (self) if it is not awarded	No (changes through the award buttons)
Vendor columns	Two-line header: vendor name over that quote's leveled total. Each cell is the vendor's unit price for the line; * after a price means it was substituted because the vendor did not quote that line	No

Below the lines, when the folder has at least one line and one active quote, four footer rows break down each vendor's total: **Quoted** (real vendor prices × qty), **Substituted** \ (leveling fill-ins × qty), **Adjustment** (the quote's adjustment dollars) and **LEVELED TOTAL*** (the sum, in bold).

Colours in this grid follow the legend beside **Award the selected line**: *green = low bid · blue = awarded · \ = substituted price**. A green cell is the lowest real quoted price on that line; substituted prices never win the green. A blue cell is the awarded vendor, and blue wins when a cell is both.

The award bar under the grid holds **Export Excel**, **Award Line → Selected Vendor** and **Line → Self-Perform**. These are covered under Tasks.

3 · Vendor quotes in this folder

Pick a vendor in the dropdown and click + **Quote** to attach that vendor's quote to the folder. **Award ALL Lines → Selected Vendor** awards every line the selected vendor priced.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Vendor	Vendor name	No
Status	Active (default) or Ignored. An ignored quote stays on file but gets no comparison column, no leveled total and cannot be awarded	Yes, dropdown
Reviewed	Tick it once you have checked the quote against the vendor's paperwork. It clears itself if any price on the quote changes	Yes, checkbox
Adjustment \$	A lump sum added to this vendor's leveled total for freight, terms, exclusions or bond. Negative values are allowed	Yes
Leveled Total	Sum of leveled unit price × qty over all lines, plus the adjustment. Shows (ignored) for ignored quotes	No (gray, calculated)
Priced	How many lines this vendor actually priced	No
Awarded	How many lines are currently awarded to this quote	No

4 · Vendor Unit Price

Selecting a quote row fills the entry grid at the bottom with the folder's lines (**Code**, **Description**, **Qty**, all read-only) and one editable column, **4 · Vendor Unit Price**. Type the vendor's unit price on each line. Your entries show in blue, the override colour. Leave a line blank if the vendor did not quote it.

Concepts

Leveling is how SuperBid makes totals comparable when vendors do not all price the same lines. A blank price is filled with a substitute, in this order: the price of the quote already awarded on that line, otherwise the lowest price among the active quotes, otherwise your self-perform price. Substitutes are marked with * on screen and in the report, and in italics in the Excel export. Ignored quotes are left out of the substitute math.

The *leveled total* is the sum of leveled unit prices × line quantity plus the quote's **Adjustment \$**. It is the number vendor columns sort by.

Self-perform is the pseudo-vendor for doing the work with your own forces at the estimate's current cost. For a cost item that has been switched to the Comparison method, self-perform always means the detail (crew and resource) side.

An *award* is the decision that reprices the estimate. For a resource line, the resource's **Rate Source** on the Resources screen becomes **Manual** and its **Effective Rate** becomes the vendor price, so every cost item using that resource reprices. For a cost item line, the item's **Method** on the Estimate screen becomes **Comparison** if it had a crew, productivity factor or resource usages (the detail cost is kept), or **Subcontracted** if it was a plain item. Either way **Plug \$/U** becomes the vendor price, **Plug Total** is cleared, and the dollars land in the subcontract cost bucket.

Tasks

To set up a quote folder and its lines

1. Open the estimate and press **Ctrl+4**.
2. Under **1 · Folders** click **Add**. A folder named **Folder 1** appears and is selected.
3. Click the **Folder** cell and type a name, for example **Pipe & bedding**.
4. Add lines from the **2 · Lines & leveled comparison** bar: pick a resource and click **+ Resource**, pick a leaf cost item and click **+ Cost Item**, or click **Auto-fill** to add every material, sub and trucking resource at once.
5. Check the **Qty** column. A resource line carries the estimate's demand including waste, for example 612.00 m of 300 mm PVC for 600 m of pipe at 2% waste.
6. To remove a line, select it and click **Delete Line**.

The status bar confirms each step, for example **Added line PIPE300**. A duplicate is refused with **'PIPE300' is already in this folder**.

To add vendors and attach their quotes

1. Under **Vendors** click **Add**, then rename Vendor 1 in the **Vendor** cell. Fill **Contact** if you want it.
2. With the folder selected, pick the vendor in the dropdown beside **+ Quote** and click **+ Quote**. The quote appears under **3 · Vendor quotes in this folder** and is selected.
3. Repeat for each bidder. A vendor can have one quote per folder; a second attempt shows 'NAME' already has a quote in this folder.

To enter a vendor's prices

1. Click the vendor's row under **3 · Vendor quotes in this folder**.
2. In the entry grid, type each unit price in **4 · Vendor Unit Price**. Leave blank any line the vendor did not quote.
3. To paste a column of prices from Excel, click the first cell (without opening it for editing) and press **Ctrl+V**. The whole paste is one undo step; a pasted cell that is not a number is skipped and counted on the status bar, and if any cell cannot be saved to the file the whole paste is undone and the status bar shows the reason in red. Press **Delete** on a cell to clear it (not quoted).
4. Enter any **Adjustment \$** on the quote row for freight, terms or exclusions.
5. Tick **Reviewed** once you have checked the quote.

Each typed price is one undo step. 2.5 and 2,5 both read as 2.5 whatever the Windows number format, and \$1,200.00 is accepted too. Text that is not a number is refused with "**abc**" is not a number — **quoted price unchanged**. on the status bar and the cell keeps its stored value. A blank clears the price (not quoted).

To read the leveled comparison

1. Select the folder. Vendor columns appear right of **Awarded To**, cheapest leveled total first, with the total under each vendor's name.
2. Look for green cells (lowest real price on the line) and * markers (substituted).
3. Read the four footer rows to see how much of each total is real pricing, how much is substitution, and the adjustment.
4. To drop a quote from the comparison without deleting it, set its **Status** to **Ignored**.

To award a line or a whole quote

1. Select the line in the comparison grid **and** the vendor's row under **3 · Vendor quotes in this folder**. Both selections are required; with either missing the button does nothing.
2. Click **Award Line → Selected Vendor**. The status bar shows **Awarded PIPE300 to Valley Pipe Supply**. and the cell turns blue.

3. To award every line the vendor priced, select only the quote row and click **Award ALL Lines → Selected Vendor**. The status bar shows **Awarded N line(s) to VENDOR**. Lines the vendor left blank are untouched.
4. Check the effect on the Resources or Estimate screen as described under Concepts.
5. To reverse an award completely, press **Ctrl+Z** straight away. One undo reverses the whole award.

Line → Self-Perform clears the award on the selected line and reports **PIPE300 returned to self-perform**. A Comparison item swaps back to its detail cost, but a resource keeps the awarded price with **Rate Source Manual**, and a plain item stays Subcontracted. Edit those on the Resources or Estimate screen if you want the old numbers back.

Awards fail with a status-bar message when the vendor has no price on the line (**This vendor has no price for that line – enter a price first.**) or the quote is ignored (**Ignored quotes cannot be awarded.**).

To export the comparison to Excel

1. Select the folder and click **Export Excel**.
2. In the **Export quote comparison** dialog keep or change **quote-comparison.xlsx** and save.

The workbook has one sheet, **Quote Comparison**, with **Code, Description, Unit, Qty, Self-Perform** and one column per active vendor. Substituted prices are italic, the bold **TOTAL (leveled)** row carries the leveled totals, and a note under the table explains the italics. **Interchange ► Export estimate to Excel workbook...** does not include quotes; use this button instead.

To print the Quote Summary report

1. Choose **Reports ► Quote Summary...**
2. In the **Report Preview** window click **Print...** or **Save as PDF...**

The report has one section per folder, headed **Folder: NAME**, with columns **Line, Qty, Self-Perform, Awarded To** and one per active vendor, a **Leveled totals** row and the footnote *** substituted price (vendor did not quote this line)**. An estimate with no folders prints **No quote folders in this estimate**.

To clear the unreviewed-quote warning

1. On the Overview screen (**Ctrl+1**), find **Data-quality checks**. The entry reads **N vendor quote(s) not yet marked reviewed**. Click it to jump to the Quotes screen; the first folder with an unreviewed quote is selected.
2. Tick **Reviewed** on each quote you have checked.
3. For a fuller scan, choose **Estimate ► Estimate Check...**, keep the rules **Unreviewed vendor quotes** and **Quote folders with no award** ticked, click **Run check**, select a finding and click **Go to selected**.

To maintain the company directory

Library ► Contacts... opens the **Contacts** dialog, headed **Company directory**, with the categories **Customer, Engineer, Subcontractor** and **Vendor**. It is stored at %APPDATA%\SuperBid\contacts.json and shared by every estimate.

1. Filter with the category dropdown (default **All**) or type in the search box, which matches company, trade, contact, e-mail, city and notes.
2. Click **Add** to create a row in the current category (or **Customer** when the filter is **All**) and fill **Category, Company, Trade / type, Contact, Contact phone, Email, Phone, City, Prov, Postal, Address, Fax, Web** and **Notes**.
3. Click **Import from Excel...** to merge a workbook. Only sheets whose names contain customer, engineer, subcontractor, sub, vendor or supplier are read. The header row must contain a name column (such as **Company, Company Name, Vendor Name, Subcontractor Name, Name or Firm**) plus at least one other recognised column. An import fills only blank fields on an existing company in the same category; it never overwrites what you typed. The status line reports how many rows were new and how many merged.
4. Select rows and click **Delete** to remove them.
5. Click **Save**. Rows with a blank **Company** are dropped. **Cancel** discards every change, including an import.

Tips and gotchas

- After most actions (adding or deleting lines, **Auto-fill**, awards, **Line → Self-Perform**) the quote-row selection is cleared and the price entry grid empties. Click the quote row again to keep typing prices.
- **Qty** is captured when the line is added and never refreshed. If you change quantities or waste in the estimate, delete and re-add the line.
- There is no button to delete a single quote, and a vendor with quotes cannot be deleted (**Cannot delete 'NAME': it has quotes. Delete those first.**). Set the quote's **Status** to **Ignored**, or delete the folder.
- An award made before a quote was set to **Ignored** stays in force. Only new awards to that quote are refused.
- A vendor column can show the lowest leveled total without a single green cell, because substituted prices never win the green.
- **Award ALL Lines → Selected Vendor** is not an all-or-nothing package award. Lines the vendor did not price keep their current award or self-perform status.
- Entering a price on a reviewed quote silently clears **Reviewed**. Re-tick it after edits.
- The Quote Summary report and the Excel export list only active quotes.
- Vendor names must be unique. If two vendors share a name, **+ Quote** always attaches to the first one.

- The Overview list shows at most 8 warnings; the rest are counted in a final line.
- The demo bid's quote folder is in imperial units (LF and CY); your own folders take the units of your resources and cost items.

Warning: **Delete** (folder or vendor) and **Delete Line** act immediately with no confirmation. Press **Ctrl+Z** to recover.

Warning: **Line → Self-Perform** does not restore a resource's original rate. If you want the pre-award cost back, use **Ctrl+Z** immediately after the award, or reset the rate on the Resources screen.

Tip: Use **Adjustment \$** to level what the paperwork does not: add freight for a supplier quoting FOB their yard, add bond for a sub who excluded it, or enter a negative amount for an early-payment discount you intend to take.

Bid Summary: markups, bond and the spread

The Estimate screen builds your true cost. The Bid Summary screen turns that cost into the unit prices you put on the bid form. SuperBid calls this the *spread*: markups, indirect costs and bond are pooled and then shared out across the pay items so that unit price × pay quantity adds up to your target bid to the penny. You do not price lines one by one. You set the markup chain, choose how the pools are shared, and lock or exclude individual lines where you need control. Open it from the nav rail (**Bid Summary**) or press **Ctrl+5**.

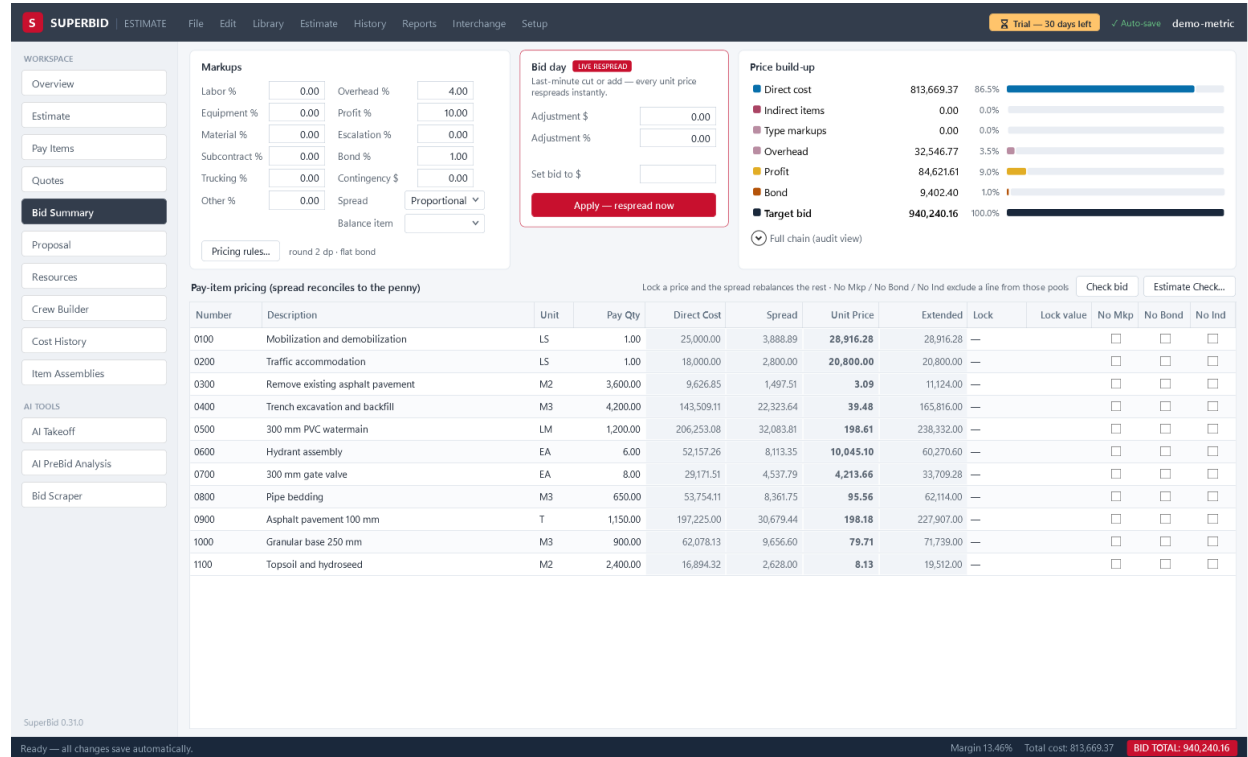


Figure 14. The Bid Summary screen with the sample 118 Avenue watermain estimate open.

Screen tour

Three cards sit across the top and the pay-item pricing grid fills the rest. A white cell is one you type in, a gray cell is calculated, and blue text is your override (a lock value).

Markups card

Every percent box takes a percent (10 means 10 %; 2.5 means 2.5 %) and commits when you leave it with Tab or a click. Each commit re-runs the chain and respreads every unit price at once.

Field	What it does
Labor %, Equipment %, Material %, Subcontract %, Trucking %, Other %	Type markups. Each applies only to the matching bucket of direct cost. Subcontracted items land in

Field	What it does
	Subcontract; plugs, Calculated amounts and crew-dollar costs land in Other.
Overhead %	Applied to direct + indirect + escalation.
Profit %	Applied to everything above it, including type markups and overhead.
Escalation %	Applied to direct + indirect.
Bond %	Flat bond rate. SuperBid grosses it up so bond is exactly this percent of the final bid.
Contingency \$	A flat dollar amount added after profit. It belongs to the base bid only; alternates never carry it.
Spread	Proportional (share by direct cost) or Even (equal shares). Default is Proportional.
Balance item	The pay item that absorbs the rounding pennies. Blank means automatic.

The **Pricing rules...** button opens the rounding-band and tiered-bond editor. The summary beside it reads round 2 dp · flat bond on a new estimate, or for example 2 rounding band(s) · 3-bracket bond.

The chain runs in this order: direct cost, indirect items, escalation, type markups, overhead, profit, contingency, bid-day adjustment, bond, target bid. Type markups apply to direct cost only; indirect items receive escalation, overhead and profit but not the type markups.

Bid day card

The accent-bordered card marked **LIVE RESPREAD** is for last-minute changes. **Adjustment \$** adds (positive) or cuts (negative) a flat amount; **Adjustment %** adds or cuts a percent of the pre-bond subtotal. Both commit when you leave the box and respread immediately. Because the adjustment lands before the bond gross-up, bond stays an exact percent of the final figure. Both act on the base bid only; alternate prices do not move.

Set base bid to \$ with **Apply — respread now** forces the base bid to an exact total. SuperBid solves the flat adjustment needed, writes it into **Adjustment \$**, and resets **Adjustment %** to 0. The figure you type is the base schedule's total; alternates keep their own stand-alone prices. The box reads 1,250,000, \$1,250,000 and 1 250 000,50 alike, whatever the Windows number format.

Price build-up card

Each row shows a colour chip, a label, the amount, its share of the target bid as a percent, and a bar. Direct cost, Indirect items, Type markups, Overhead, Profit, Bond and Target bid always show; Escalation, Contingency and Bid-day adjustment appear only when non-zero. Expand **Full chain (audit view)** for every line of the chain in a fixed-width list plus two extra lines: Priced total (the sum of every

Extended in the grid) and Residual (target minus priced total). Residual is 0.00 when the spread fully reconciles. With alternates the card shows the base bid's chain, and the audit view splits into blocks: a **BASE BID** block whose Priced total and Residual are the base bid's own, so the three lines reconcile; an **ALTERNATE <code> (stand-alone)** block per alternate with its own **ALT <code> TOTAL**, Priced total and Residual (no Contingency or Bid-day adjust lines, because alternates never carry those); and a **BID TOTALS** block listing Base bid and each Alt, then **ALL SCHEDULES** (the same figure as the status-bar pill), a Priced total (the sum of every Extended across all schedules, which is what the Excel workbook and the Bid Summary report print as **TOTAL (all schedules)**) and a Residual explaining any difference between the two.

Pay-item pricing grid

The section bar reads **Pay-item pricing (spread reconciles to the penny per schedule)** and carries the **Check bid** and **Estimate Check...** buttons. One row appears for each *leaf* pay item (an item with no child items); parent items are grouping only and carry no price. Alternate lines are priced too, each from its own alternate's chain.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Number, Description, Unit	From the Pay Items screen.	No
Pay Qty	The owner's pay quantity.	No
Direct Cost	Rolled-up direct cost behind the item; indirect items are excluded. Zero shows as —.	No
Spread	This line's share of markups, indirects and bond, before rounding. Zero shows as —.	No
Unit Price	(Direct Cost + Spread) ÷ Pay Qty, rounded per the rounding policy. Bold.	No (use a lock)
Extended	Rounded Unit Price × Pay Qty. Zero shows as —.	No
Lock	— (unlocked), Price , Markup % or Margin % .	Yes
Lock value	For Price, the \$/unit. For Markup % or Margin %, a whole-number percent. Blue text. 2.5 and 2,5 both read as 2.5; text that is not a number is refused and the cell keeps its value; a blank clears it.	Yes
No Mkp	Excludes the line from the markup pool.	Yes
No Bond	Excludes the line from the bond pool.	Yes
No Ind	Excludes the line from the indirect pool.	Yes

Right-click a column header to show or hide columns; layouts persist in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\grids.txt.

Status bar

The bottom bar shows pricing on every screen: **BID TOTAL:** (the chain's target), **Total cost:** (every root cost item, direct and indirect), **Margin** (target minus base-bid cost, as a percent of target) and a **Δ** chip showing how much your most recent change moved the bid. With alternates the pill reads **BASE BID:** **<x>** · **ALL SCHEDULES:** **<y>**, where y is the base bid plus every alternate's stand-alone total, and the cost text reads **Total cost (all schedules):** followed by the base-bid cost plus every alternate's stand-alone cost (the same figure as the Overview's **All schedules** note under card B); when a change order carries cost it continues · **incl. change orders:** **<z>**, z being the whole estimate's cost. Pricing errors appear here in red.

Tasks

To set the markups for a bid

1. Press **Ctrl+5**.
2. In the **Markups** card type your percents. A new estimate starts with every percent at 0.
3. Type a flat amount in **Contingency \$** if you carry one.
4. Press Tab after each box. The **Price build-up** card, the grid and **BID TOTAL:** update at once.
5. Expand **Full chain (audit view)** and confirm Residual reads **0.00**.

Worked example from **File ▶ New Demo Bid...**: Profit 10 %, Bond 1 %, everything else 0, no indirect items. Direct cost 109,920.18 → Profit 10,992.02 → Bond 1,221.34 → TARGET BID 122,133.54. The bond is exactly 1 % of 122,133.54. Hand arithmetic from the rounded direct cost lands one cent low; the app computes on unrounded values.

To choose the spread method and the balance item

1. Set **Spread** to **Proportional** or **Even**. If every eligible line has zero direct cost, Proportional shares evenly.
2. Pick a pay item number in **Balance item**, or leave it blank for automatic (the unlocked line with the largest extended).
3. Check Residual in the audit view.

Tip: Choose a lump-sum item with quantity 1 (mobilization, for example) as the balance item. It absorbs any residual exactly. An item with a large quantity can only move in steps of one cent × quantity (150.00 for 15,000 M2 at 2 decimals), so part of the residual may remain — at most half a rounding step × its quantity. Only a lump-sum balance item (quantity 0 or 1) guarantees an exact total.

To lock a pay item's unit price

1. In the line's **Lock** cell choose **Price**, **Markup %** or **Margin %**. Choosing **Price** captures the current computed unit price.

2. For **Price**, overtype **Lock value** with the \$/unit you want. For **Markup %** or **Margin %**, type the whole-number percent (30 holds 30 % on cost, or 30 % of price). Leave the cell to commit. Text that is not a number is refused with "**abc is not a number — lock value unchanged.**" on the status bar and the cell keeps its stored value; clearing the cell removes the value.
3. Watch the other lines. What the lock displaced is redistributed over the unlocked lines and **BID TOTAL:** does not change. If the displacement pushes an unlocked line below its direct unit cost or to a negative unit price, the Overview's **Data-quality checks** shows a  line for it ("spreads to ... BELOW its direct unit cost" or "spreads to a NEGATIVE unit price") and the Estimate Check rules **Unlocked prices below cost** and **Negative unit prices** flag it. The bid still foots exactly, so those warnings are the only signal.
4. To unlock, set **Lock** back to —.

Markup % holds unit price = direct unit cost × (1 + markup). Margin % holds unit price = direct unit cost ÷ (1 – margin). A Margin % of 100 or more cannot be solved, so the line spreads as unlocked.

To keep a line out of a pool

1. Tick **No Mkp**, **No Bond** or **No Ind** on the line.
2. The excluded dollars move to the remaining eligible unlocked lines. If no unlocked line is eligible, they move to every unlocked line. The total bid is unchanged.

To make a bid-day cut or add

1. In the **Bid day** card type a dollar amount in **Adjustment \$** (negative to cut) or a percent in **Adjustment %**.
2. Leave the box. Every unit price respreads and a Bid-day adjustment row appears in the **Price build-up**.
3. Confirm the new **BID TOTAL:** and the  chip.

To set the bid to an exact total

1. Type the figure in **Set base bid to \$**, for example 1,250,000 or \$1,250,000.
2. Click **Apply — respread now**. The status bar reads "Bid set to 1,250,000.00 via ... adjustment." and **BID TOTAL:** matches to the penny. With alternates present it reads "Base bid set to 1,250,000.00 via ... adjustment (alternates unchanged)." — the figure is the base schedule's total and alternate prices do not move.
3. Press **Ctrl+Z** to undo, or set **Adjustment \$** back to 0.

A blank, non-numeric, zero or negative figure shows "Enter a valid target bid amount first." and changes nothing.

To set rounding bands or a tiered bond table

1. Click **Pricing rules....** The **Pricing rules** dialog opens.
2. Under **Unit-price rounding bands** click **Add band** and edit **Up to \$ (unit price)** and **Decimals** (0 to 6). A unit price at or below the threshold rounds to that many decimals; a price above the top band uses the top band's decimals. Add bands from low to high.
3. Under **Tiered bond table** click **Add bracket** and set **Up to \$ (contract)** and **Rate %** for each slice, for example 500,000 at 2.5, then 2,500,000 at 1.5, then 100,000,000 at 1.0. Rates are marginal, like tax brackets; the amount above the last bracket keeps the last bracket's rate. With alternates, each alternate's bond premium is evaluated on the alternate's own total, as if it stood alone; that is slightly conservative, because the first bracket is the dearest.
4. Click **Save**. Both tables are written as one undo step and the bid reprices. **Remove** deletes the selected row.

Remove every bracket and save to return to the flat **Bond %**. With no bands, every unit price rounds to 2 decimals.

Pricing rules

Unit-price rounding by price band, and a tiered (bracketed) bond premium. Leave a table empty to use the flat unit-price decimals and flat bond % from the Bid Summary.

Unit-price rounding bands Add band Remove

A unit price at or below "Up to \$" rounds to that many decimals. Order low to high; make the last band's "Up to" very large.

Up to \$ (unit price)	Decimals
-----------------------	----------

Tiered bond table Add bracket Remove

Marginal rates like tax brackets: each rate applies to the slice of the contract amount up to its "Up to \$". Rate is a percentage.

Up to \$ (contract)	Rate %
---------------------	--------

Save Cancel

Figure 15. The Pricing rules dialog with rounding bands and a tiered bond table.

To run the bid-readiness checks

1. Click **Check bid**. SuperBid jumps to the Overview screen and the status bar reads "Bid readiness: all checks clear." or a count of checks needing attention.

2. In **Data-quality checks** click any warning to jump to its row. Pricing checks include a locked price below direct unit cost, a pay item with cost but zero pay quantity, a zero-quantity pay item that still carries price dollars, an unlocked line spread below its direct unit cost, an unlocked line with a negative unit price, and a cost item whose allocation shares do not total 100%.
3. For the deeper scan click **Estimate Check...**, untick rules that do not apply, click **Run check**, then double-click a finding or use **Go to selected**. Pricing rules include **Price locks below cost**, **Unlocked prices below cost**, **Negative unit prices**, **Zero-quantity pay items carrying price**, **Locks without a value**, **No bond on a large bid** (direct cost of 500,000 or more with no bond percent and no bond table) and **Alternates priced stand-alone** (one low-severity reminder per alternate). The three rules that read the spread are skipped without a message while pricing has failed. Your rule choices are remembered in %APPDATA%\SuperBid\estimate-check.txt; the full list of 20 rules is in the Overview chapter.

To print the Bid Summary or get the prices out

1. **Reports ▶ Bid Summary...** opens the internal report: the markup chain (with Priced total and Residual) and a priced pay-item table. With alternates it prints the base bid's chain and table, then a chain and table per alternate and a **Bid Totals** block (see the Proposal chapter). Click **Print...** or **Save as PDF...** (default name `bid-summary.pdf`).
2. **Interchange ▶ Export estimate to Excel workbook...** writes `estimate.xlsx` with a **Pay Items** sheet (Number through Extended plus a **TOTAL BID** row; base-bid items only; with alternates, a **BASE BID TOTAL**, an **ALTERNATE <code> TOTAL** per alternate, an **Alternate** column naming each row's schedule and a closing **TOTAL (all schedules)** row) and a **Bid Summary** sheet listing the chain (with alternates, a **Base Bid** block, an **Alternate <code>** block per alternate and a **Bid Totals** block, each footing on its own).
3. **Interchange ▶ Write prices to DOT (.COL)...** writes the spread's unit prices back into an AASHTOWare `.col` file and keeps a backup beside it: `<name>.col.bak` is the first-ever copy (the agency's original) and is never overwritten, and each later run that changes the file adds a dated `<name>.col.<yyyymmdd-HH:mm:ss>.bak`. Its result message leads with **CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING** when lines were left unpriced, quantities in the file differ from the estimate, a matched line has no numeric quantity, or priced items have no line in the file (see the Pay Items chapter). It refuses, writing nothing, while two priced pay items share a number or a price is too wide for the file's price field.

Print... Save as PDF...

Bid Summary

Demo Bid — 118 Avenue Watermain Replacement

Generated 2026-09-02 06:52

Markup Chain

Direct cost	813,669.37
Indirect items	0.00
Escalation	0.00
Type markups	0.00
Overhead	32,546.77
Profit	84,621.61
Contingency	0.00
Bid-day adjustment	0.00
Bond	9,402.40
TARGET BID	940,240.16
Priced total	940,240.16
Residual	0.00

Pay Item Pricing

Item	Description	Pay Qty	Direct Cost	Spread	Unit Price	Extended
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	1.00	25,000.00	3,888.89	28,916.28	28,916.28
0200	Traffic accommodation	1.00	18,000.00	2,800.00	20,800.00	20,800.00
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	3,600.00	9,626.85	1,497.51	3.09	11,124.00
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	4,200.00	143,509.11	22,323.64	39.48	165,816.00
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	1,200.00	206,253.08	32,083.81	198.61	238,332.00
0600	Hydrant assembly	6.00	52,157.26	8,113.35	10,045.10	60,270.60
0700	300 mm gate valve	8.00	29,171.51	4,537.79	4,213.66	33,709.28
0800	Pipe bedding	650.00	53,754.11	8,361.75	95.56	62,114.00
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	1,150.00	197,225.00	30,679.44	198.18	227,907.00
1000	Granular base 250 mm	900.00	62,078.13	9,656.60	79.71	71,739.00
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	2,400.00	16,894.32	2,628.00	8.13	19,512.00
TOTAL						940,240.16

Figure 16. A report preview with the Print... and Save as PDF... buttons.

Tips and gotchas

- Every committed box or cell is one undo step (**Ctrl+Z**). Lock type and lock value are two separate steps.
- **Material %** is one markup that writes both stored material buckets (permanent and construction). Older files with different rates unify on the first edit.
- When any bracket exists in the tiered bond table, **Bond %** is ignored. On this screen the card summary ("... · 3-bracket bond") is the only hint.
- Changing **Lock** type clears the old value. A 20 % markup is not a 20 % margin is not \$20 per unit, so re-enter the value.
- A **Markup %** or **Margin %** lock with a blank value spreads as unlocked. Only Estimate Check catches this.
- Price locks are kept exactly as typed; Markup % and Margin % locks are rounded to the owner-facing precision so the line foots.
- **Balance item** lists every pay item number, including parents and change-order items. Picking one that is not an unlocked base-bid leaf silently falls back to automatic.

- Change-order pay items appear in the grid with – in the money columns. They are priced separately in **Estimate ► Change Orders...**, and the base bid prices identically with or without them. Without alternates, **Total cost:** in the status bar includes change-order cost; with alternates, **Total cost (all schedules):** is base plus alternates and the change-order cost shows in its **incl. change orders:** suffix. The chain, **Margin** and the Overview KPIs cover the base bid only.
- Alternates are priced stand-alone. The base bid carries the whole fixed indirect pool, **Contingency \$** and every bid-day adjustment; each alternate is priced as its own direct cost plus type markups, escalation, overhead, profit and bond on its own subtotal. A Calculated (percent-of-cost) indirect follows the cost it applies to, so each group gets its own share; an indirect cost item assigned entirely to an alternate's pay items prices inside that alternate; a cost item allocated across base and alternate items splits by its shares. **Margin**, the chain card and the Overview figures describe the base bid; the status-bar pill reads **BASE BID:** and **ALL SCHEDULES:**, and the Overview cards carry each alternate on their grey lines; the grid prices every alternate line from its own chain; the Bid Proposal prints each alternate's total as its add-on price; the Excel **Pay Items** sheet subtotals each schedule and ends in **TOTAL (all schedules);** and a history snapshot's bid total is base plus all alternates. Alternate labels match ignoring case.
- An alternate made of one large-quantity item (say 15,000 M2) cannot always hit its own total to the penny at two decimals. Its residual shows in the alternate's block in the audit view and on the Bid Summary report, and the proposal prints the extended sum.
- A zero-quantity pay item shows Unit Price 0.00 but still carries its cost and spread in Extended, which the bid form cannot recover. The Overview and the Estimate Check (**Zero-quantity pay items carrying price**, high) flag it: quantify the line, or lock or exclude it, before exporting a .COL or a proposal.
- **Check bid** leaves this screen. The Overview list shows at most 8 warnings; the status-bar count is the real total.

Warning: A **Bond %** of 100 or more, or below 0, stops pricing. The status bar reads "Pricing: Bond percent must be in [0, 1)." in red, the audit view reads "PRICING ERROR: Bond percent must be in [0, 1).", the grid's computed columns drop to – and 0.00, and **BID TOTAL:** disappears until you correct it. While pricing has failed, the Estimate Check silently skips its three price-layer rules.

Warning: If every line is locked, the pools have nowhere to go. That money shows as a non-zero Residual and the bid form will not add up to the target. Always confirm Residual is 0.00 before you submit.

Proposal, reports and Excel exports

The Proposal screen shows the **Bid Proposal** — the bid form you hand to the owner — rebuilt from the live estimate every time you open the screen, together with the editor for the Terms & Conditions that print on it. It is also where you print the proposal or save it as a PDF. The **Reports** menu opens the rest of the report pack (SuperBid's seven built-in reports, all previewed and saved the same way), and the **Interchange** menu exports the estimate to Excel for review or for accounting.

The screenshot shows the SuperBid software interface. The top navigation bar includes 'SUPERBID', 'ESTIMATE', 'File', 'Edit', 'Library', 'Estimate', 'History', 'Reports', 'Interchange', and 'Setup'. A status bar at the top right indicates 'Trial — 30 days left', 'Auto-save', and 'demo-metric'.

On the left, a 'WORKSPACE' sidebar lists various views: Overview, Estimate, Pay Items, Quotes, Bid Summary, **Proposal** (selected), Resources, Crew Builder, Cost History, Item Assemblies, AI TOOLS, AI Takeoff, AI PreBid Analysis, and Bid Scraper.

The main content area is titled 'Bid proposal (regenerates when you open this screen)' and includes a 'Refresh' button and a 'Print / Save PDF...' button. Below this is a section for 'Terms & conditions · print on every proposal'.

The 'Bid Proposal' section displays the following information:

- Bid Proposal**
- Demo Bid — 118 Avenue Watermain Replacement
- Generated 2025-09-02 06:32

The 'Schedule of Bid Items' table is as follows:

Item	Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Extended
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	LS	1.00	28,916.28	28,916.28
0200	Traffic accommodation	LS	1.00	20,800.00	20,800.00
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	M2	3,600.00	3.09	11,124.00
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	M3	4,200.00	39.48	165,816.00
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	LM	1,200.00	198.61	238,332.00
0600	Hydrant assembly	EA	6.00	10,045.10	60,270.60
0700	300 mm gate valve	EA	8.00	4,213.66	33,709.28
0800	Pipe bedding	M3	650.00	95.56	62,114.00
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	T	1,150.00	198.18	227,907.00
1000	Granular base 250 mm	M3	900.00	79.71	71,739.00
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	M2	2,400.00	8.13	19,512.00
TOTAL BID					940,240.16

Below the table, the 'Terms & Conditions' section lists 9 terms, including validity, quantities, payment terms, and site access. At the bottom, there are lines for 'Contractor / Authorized Signature' and 'Printed Name & Title'.

The bottom status bar shows 'Ready — all changes save automatically.', 'Margin 13.40%', 'Total cost: 813,669.37', and 'BID TOTAL: 940,240.16'.

Figure 17. The Proposal screen with the sample 118 Avenue watermain estimate open.

Screen tour

Open the Proposal screen from the left rail (**WORKSPACE ▸ Proposal**) or press **Ctrl+6**. An estimate must be open.

The section bar reads **Bid proposal (regenerates when you open this screen)** and carries two buttons. **Refresh** commits any terms you are still typing and re-renders the preview. **Print / Save PDF...** opens the proposal in a Report Preview window (see below), where printing and PDF saving live; the on-screen preview itself is read-only.

Below the bar sits a collapsed expander headed **Terms & conditions · print on every proposal**. Expand it to see the terms text box, three buttons and the hint *Blank line = new numbered clause · saved with the estimate · click Refresh to preview*.

- The text box holds the estimate's terms. A clause is one paragraph; an empty line starts the next clause. Your edit is committed when the box loses focus (click anywhere else, or press **Refresh**). Each commit is one undo step and is written into the `.sbid` file with the estimate.
- **Standard clauses...** opens the Standard Clauses dialog (below).
- **Insert company default** replaces the whole box with your saved company terms, or with the built-in heavy-civil template until you have saved one.
- **Save as company default** writes the current text to `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\default-terms.txt` so new estimates start with it.

The white panel underneath is the rendered proposal. The schedule columns are:

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Item	The owner's bid-form item number from Pay Items	No
Description	Pay item description	No
Unit	The unit code exactly as typed on Pay Items (<code>m3</code> , <code>LM</code> , <code>EA</code> , <code>LS</code>)	No
Quantity	The pay quantity — the owner's quantity from the bid schedule, not your forecast quantity	No
Unit Price	The unit price the spread engine produced for this item	No
Extended	Unit Price × Quantity after penny-balancing	No

Below the schedule the proposal prints a **Terms & Conditions** section (only when the terms box is not blank) with clauses numbered 1., 2., 3. in text order, a closing sentence in which the undersigned agrees to perform the work at the unit prices bid, and three signature lines: **Contractor / Authorized Signature, Printed Name & Title, Date**.

With one schedule the heading is **Schedule of Bid Items** and the total row is **TOTAL BID**. If any pay item carries a bid alternate code (typed in the **Alternate** column on the Pay Items screen, for example **ALT-1**), the proposal splits into **Schedule of Bid Items — Base Bid** and a **Schedule of Bid Items — Alternate ALT-1** section per code, each with its own total (**BASE BID TOTAL**, **ALTERNATE ALT-1 TOTAL**), then a **Bid Totals** list (**Base bid**, **Alternate ALT-1**, ...) ending in **TOTAL (all schedules)**. Each alternate is priced stand-alone, so **BASE BID TOTAL** is the base-only bid — the figure to transcribe if the owner awards the base bid alone — each **ALTERNATE ... TOTAL** is the add-on price for that alternate, and **TOTAL (all schedules)** is everything awarded together. Change-order pay items are never printed on the proposal, so every schedule foots to its total.

Standard Clauses dialog

The dialog is titled **Standard Clauses**. Each card shows a clause label in bold (for example **Validity** or **Winter work**), the full clause text and a checkbox. A box comes up ticked when a clause with the same wording is already in the estimate's terms (differences in spaces and line breaks are ignored). **Apply to proposal** (also **Enter**) reconciles the ticks: unticked standard clauses are removed, newly ticked ones are

added after your existing text, and clauses you wrote by hand are never touched. **Cancel** closes without changes. The preview regenerates as soon as you apply.

SuperBid ships 15 built-in clauses: Validity, Estimated quantities, Payment & holdback, Exclusions, Price escalation, Site access & water, Changes & extra work, Insurance & WCB, Dispute resolution, Construction layout, Materials testing, Restoration, Standby & remobilization, Winter work and Subsurface conditions. The first nine are the built-in default terms, so an estimate seeded with the built-in template opens the dialog with those nine ticked. The built-in **Payment & holdback** clause reads that payment is due within 28 days of receipt of a proper invoice, per the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act (Alberta), with statutory holdback released in accordance with that Act — not net 30. Your own %APPDATA%\SuperBid\terms-catalog.txt replaces the list (see Tasks).

Report Preview window

Every report opens in its own Report Preview window, titled *Report title — estimate name* (for the demo bid, *Bid Proposal — Demo Bid — Maple Street Improvements*). The dark header bar has **Print...**, **Save as PDF...** and a status line. You can keep several open while you work, but each is a snapshot of the estimate as it was when opened.

Print... Save as PDF...						
Bid Summary						
Demo Bid — 118 Avenue Watermain Replacement						
Generated 2026-09-02 06:52						
Markup Chain						
Direct cost		813,669.37				
Indirect items		0.00				
Escalation		0.00				
Type markups		0.00				
Overhead		32,546.77				
Profit		84,621.61				
Contingency		0.00				
Bid-day adjustment		0.00				
Bond		9,402.40				
TARGET BID		940,240.16				
Priced total		940,240.16				
Residual		0.00				
Pay Item Pricing						
Item	Description	Pay Qty	Direct Cost	Spread	Unit Price	Extended
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	1.00	25,000.00	3,888.89	28,916.28	28,916.28
0200	Traffic accommodation	1.00	18,000.00	2,800.00	20,800.00	20,800.00
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	3,600.00	9,626.85	1,497.51	3.09	11,124.00
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	4,200.00	143,509.11	22,323.64	39.48	165,816.00
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	1,200.00	206,253.08	32,083.81	198.61	238,332.00
0600	Hydrant assembly	6.00	52,157.26	8,113.35	10,045.10	60,270.60
0700	300 mm gate valve	8.00	29,171.51	4,537.79	4,213.66	33,709.28
0800	Pipe bedding	650.00	53,754.11	8,361.75	95.56	62,114.00
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	1,150.00	197,225.00	30,679.44	198.18	227,907.00
1000	Granular base 250 mm	900.00	62,078.13	9,656.60	79.71	71,739.00
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	2,400.00	16,894.32	2,628.00	8.13	19,512.00
TOTAL						940,240.16

Figure 18. A report open in the Report Preview window.

Every report prints a title, the estimate name and a *Generated yyyy-MM-dd HH:mm* stamp. Amounts use two decimals with thousands separators. The PDF is US Letter with a footer reading *SuperBid — page N of M*. There is no company name, logo or letterhead anywhere in the reports; the proposal identifies the bidder only through the estimate name, whatever you write in the terms, and the signature block.

The report pack

Six reports are on the **Reports** menu; the seventh is under **History**.

- **Reports ▶ Bid Proposal...** — the owner-facing form described above.
- **Reports ▶ Bid Summary...** — a **Markup Chain** list (Direct cost, Indirect items, Escalation, Type markups, Overhead, Profit, Contingency, Bid-day adjustment, Bond, TARGET BID, Priced total, Residual) and a **Pay Item Pricing** table with Item, Description, Pay Qty, Direct Cost, Spread, Unit Price and Extended for each base-bid pay item, ending in a **TOTAL** row. Residual is the target minus the priced total; 0.00 means the spread absorbed everything. An estimate made from a template prints *Created from template:* and the template name at the top. With alternates the report prints **Markup Chain — Base Bid** and **Pay Item Pricing — Base Bid**, then for each alternate a **Markup Chain — Alternate X** (ending in **ALTERNATE X TOTAL**, with no Contingency or Bid-day adjustment rows, because alternates never carry those) and a **Pay Item Pricing — Alternate X** table, then a **Bid Totals** block listing **Base bid**, each **Alternate X** and **TOTAL (all schedules)** with a sentence explaining the stand-alone rule. Without alternates the report is unchanged.
- **Reports ▶ Cost Item Detail...** — every cost item in the Estimate tree, indented two spaces per level: Code, Description, Method (**Detail**, **Plug**, **Quick**, **Subcontracted**, **Comparison**, **Calculated**, or *(rollup)* for a parent), Qty (your forecast quantity), Prod (the productivity factor value only, no unit), Crew Hrs, Labor+Equip, Mat/Sub and Total. **TOTAL (all items)** is the estimate's total cost, direct and indirect.
- **Reports ▶ Crew Analysis...** — one section per crew, headed **Crew** followed by the crew code and description. A members table (Resource, Type, Qty in Crew, Rate, Cost / Crew-Hr) ends in **Crew rate:**; a usage table (Used By Item, Description, Crew Hours, Labor+Equip Cost) lists every cost item that uses the crew, or *(not used)*, with a **Total** row.
- **Reports ▶ Quote Summary...** — one section per quote folder, *Folder: name*, with Line, Qty, Self-Perform (your own cost for the line), Awarded To (*(self)* when no vendor is awarded) and one column per active vendor. A price marked * is a substitute: the vendor did not quote that line, so the awarded price, then the lowest active quote, then self-perform stands in; a footnote under each table says so. **Leveled totals** include each vendor's adjustment. Ignored quotes are left out. With no quote folders the report says *No quote folders in this estimate*.
- **Reports ▶ Audit Trail...** — the estimate's change log under the heading **Changes (N, newest first)**, with **When (UTC)** and **Action** columns. Undo and redo are logged too, and structural actions appear as labelled rows such as *add pay item 100*, *add resource Lab-RES1*, *delete cost item X*, *add item assembly ...*, *allocate ... to ...* and *delete crew member*. At most the newest 500 entries are shown.

- **History ► Benchmark vs history...** — compares this estimate against one or more `.sbhist` history databases. For each file you get **Cost Items — Unit Cost**, **Cost Items — Production Factor (same factor type)** and **Pay Items — Bid Unit Price**, each with Code, Description, Unit, Current, n, Low, Avg, High and Flag. With several files each heading is prefixed with the file name. Flags are **HIGH** (above the historical high), **LOW** (below the low) or **n/a** (no history for that code). Observations count only when the unit matches.

Excel exports

Interchange ► Export estimate to Excel workbook... writes six sheets, default name `estimate.xlsx`:

Sheet	Contents
Pay Items	Number, Description, Unit, Pay Qty, Direct Cost, Spread, Unit Price, Extended for each base-bid leaf pay item (change-order items are left out); last row TOTAL BID . With alternates the base rows end in BASE BID TOTAL , each alternate's rows follow and end in ALTERNATE <code> TOTAL , a ninth column Alternate names each row's schedule (blank for the base bid), and the last row is TOTAL (all schedules)
Cost Items	The whole tree in order: Level, Code, Description, Pay Item, Unit, Quantity, Method, Crew Hours, Labor+Equip, Mat/Sub/Other, Total Cost, Indirect
Resources	Code, Type, Description, Unit, Rate Source, Effective Rate (both material types export as Material)
Bid Summary	The markup chain as label/value pairs in columns A and B, no header row. With alternates: a Base Bid block (the classic rows), an Alternate <code> block per alternate (Direct cost through Bond, ALTERNATE <code> TOTAL , Priced total, Residual — no Contingency or Bid-day adjustment rows) and a Bid Totals block (Base bid, each Alternate, TOTAL (all schedules)); TARGET BID , Priced total and Residual foot within each block
Job-Cost Budget	One row per leaf cost item: Item Code, Description, Pay Item, Unit, Quantity, Indirect, Labor, Equipment, Material, Subcontract, Trucking, Other, Total, Scope (Base bid or the change-order number); last row TOTAL , whose Description reads Scope: base bid + Draft/Ready change orders (Rejected excluded)
Budget by Cost Code	One row per item and non-zero cost type: Item Code, Cost Code, Cost Type, Pay Item, Amount, Scope

Interchange ► Export job-cost budget (Excel)... writes only the last two sheets, default name `job-cost-budget.xlsx`. This is the hand-off to accounting, job-cost or ERP software. Cost codes are fixed: **LAB**, **EQP**, **MAT**, **SUB**, **TRK**, **OTH**; permanent and construction materials merge into the single **MAT** code. Cost that belongs to a Rejected change order is left out of both sheets; Draft and Ready change-order cost stays in, labelled by its change-order number in **Scope**, and **TOTAL** is the sum of the rows shown. In the Cost Items and Job-Cost Budget sheets, **Indirect** shows **Y** for an item that is flagged indirect (or sits under an indirect parent): its cost goes into the **Indirect items** line of the markup chain and is spread across the pay items instead of counting as one pay item's direct cost.

Tasks

To preview the bid proposal

1. Open an estimate (**File ► Open...** or **Ctrl+O**).
2. Click **Proposal** in the left rail or press **Ctrl+6**.
3. Click **Refresh** after editing terms.

To write or edit the terms by hand

1. Expand **Terms & conditions · print on every proposal**.
2. Type in the text box. Leave an empty line between clauses; a single line break stays inside the same clause.
3. Click **Refresh**. The edit commits and the preview shows the numbered clauses.

To tick standard clauses on or off

1. In the terms expander click **Standard clauses...**
2. Tick the clauses the proposal should carry and untick the ones it should not.
3. Click **Apply to proposal**. The preview regenerates.

To save your terms as the company default

1. Get the terms box the way every new estimate should start.
2. Click **Save as company default**. The status bar confirms: *Saved as the company default — new estimates start with these terms.*

Estimates created with **File ► New Estimate...** or **File ► New Demo Bid...** are seeded with the default. **File ► New from Template...** (and a template chosen inside **New Estimate...**) copies the template's own terms instead. Existing estimates are never changed. Until you save a default, new estimates start from the built-in text, whose payment clause is the 28-day Prompt Payment wording; an estimate or a saved company default from before that wording changed keeps its stored text, so edit it (or save the default again) to adopt the new clause.

To reset the terms to the company default

1. Click **Insert company default**.
2. If the box is not empty, answer **Yes** in the **Insert company default** box that asks *Replace the current terms with the company default?*

To print the proposal or save it as a PDF

1. Click **Print / Save PDF...** (or **Reports ▶ Bid Proposal...**).
2. To print, click **Print...** and choose a printer in the Windows print dialog. The status line reads *Sent to printer*.
3. To save, click **Save as PDF...**, keep or change the name (`bid-proposal.pdf`) in the **Save report as PDF** dialog and save. The status line reads *Generating PDF...* then *Saved:* with the path. If the file cannot be written the status line reads *PDF failed.* and an error box titled **PDF export** explains why.

Other reports default to `bid-summary.pdf`, `cost-item-detail.pdf`, `crew-analysis.pdf`, `quote-summary.pdf`, `audit-trail.pdf` and `benchmark-vs-history.pdf`.

To benchmark the estimate against history

1. Click **History ▶ Benchmark vs history...**
2. In *Choose history database(s) — Ctrl-click to compare several*, select one or more `.sbhist` files and open them.
3. Read the HIGH, LOW and n/a flags. Files that cannot be opened are skipped and named in the status bar; if none can be opened an error box titled **Benchmark** lists them.

To export the estimate workbook or the job-cost budget

1. Click **Interchange ▶ Export estimate to Excel workbook...** or **Interchange ▶ Export job-cost budget (Excel)...**
2. Choose a location and save. The status bar reads *Estimate workbook exported to* or *Job-cost budget exported to* followed by the path.

There is no save-first step: every committed edit is already in the `.sbid` file, and the export reads the live estimate.

To customise the standard-clause library

1. Create or edit `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\terms-catalog.txt` in a text editor: one clause per line as `Label|Clause text`. Lines starting with `#` are ignored. A label may not contain `|`; a line whose clause text contains `|`, or that repeats an earlier clause, is skipped.
2. Reopen **Standard clauses...** Your file replaces the built-in list. A missing, empty or unreadable file falls back to the 15 built-ins.

Tips and gotchas

Note: Change-order pay items, whatever their status, are left out of the proposal schedule and of the **Pay Items** sheet, so the rows always foot to the total. Change orders are priced separately in

Estimate ► Change Orders...; no per-change-order section is printed. The two job-cost sheets are the exception: they include Draft and Ready change-order cost, labelled in their **Scope** column, and leave Rejected cost out.

- The terms box commits when it loses focus. If you type terms and immediately press a keyboard shortcut, click **Refresh** or **Save as company default** first to be sure the text was taken.
- A separator line must be truly empty. A "blank" line containing a space will not start a new numbered clause on the printed proposal. Extra empty lines collapse.
- Standard-clause ticks match the wording. If you edit one word of a standard clause in the box, it shows unticked next time, and ticking it again appends a second clause on the same subject. Applied clauses go at the end of the text; numbering follows text order.
- **Insert company default** replaces everything in the box, including hand-written clauses. Use **Ctrl+Z** if you did not mean to.
- The company default and the clause catalogue are per Windows user on this machine; the estimate's own terms travel inside the `.sbid`.
- The built-in default terms are generic heavy-civil boilerplate — a starting point, not legal advice. Edit them before saving them as your default.
- Unit codes print exactly as typed on Pay Items. Check there if the proposal shows `M3` on one line and `m3` on another.
- Audit Trail times are UTC, not Edmonton time, and many actions carry short internal labels (for example *edit proposal terms*, *undo*, *redo*, *add pay item 100*, *delete cost item X*) rather than plain descriptions.
- The PDF is US Letter, not A4. Printed copies use the chosen printer's printable area.
- The Job-Cost Budget **TOTAL** is the cost of the base bid plus every Draft or Ready change order, direct plus indirect — not the bid price. It equals **TOTAL (all items)** on the Cost Item Detail report only when no change order is Rejected, because Rejected cost is left out of the budget sheets. The Pay Items **TOTAL BID** is the priced total: the target bid less any residual. With alternates the sheet shows **BASE BID TOTAL**, each **ALTERNATE <code> TOTAL** and **TOTAL (all schedules)** instead.
- Exporting over a workbook that is open in Excel fails with an error box titled **Excel export** or **Job-cost export**. Close the file in Excel and try again.
- With no estimate open, the Reports menu, the exports and the benchmark do nothing and show no message.

Cost History and benchmarking

The Cost History screen is where you build and use a company history database. A history database (a file with the `.sbhist` extension) stores snapshots of finished estimates: the unit cost and production rate of every leaf cost item and the bid unit price of every leaf pay item. A leaf item is one with no child items under it. Once you have a few snapshots, you can benchmark any open estimate against them. The Benchmark vs History report shows each line's current value beside the low, average and high of your history and flags it HIGH or LOW when it falls outside that band. If your company also runs SuperJob, a finished job's real field costs and production rates can be published into the same kind of file, so your next bid is checked against what actually happened.

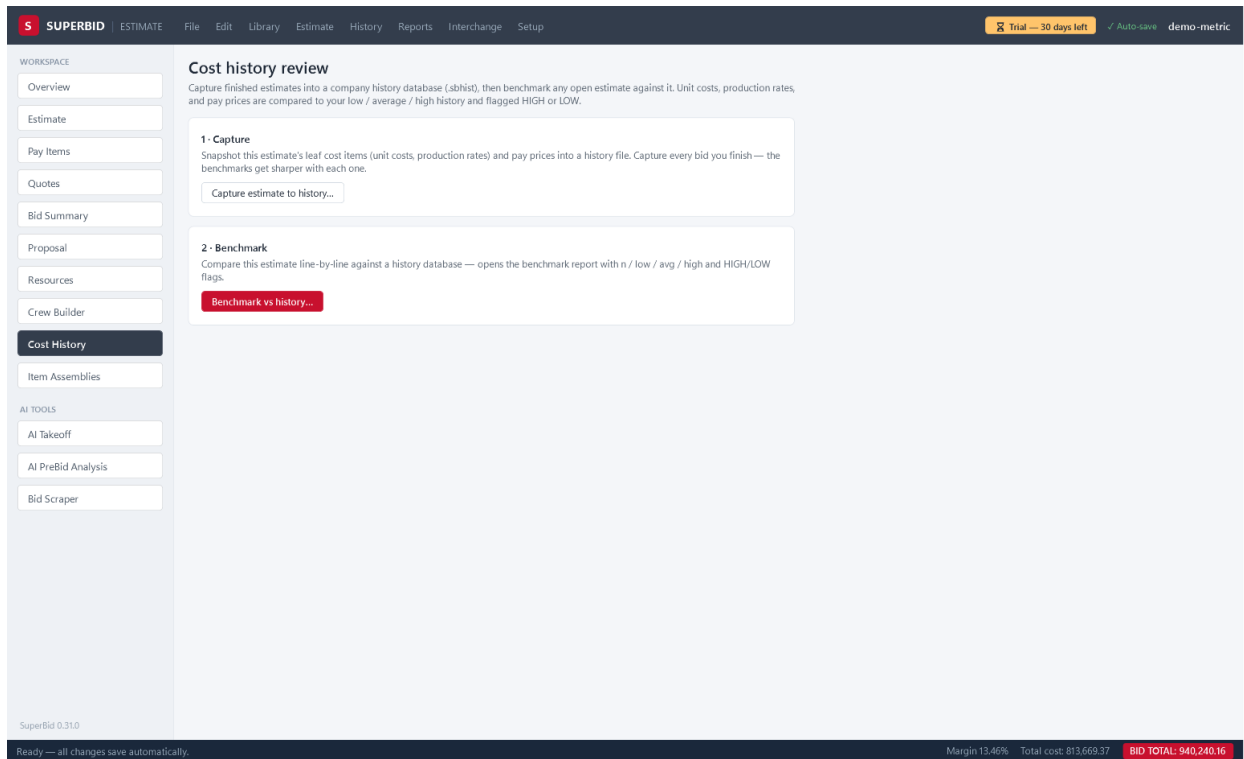


Figure 19. The Cost History screen with its two cards, Capture and Benchmark.

Screen tour

Open the screen from the left navigation rail (**Cost History**) or press **Ctrl+9**. The page title is **Cost history review**. There is no grid on this screen and nothing to edit; it holds two cards that launch the two history actions. The same two actions are on the top menu under **History**. Both actions need an open estimate. The shortcut and the buttons do nothing while the welcome screen is showing.

Control	What it does
1 · Capture card, Capture estimate to history...	Writes one snapshot of the open estimate into a history database you choose. Same as History ▶ Capture estimate to history...
2 · Benchmark card, Benchmark vs history...	Compares the open estimate line by line against one or more history databases and opens the Benchmark vs History report. Same as History ▶ Benchmark vs history...

The **Reports** menu does not list the benchmark report. You reach it only through this screen or the **History** menu.

The capture dialog is titled **Choose or create history database**. It proposes the file name `company-history.sbhst` and lists only SuperBid history (*.sbhist) files. Picking an existing file adds a snapshot to it; typing a new name creates a new database. Windows does not ask whether to replace the file, because nothing is replaced.

The benchmark dialog is titled **Choose history database(s) — Ctrl-click to compare several**. It lets you select more than one .sbhist file at once. It also offers an All files (.) filter; a file that is not a history database is skipped with an error in the status bar rather than stopping the report.

The report opens in the Report Preview window, titled **Benchmark vs History** — followed by the estimate name. The window has two buttons, **Print...** and **Save as PDF...** (dialog title **Save report as PDF**, default file name `benchmark-vs-history.pdf`). It starts with one line per history file, "History: {file} — {N} snapshot(s).", followed by the reading rules: observations only count when the units agree; HIGH means the current value is above the historical high; LOW means below the historical low; n/a means no history for this code. Then come three tables for each history file:

- **Cost Items — Unit Cost:** every leaf cost item, sorted by code. Current is the item's total cost divided by its forecast quantity.
- **Cost Items — Production Factor (same factor type):** leaf cost items that have a production factor. Current is the factor value. History rows count only when they use the same factor type (for example UH units per hour, HU hours per unit, MU manhours per unit).
- **Pay Items — Bid Unit Price:** every leaf pay item, sorted by number. Current is the spread unit price for the base bid.

A table with no rows shows a single "(none)" row. When more than one file was selected, each heading is prefixed with the file name and a middle dot, for example "company-history.sbhst · Pay Items — Bid Unit Price".

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Code	Cost item code, or pay item number in the pay table.	No
Description	The item's description from the open estimate.	No

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Unit	The current item's unit, such as M3, LM, T or EA. Only history rows with a matching unit are counted; M and LM count as the same unit.	No
Current	This estimate's value: unit cost in dollars per unit, production factor value, or bid unit price. Two decimals.	No
n	Number of matching historical observations across every snapshot in the file.	No
Low	Lowest matching historical value. Blank when n is 0.	No
Avg	Plain average (sum divided by n) of the matching values. Blank when n is 0.	No
High	Highest matching historical value. Blank when n is 0.	No
Flag	n/a when n is 0; HIGH when Current is above High; LOW when Current is below Low; blank when inside the band.	No

The colour conventions used elsewhere in SuperBid (white cell = you type it, gray = calculated, blue text = your override) do not apply here. The report is read-only and the flags are plain text with no colour.

Print...

Save as PDF...

Bid Summary

Demo Bid — 118 Avenue Watermain Replacement

Generated 2026-09-02 06:52

Markup Chain

Direct cost	813,669.37
Indirect items	0.00
Escalation	0.00
Type markups	0.00
Overhead	32,546.77
Profit	84,621.61
Contingency	0.00
Bid-day adjustment	0.00
Bond	9,402.40
TARGET BID	940,240.16
Priced total	940,240.16
Residual	0.00

Pay Item Pricing

Item	Description	Pay Qty	Direct Cost	Spread	Unit Price	Extended
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	1.00	25,000.00	3,888.89	28,916.28	28,916.28
0200	Traffic accommodation	1.00	18,000.00	2,800.00	20,800.00	20,800.00
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	3,600.00	9,626.85	1,497.51	3.09	11,124.00
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	4,200.00	143,509.11	22,323.64	39.48	165,816.00
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	1,200.00	206,253.08	32,083.81	198.61	238,332.00
0600	Hydrant assembly	6.00	52,157.26	8,113.35	10,045.10	60,270.60
0700	300 mm gate valve	8.00	29,171.51	4,537.79	4,213.66	33,709.28
0800	Pipe bedding	650.00	53,754.11	8,361.75	95.56	62,114.00
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	1,150.00	197,225.00	30,679.44	198.18	227,907.00
1000	Granular base 250 mm	900.00	62,078.13	9,656.60	79.71	71,739.00
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	2,400.00	16,894.32	2,628.00	8.13	19,512.00
TOTAL						940,240.16

Figure 20. A report in the Report Preview window, with the Print... and Save as PDF... buttons at the top.

Tasks

To capture the open estimate into a history database

1. Finish pricing the estimate. The snapshot records whatever the estimate calculates at that moment: unit costs, production factors and the spread bid unit prices.
2. Go to **Cost History** (or press **Ctrl+9**) and click **Capture estimate to history...**, or use **History ▸ Capture estimate to history....**
3. In **Choose or create history database**, pick an existing `.sbhist` file to add to it, or type a new name (the default is `company-history.sbhist`) to start a new one. Click **Save**.
4. Read the **History capture** message: "Snapshot captured." and "History now holds N estimate snapshot(s)." Click **OK**. The status bar at the bottom of the window shows "Captured to history (N snapshot(s) total)."

One snapshot holds one row per leaf cost item (code, description, unit, forecast quantity, factor type and value, crew hours, total cost, unit cost) and one row per leaf pay item (number, description, unit, pay quantity, bid unit price). Indirect items and every cost method are captured alike. The capture is not written to the estimate's audit trail, and SuperBid does not remember which file you used; you choose the file every time.

To benchmark the open estimate against one history file

1. Open the estimate you are pricing.
2. On **Cost History**, click **Benchmark vs history...**, or use **History ▸ Benchmark vs history....**
3. In **Choose history database(s) — Ctrl-click to compare several**, select the `.sbhist` file and click **Open**.
4. Read the first line of the report to confirm the file and how many snapshots it holds.
5. Scan the three tables for **HIGH** and **LOW** in the Flag column. Check the n column to see how many observations the band is built from.
6. Click **Print...** or **Save as PDF...** if you want to keep the report.

The preview window stays open while you keep working, but it does not refresh. After you change the estimate, run the benchmark again.

To benchmark your own history and a market file side by side

A market history file is an ordinary `.sbhist` built from public data (for example municipal bid tabs or Alberta Transportation unit price averages) rather than from your own captures. SuperBid does not ship any market files; your company builds or obtains them.

1. Click **Benchmark vs history....**
2. In the open dialog, hold **Ctrl** and click each file you want, for example `company-history.sbhist` and a market file. Click **Open**.

3. Read each set of tables under its own file-name heading. Bands are never blended across files, so you see "our history" and "the market" separately.

If two selected files share the same file name in different folders, the heading uses the folder name and the file name. If a selected file cannot be read, it is skipped and the status bar shows "Benchmark: skipped N unreadable file(s)" with the reason. If none of the files can be read, a **Benchmark** error box lists them.

To read and act on a benchmark row

1. Compare Current with Low and High. Values equal to Low or High are inside the band and do not flag.
2. Check n. With n = 1, Low, Avg and High are the same single value, so any difference flags. A row with n/a has no matching history: a new code, a different unit, or a different factor type.
3. For production rows, work out the direction yourself. For units-per-time types (UH, US, UM) a **HIGH** factor means faster than history. For time-per-unit types (HU, SU, MU) a **HIGH** factor means slower. S (total shifts) and CH (total crew hours) are totals, not rates.
4. Fix genuine outliers on the Estimate, Pay Items or Bid Summary screens, then run **Benchmark vs history...** again.

To publish a finished job's actuals from SuperJob

1. In SuperJob, open the job. Without an open job the status line reads "Open a job first — publishing reads its field data."
2. Choose **Job ► Publish actuals to history...** The **Publish Actuals to History** dialog opens.
3. Check the **History file** path. The default is Documents\SuperBid Data\company-actuals.sbhists. Click **Browse...** to point at another .sbhist file. The folder is created if it does not exist.
4. Review the grid. Each row shows **Code**, **Description**, **Unit**, **Installed** (installed quantity to date), % (installed divided by budget quantity), **Cost** (actual labour, equipment and coded cost entries), **\$/Unit** (Cost divided by Installed), **Crew hrs** and **Man hrs** (the hours the production rate is built on) and **Production** (the achieved rate in the code's own factor type: UH, HU, MU or UM). The dialog header explains that **Crew hrs** is the sum of the code's labour-row hours, so a crew logged as several labour rows inflates it; check that number before trusting a UH or HU rate. A code with no logged labour hours (equipment-only or subcontracted work) shows no production rate and publishes none; its unit cost still publishes. Rows arrive checked in the **Publish** column when they have an installed quantity, a unit, a budget quantity and are at least 90 % complete. Rows below 90 % or with no budget quantity arrive unchecked with the reason in **Why unchecked**; you may check them deliberately. Rows with no installed quantity or a blank unit cannot be checked.
5. Decide whether to keep the checkbox **Also publish the N awarded schedule price(s) — what these items actually won at**. It publishes the schedule lines that have a contract quantity above zero, a unit price other than \$0.00 and a unit, at the contract quantity. A line with a zero quantity,

a \$0.00 unit price or a blank unit, and every change-order line, is never published as an award price; the count N already leaves them out.

6. Click **Publish**. The **SuperJob — published** message confirms how many cost rows and award prices were written. The publish is also recorded in the job's audit trail. Re-publishing the same job later replaces that job's earlier snapshot instead of adding another.
7. Back in SuperBid, run **Benchmark vs history...** and select that file. The actual dollars per unit appear in the unit-cost band and the achieved rate in the production band for the same code, unit and factor type.

To keep bid snapshots and actuals from blending

1. Capture bids into one file (SuperBid proposes `company-history.sbhst`) and publish SuperJob actuals into a different file (SuperJob proposes `company-actuals.sbhst`).
2. When benchmarking, Ctrl-click both files so the report shows separate sections for each.

If you want one blended band, point SuperJob at the file you capture bids into. Estimated and actual values then carry equal weight. SuperBid has no filter to show actuals only.

Tips and gotchas

- Bands are raw minimum, average and maximum with no trimming and no weighting by date or job size. One unrepresentative snapshot sets the Low or High for that code until the file is rebuilt, and SuperBid has no screen to view, edit or delete snapshots. Capture only bids you trust.
- Every click of **Capture estimate to history...** adds a new snapshot, even for the same estimate on the same day. Capturing a bid five times while adjusting it gives it five votes in the average. Only SuperJob publishes replace an earlier snapshot.
- Codes match case-insensitively but otherwise exactly. `PIPE` does not match `PIPE #3`. Consistent cost codes across estimates are what make history useful.
- Units match after normalising: `m2` matches `M2`, `Ton` and `tonne` match `T`, `each` matches `EA`, `Lin.m` matches `LM`, `cu.m` matches `M3`, and `M` matches `LM`, so history captured per metre counts for an item priced per linear metre.

Warning: A blank unit matches everything. A history row with no unit joins the band of every unit for that code, and a current item with no unit picks up history from every unit. Fill in units before capturing.

- Pay items match on the pay item number and unit. A market file built from an owner's bid tabs carries that owner's item numbers; if your pay items are numbered differently (for example 1, 2, 3), they show `n/a` against it.

Note: A cost item with a forecast quantity of 0 (typical of lump-sum indirect items) captures its raw total cost as its "unit cost" and benchmarks the same way. Such rows are dollars, not dollars per unit, and will flag whenever the job size differs.

- Change-order pay items are outside the base-bid spread. They are captured with a unit price of 0 and benchmark with Current 0.
- The production table includes every leaf item with a factor type, including \$U (crew dollars per unit), S (total shifts) and CH (total crew hours). S and CH rows compare raw totals across jobs of different sizes and flag often.
- Report values show two decimals. A small hours-per-unit factor such as 0.0125 displays as 0.01, and Low and High can look identical while still flagging.
- SuperJob computes crew hours as the sum of hours over labour rows. A crew logged as several labour rows inflates crew hours and understates UH rates. Look at the **Crew hrs**, **Man hrs** and **Production** columns before trusting a row.
- In SuperJob, a code with an installed quantity but no logged labour hours publishes no production rate at all (never a rate of 0); its unit cost still publishes.
- History files published by earlier SuperJob versions may hold production bands of 0 or zero-price award rows. Re-publish each job once after updating: the publish replaces that job's earlier snapshot, which purges them.
- Snapshot counts in the capture message and the report intro include SuperJob actuals snapshots as well as bid captures.

Warning: Do not start a new job by copying a .sbjob file. Both jobs then share one history source tag, so each publish replaces the other job's snapshot instead of adding its own.

AI tools: takeoff, pre-bid analysis and the bid scraper

The **AI TOOLS** section of the left rail holds three screens that send documents to a hosted AI service and bring back structured results for you to review: **AI Takeoff** drafts quantities from a plan set, **AI PreBid Analysis** reads a whole tender package and reports deadlines, risks, schedule checks and RFIs, and **Bid Scraper** turns a bid board's listing page into a scored triage pipeline. None of them price anything, and none of them measure drawings by eye. Every quantity comes from a labelled value, a schedule row, or arithmetic the AI shows you. All three share one connection that you set up once under **Setup ► AI & Bid Scraper settings....** The rail, and so these three screens, only appears once an estimate is open, and the screens have no keyboard shortcut.

Setup: connect an AI service

Setup ► AI & Bid Scraper settings... (or **Open Setup...** in the header of any AI screen) opens the **Setup** dialog. The menu is available on the welcome screen too. Settings are saved to %APPDATA%\SuperBid\settings.json; API keys and the scraper password are encrypted for your Windows account and are never written into an estimate file.

Setup

Connections and data sources for SuperBid's AI features.

AI connection

Powers AI Takeoff, AI PreBid Analysis, and the Bid Scraper. Pick which AI service to use and paste its API key — keys are stored encrypted for your Windows account, never in the estimate file, never in plain text. Only the selected provider is used.

AI service Anthropic — Claude

Model claude-opus-4-8

Test connection

No Anthropic key stored yet.

Bid Scraper — source

Where the scraper logs in to pull bid opportunities (e.g. Alberta Purchasing Connection, buildworks.ca). Credentials are stored encrypted for your Windows account.

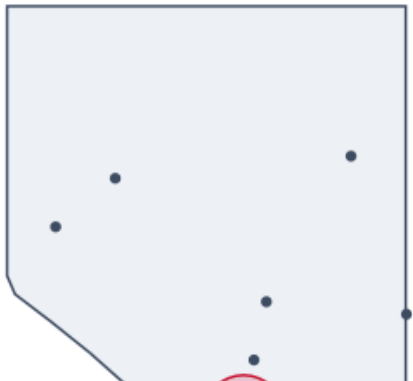
Website address

Login / e-mail

Password

Bid Scraper — region

Only bid opportunities inside this radius are pulled. Pick a center and set the reach.



Center Calgary

Radius 100 km

Click the map to snap the center to the nearest city. The scraper (and the LLM behind it) will ignore anything outside the circle.

Figure 21. The Setup dialog with the AI connection card at the top.

The **AI connection** card has four controls. **AI service** offers **Anthropic — Claude**, **OpenAI — ChatGPT** and **Custom (OpenAI-compatible endpoint)**; each keeps its own key and model, and only the selected service is used. **Model** is an editable list: type any model id, or open the dropdown to fetch the ids your key can use (paste the key first, or the list cannot be fetched). **Base URL** appears only for Custom (for

example `https://openrouter.ai/api/v1`). The masked box beside **Test connection** is where you paste the API key.

To connect an AI service

1. Choose the **AI service**.
2. Paste the key into the API key box. The status line reads `No Anthropic key stored yet.` (or OpenAI or Custom) while no key is stored; once one is saved it reads `A Anthropic key is stored (encrypted).` Test it any time.
3. For Custom only, fill in **Base URL**.
4. Click **Test connection**. Expect `✓ Connected – the key is valid.` A rejected key reads `✗ The API rejected this key (401).` Check it at `console.anthropic.com.` (or `platform.openai.com`).
5. Open the **Model** dropdown, wait for `✓ {n} model(s) available to this key.,` and pick one. If you leave the model blank, saving fills in `claude-opus-4-8` for Anthropic or `gpt-5.1` for OpenAI. Custom has no default; type one.
6. Click **Save settings**.

Note: API usage is billed by the provider per request. A ChatGPT or Claude chat subscription includes no API credits; an unfunded account, on either provider, gets a message saying the API account is OUT OF CREDITS and that API usage is billed separately from a chat subscription, rather than a retry or a raw error.

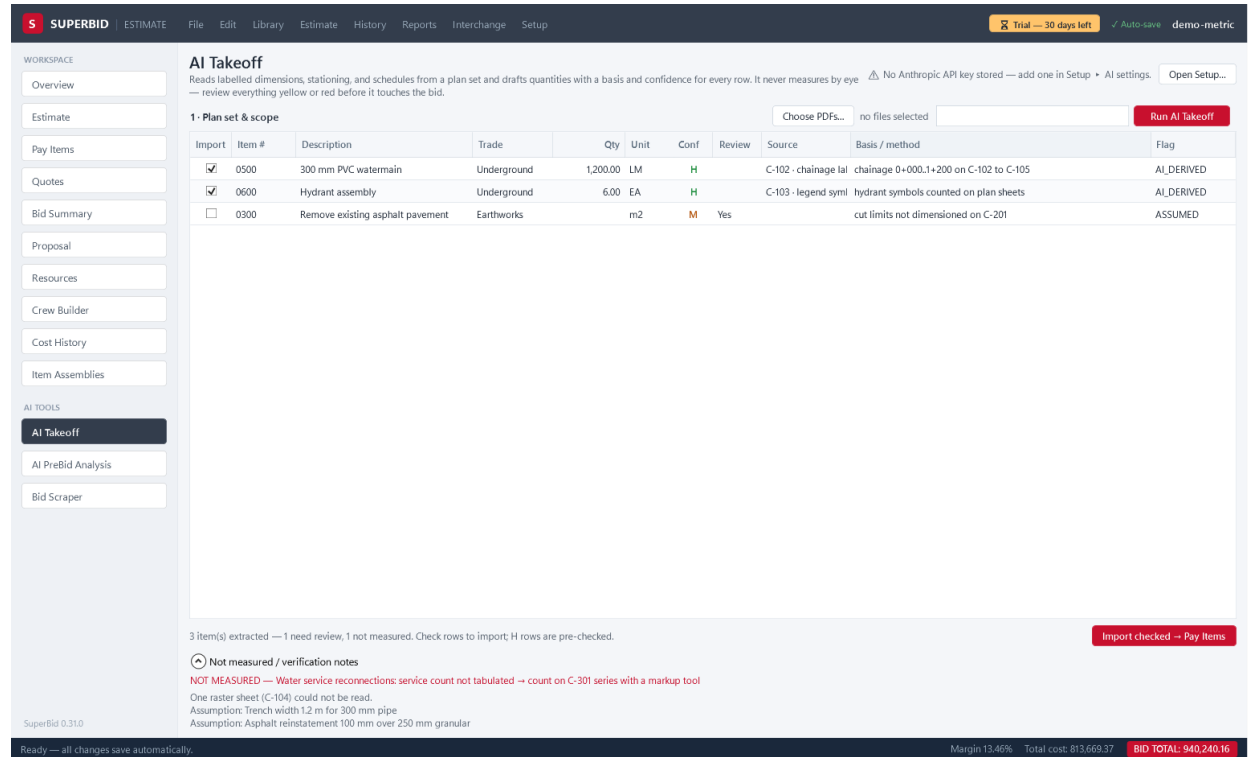
To set the scraper source, region and work types

1. Under **Bid Scraper — source**, enter the **Website address** of the listing page. **Login / e-mail** and **Password** are optional and are sent only as Basic authentication over `https`; a scan of an `http` address with credentials set is refused.
2. Under **Bid Scraper — region**, pick a **Center** from the nine Alberta cities (Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Lloydminster, Peace River) or click the map to snap to the nearest one. Drag **Radius** from 25 to 500 km in 25 km steps. Defaults are Calgary and 100 km.
3. Under **Bid Scraper — work types**, tick what you self-perform: Earthworks / grading, Underground utilities, Road construction / paving, Bridges / structures, Concrete / flatwork, Water / wastewater, Site development, Landscaping / reclamation, Demolition, Aggregate / crushing, Maintenance / snow contracts. None are ticked by default.
4. Click **Save settings**. The Bid Scraper re-scores every row the next time that screen refreshes.

Note: The region card says opportunities outside the radius are ignored. In this version nothing is filtered out: radius and work types only add or remove fit-score points. The **Center** city is also sent to AI Takeoff, AI PreBid and the scraper as your region, always as `"{City}, Alberta"`. A BC contractor should pick the nearest Alberta centre and a wide radius.

AI Takeoff

AI Takeoff sends plan-set PDFs and a scope note to the AI, which returns one line per quantity with the sheet it came from, the arithmetic, a confidence letter and a source flag. You review the grid, then import the rows you trust into **Pay Items** as Forecast quantities. The header shows the provider and model in use, for example Anthropic · claude-opus-4-8, or  and the reason when the connection is incomplete.



AI Takeoff
Reads labelled dimensions, stationing, and schedules from a plan set and drafts quantities with a basis and confidence for every row. It never measures by eye.  No Anthropic API key stored — add one in Setup • AI settings. [Open Setup...](#)

1 • Plan set & scope Choose PDFs... no files selected [Run AI Takeoff](#)

Import	Item #	Description	Trade	Qty	Unit	Conf	Review	Source	Basis / method	Flag
☒	0500	300 mm PVC watermain	Underground	1,200.00	LM	H		C-102 - chainage lal	chainage 0+000.1+200 on C-102 to C-105	AI_DERIVED
☒	0600	Hydrant assembly	Underground	6.00	EA	H		C-103 - legend sym	hydrant symbols counted on plan sheets	AI_DERIVED
☐	0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	Earthworks		m2	M	Yes		cut limits not dimensioned on C-201	ASSUMED

3 item(s) extracted — 1 need review, 1 not measured. Check rows to import: H rows are pre-checked. [Import checked → Pay Items](#)

 **Not measured / verification notes**
NOT MEASURED — Water service reconnections: service count not tabulated → count on C-301 series with a markup tool
 One raster sheet (C-104) could not be read.
 Assumption: Trench width 1.2 m for 300 mm pipe
 Assumption: Asphalt reinstatement 100 mm over 250 mm granular

SuperBid 0.31.0
Ready — all changes save automatically. Margin 13.46% Total cost: 813,669.37 **BID TOTAL: 940,240.16**

Figure 22. The AI Takeoff screen after a run, with H rows pre-ticked for import.

The run bar **1 • Plan set & scope** holds **Choose PDFs...**, the file count ({N} file(s), {MB} MB), the scope box (tooltip example: south side only, Parts A–D; blank means the full project), **Run AI Takeoff** and, during a run, **Cancel**. Below the grid are the status line, **Import checked → Pay Items** (enabled only when there are rows and an estimate is open), and the expander **Not measured / verification notes**.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Import	Tick to include the row in the import. Pre-ticked for H rows that have a quantity and no review flag.	Yes
Item #	Pay-item number to join to. Blank rows are skipped on import.	Yes
Description	The AI's description of the item.	No
Trade	Trade or discipline label.	No
Qty	Quantity. Blank means the AI could not derive it; blank rows cannot import.	Yes
Unit	Unit as the AI wrote it, usually the schedule's unit verbatim (m ² , m ³).	No

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Conf	H green, M amber, L red.	No
Review	Yes when the row is M or L, has no quantity, or the AI flagged it.	No
Source	Sheet and detail, for example C-102 · station labels.	No
Basis / method	The arithmetic used, or the AI's note when there is none.	No
Flag	OWNER_STATED (printed in the documents), AI_DERIVED (arithmetic on printed values) or ASSUMED (a typical value where the documents are silent).	No

To run a takeoff

1. Open the estimate whose schedule should receive the quantities. Its pay items (number, description, unit, pay and forecast quantity) are sent as the authoritative item list, so the AI fills quantities instead of inventing items.
2. Click **AI Takeoff** in the rail and check the header shows your provider.
3. Click **Choose PDFs...** and select the sheets. Keep the set under about 24 MB and 600 pages; the schedule plus key plan sheets beats the whole set.
4. Optionally type a scope.
5. Click **Run AI Takeoff**. The status line streams Preparing documents..., Uploading PDFs to Anthropic..., Receiving output... {n} characters, then Parsing takeoff JSON...
6. Read the summary: {N} item(s) extracted – {R} need review, {M} not measured. Check rows to import; H rows are pre-checked. The expander opens by itself when scope was not measured; each line reads NOT MEASURED – {scope item}: {reason} → {suggested action}, followed by the AI's verification notes and Assumption: lines.

To review and import takeoff rows

1. Read **Basis / method**, **Source** and **Flag** on every row. Fix **Item #** to match your schedule, edit **Qty** if you disagree, and tick or untick **Import**.
2. Click **Import checked → Pay Items**. The message box **AI takeoff import** reports Added {a} pay item(s), updated {u} forecast quantity(ies)., any estimate items created from the schedule, and warnings. If the schedule already holds two items with the same number, the import matches the first of them and warns "Duplicate item number '...' already in the schedule — matching against the first occurrence."
3. Check the **Pay Items** screen. Matched items get a new Forecast Qty; Pay Qty never moves. New items are appended with Pay Qty = Forecast Qty = the takeoff quantity, with a mirrored root item on the Estimate screen. **Ctrl+Z** reverts the whole import as one step, and if the import fails part-way nothing is written.

Warning: The import writes into whichever estimate is open at that moment. Results stay in memory when you open another file, so a takeoff run against one estimate can be imported into a different one if you switch files in between.

Units are matched after normalising: m² matches M2, each matches EA, Ton matches T, and m matches LM. A real mismatch skips the row with the warning {number}: takeoff unit '{u}' ≠ schedule unit '{v}' – skipped, resolve units first.

AI PreBid Analysis

AI PreBid Analysis sends the tender package to the AI and renders a pre-bid review: two summary cards, six read-only grids, and an Excel export. Nothing here writes into the estimate; you key any changes yourself. PDFs go as attachments; Excel, Word, CSV and TXT files are transcribed to text and ride along.

AI PreBid Analysis

Reads the whole tender package and reports what decides the bid: deadlines, risk clauses, schedule-of-quantities reconciliation, scope gaps, and the RFIs worth. No Anthropic API key stored — add one in Setup • AI settings. Open Setup...

1 • Tender package

Add folder... Choose PDFs... no files selected Run PreBid Analysis Export Excel...

118 Avenue Watermain Replacement
City of Edmonton - Edmonton, AB - owner-custom
Tender close: 2026-10-15 14:00 MDT
Questions by: 2026-10-08 12:00 (10 day(s) left)
Replace 1,200 m of 300 mm watermain on 118 Avenue from 82 Street to 97 Street, including hydrants, valves, trench reinstatement and 100 mm asphalt paving.

HIGH RISK

- Liquidated damages \$2,500/day
- Utility conflicts at 90 Street (unlocated gas)

Schedule: tight - unusual terms: 1 - open RFIs: 1

Item #	Description	Unit	Owner Qty	AI Qty	Δ %	Flag	\$ Wt	Type	Alt	In Est	Notes
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	LM	1,200.00	1,185.00	-1.3	ok	high	unit_price		✓	
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	M3	4,200.00	4,650.00	10.7	quantity_check	medium	unit_price		✓	check trench width at hydrant leads
0600	Hydrant assembly	EA	6.00	6.00	0.0	ok	medium	unit_price		✓	
Z.9	Detour surfacing	M2	0.00			no_doc_basis	low	provisional_sun		X missing	

4 schedule item(s) — 2 flagged, 1 scope gap(s), 1 RFI(s), 1 not in the open estimate. Review the tabs, then export the workbook.

Margin 13.46% Total cost: 813,669.37 **BID TOTAL: 940,240.16**

Figure 23. AI PreBid Analysis with the summary cards and the Schedule of Quantities tab.

The run bar **1 • Tender package** holds **Add folder...**, **Choose PDFs...**, the files text ({N} PDF(s), {MB} MB + {T} Excel/Word as text), **Run PreBid Analysis**, **Cancel** and **Export Excel...** The left card shows the project name, owner, location and contract form, **Tender close:** ... and, in red, **Questions by:** {date} ({d} day(s) left) or Question deadline NOT STATED – that's an RFI. The right card shows a LOW RISK, MEDIUM RISK or HIGH RISK pill (green, amber, red), the top risk drivers, and **Schedule:** ... • unusual terms: ... • open RFIs: ... plus the percentage of scope outside your work types.

The tabs:

- **Schedule of Quantities:** Item #, Description, Unit, Owner Qty, AI Qty, Δ %, Flag, \$ Wt, Type, Alt, In Est, Notes. Flag is ok, `quantity_check` (the AI's quantity differs from the owner's by roughly more than 10–15%; Notes gives the likely cause) or `no_doc_basis` (no drawing or spec support; send an RFI). Rows are amber for `quantity_check` and red for `no_doc_basis`. **\$ Wt** is high, medium or low triage by quantity times typical unit-price size; **Type** is `unit_price`, `lump_sum`, `provisional_sum`, `allowance`, `contingency` or `unknown`; **Alt** is the alternate group. **In Est** shows ✓ when your open estimate has a pay item with the same number and a matching unit (M and LM match), and X missing when not.
- **Requirements & Risks:** Category, Type (`requirement`, `risk` or `contradiction`), Detail, Risk, Cost / schedule impact, Reference, RFI. High-risk rows are red, medium amber.
- **Takeoff:** Activity, Unit, Low, Expected, High, Source, Basis (the arithmetic), Assumptions, Reference. Expected reads MISSING when the AI declined to guess; find the matching RFI.
- **Aggregates:** Category, Line, Quantity, Unit, Source, Basis, rolled up by category (milling, asphalt, granular, excavation, pipe and so on). Empty categories show (`none identified`).
- **Bid Checklist:** Item, Required, Status, Reference, Action. A row with Required `yes` and Status `missing` is red. Gray italic rows are standard practice the AI did not find in this tender; verify rather than assume.
- **RFIs & Gaps:** Id, Kind, Detail, Impact / basis, Reference, Draft / requirements. Kind is `RFI` (numbered RFI-01 onward, with ready-to-send draft text), `Scope gap` (work visible with no pay item), `Assumption` (A1, A2 and so on, cited by the Takeoff tab) or `Quote to solicit` (packages likely subcontracted, with the item numbers they cover).

Reference cells read `{document} · {section} · p.{page}`. A blank reference means the AI could not locate the spot; it is instructed never to guess one.

To run an analysis from chosen PDFs

1. Open the estimate for the bid. Its pay items are sent as the authoritative schedule and drive the **In Est** column.
2. Click **AI PreBid Analysis** in the rail, then **Choose PDFs...** and select the package (instructions to bidders, specs, special provisions, drawings, geotech, schedule, addenda).
3. Click **Run PreBid Analysis**. Runs can take several minutes.
4. Read the cards, then the status line: `{N} schedule item(s) – {F} flagged, {G} scope gap(s), {R} RFI(s), {M} not in the open estimate`. Review the tabs, then export the workbook.

To run an analysis from a whole tender folder

1. Click **Add folder...** and pick the folder. Subfolders are scanned too.
2. In the **Tender Package Files** dialog, review the **Send**, **File**, **Sent as**, **MB** and **Note** columns. **Sent as** is `PDF attachment`, `Word → text`, `Excel → text`, `Text` or `Not supported`. Old `.xls` files must be saved as `.xlsx`; images are not sent.

3. Untick large PDFs until the budget line no longer says **T00 BIG** (keep the schedule of quantities and key plan sheets). **Use these files** is disabled while over budget or with nothing ticked.
4. Click **Use these files**, then **Run PreBid Analysis**. The status shows **Transcribing {file}...** for each text document. Text is capped at 120,000 characters per document and 400,000 in total; a cut document carries a truncation marker in the text the AI receives, and a document left out for size is named to the AI as not transcribed so it flags it as unreviewed.

Note: **Choose PDFs...** replaces only the PDF list. Excel and Word files picked earlier with **Add folder...** are still sent. **Add folder...** replaces both lists.

To export the workbook

1. Click **Export Excel....** The dialog **Export PreBid analysis workbook** suggests **{Project name} - PreBid Analysis.xlsx**.
2. Save. The status reads **Exported {file}**. The sheets are Project Summary, Key Requirements & Risks, Schedule of Quantities, Quantity Takeoff, Aggregated Quantities, Bid Checklist and RFIs & Gaps, with the same amber and red tints on flagged rows, plus a hidden **_meta** sheet recording the prompt version, model id, run time and document inventory.

Bid Scraper

Bid Scraper fetches one bid-board listing page (or takes text you paste), has the AI extract every opportunity, then scores each one 0–3 against your Setup region, radius and work types. Opportunities live in a company-level pipeline at `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\scraper-pipeline.json`, outside any estimate file. The header reads `Region: {City}, {radius} km radius · Filters: {n} work type(s) · {provider · model} ✓`.

Bid Scraper
Scans a bid board's listing page and drops every opportunity into a triage pipeline — fit-scored against your region, radius, and work types. Boards: Region: Calgary, 100 km radius - Filters: no work types selected - No Anthropic API k... [Open Setup...](#)

1 · Scan a source [Scan](#)

☒ Paste listing text instead (login-walled boards)

Fit	Title	Owner	Closes	Days	Km	Muni	Scope	Status	Location	Source	Notes	S
★★★	2026 Arterial Overlay Program	City of Calgary	2099-01-15 14:00	26433	0	✓	Road construction / paving	New	Calgary, AB	demo		M
★★	118 Avenue Watermain Replacement - Phase	City of Edmonton	2099-02-10 14:00	26459	283	✓	Underground utilities, Road c	New	Edmonton, AB	demo		1,
	Office Furniture Supply	Acme Corp						New		demo		Sk

3 opportunity(ies), 3 open [Open link](#) [Start estimate...](#) [Remove](#)

SuperBid 0.31.0 Margin 13.46% Total cost: 813,669.37 **BID TOTAL: 940,240.16**

Ready — all changes save automatically.

Figure 24. The Bid Scraper pipeline sorted with open opportunities first.

The run bar **1 · Scan a source** holds the URL box (prefilled once from Setup's **Website address**), **Scan** and **Cancel**. Below it is the expander **Paste listing text instead (login-walled boards)**. Under the grid are the count (**{N} opportunity(ies), {open} open**), **Open link**, **Start estimate...** and **Remove**.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Fit	0–3 stars, computed by SuperBid, never by the AI: +1 scope match, +1 municipal or government owner, +1 within your radius.	No
Title	Tender title.	No
Owner	Owner as stated in the listing.	No
Closes	yyyy-MM-dd or with time; a trailing * means the AI inferred part of the date (usually the year).	No
Days	Days to closing (0 on closing day); closed when past; blank with no date.	No
Km	Distance from your Center city to the work location; blank when the listing gave nothing to place.	No
Muni	✓ for a municipality, provincial or federal body, school or health authority, or crown corporation.	No
Scope	Scope tags, using the Setup work-type names plus any extra tags the AI added for scope the list misses.	No
Status	New, Reviewing, Pursuing, Passed or Closed. Saved immediately.	Yes

Column	What it means	You can edit?
Location	Work location text.	No
Source	Host name of the fetched page, or pasted text .	No
Notes	Free text, saved when the cell loses focus.	Yes
Summary	One or two sentences in the listing's own words.	No

To scan a bid board

1. Click **Bid Scraper** in the rail. Edit the URL box if needed (search results, notice list or RSS feed).
2. Click **Scan**. The status runs **Fetching {host}...**, **Extracting opportunities...**, **Parsing opportunities...**, then **Scan complete – {N} opportunity(ies) found, {A} new**.
3. New rows arrive as **New**. Rows seen before (same link, otherwise same title, closing day and owner) refresh their listing fields but keep your Status and Notes.

To scan a board that needs a login

1. Log in with your browser, select the listing text and copy it.
2. Expand **Paste listing text instead (login-walled boards)** and paste.
3. Click **Scan**. Pasted text takes precedence over the URL whenever the box has content; the Source column shows **pasted text**.
4. Clear the paste box afterwards, or later scans keep using it.

To triage the pipeline

1. Sort by **Fit** or **Days**. The default order is open rows first (New, Reviewing, Pursuing), then soonest closing, then best fit.
2. Set **Status** and type **Notes** on each row.
3. Select a row and click **Open link** to view the tender in your browser (web addresses only).
4. Select a row and click **Start estimate...** to open the New Estimate wizard with the title prefilled. Creating the estimate moves a **New** row to **Pursuing**; cancelling the wizard leaves it as it was.
5. Select one or more rows and click **Remove** to drop them.

Tips and gotchas

- In these grids, the columns you can type into are **Import**, **Item #** and **Qty** on AI Takeoff and **Status** and **Notes** on the Bid Scraper. The other columns are the AI's evidence: they are not tinted gray here, they simply do not open for editing.

- AI Takeoff and PreBid results are held in memory only. They survive opening another estimate but are lost when SuperBid closes, so export the PreBid workbook before you quit. The scraper pipeline is saved to disk immediately.
- Every request has a 15-minute timeout. Rate limits (429) and server errors are retried after 5 s and 15 s with `{Provider} is busy ({code}) – retrying in {n} s...`. An out-of-credits account is not retried.
- The PDF guard checks the 32 MB request cap (about 24 MB of PDF after encoding) and 600 pages before uploading. Its page count can undercount compressed PDFs, so the provider may still reject a set that passed.
- AI Takeoff, the AI pay-item import and AI PreBid each give the model a 64,000-token answer budget per run; the Bid Scraper uses 32,000. A run that uses it up ends with `The model ran out of output room – it used up its 64,000-token answer budget (which adaptive thinking shares) before it finished, so the result is incomplete. followed by what helps.` The answer's length is set by the number of items, not the page count, so sending fewer pages rarely fixes it: split the PDF set into smaller passes (keep the schedule of quantities in each and merge the results), reduce the scope to fewer trades or items, or choose a model with a larger output limit, then run again. On Anthropic, a model whose output limit is below the budget does not fail: the status line shows `Model rejected the 64,000-token output budget – retrying at 32,000...` (the second figure is the model's own limit) and the run continues at that budget, which the out-of-room message then names instead of 64,000.
- A provider that returns a takeoff row with empty fields (some OpenAI-compatible endpoints and local servers do) shows the row with those cells blank; the usual review rules apply, and a blank **Qty** still cannot import.
- The scraper fetch is a plain page download capped at 4 MB. JavaScript portals and login walls return an empty shell; use the paste path. Relative links in pasted listings cannot be resolved and may not open.
- The pipeline belongs to the Windows user on that PC. Two estimators do not share it, and it is not backed up with your estimate files.
- Everything you send (PDFs, transcribed text, your schedule's numbers, descriptions, units and quantities but no prices, region, scope and work types) goes only to the provider you selected.
- **Interchange ▶ Import pay items with AI (PDF/Excel)...** is a separate feature that reads the owner's schedule and writes Pay quantities. AI Takeoff writes Forecast quantities. Both use the same Setup connection and both need an estimate open.

Undo, audit trail, files and troubleshooting

This chapter covers the parts of SuperBid that sit behind every screen: how your work is saved, how to undo it, how to see what changed, where files live, how to copy and reuse estimates, and what to do when something goes wrong. It also covers the trial, licence keys, updates and the self-test you can run for support.

How saving works

SuperBid has no Save button and no Save As. An estimate is one file with the extension `.sbid`, and that file is the document itself: every edit you commit (leaving a cell, pressing Enter, clicking OK in a dialog, finishing an import) is written to the file immediately. While an estimate is open, the top bar shows the green ✓ **Auto-save** chip and the status bar reads **Ready — all changes save automatically**. The estimate name (the file name without `.sbid`) shows at the right end of the top bar, and the window title becomes **SuperBid 0.31.0 — <name>.sbid**.

Because nothing is ever unsaved, **File ▶ Exit** and the window close button close SuperBid without asking. The only thing not yet saved is the cell you are typing in; it is written when you leave it.

Warning: SuperBid holds the `.sbid` file open while the estimate is open. Do not move, rename, copy or delete an estimate file until you have closed it (open another estimate, or close SuperBid). While it is open, an empty `<name>.sbid-journal` file sits beside it and disappears on close; do not delete it or sync it separately. Apart from the `.bak` copies written before a file-format upgrade and the `.replaced-` copy kept when you replace a file, SuperBid makes no backup copies of estimate files; see "Backups" below.

Undo and redo

Every committed edit is one undo step: a cell edit, an add or delete, a whole pasted block, a whole Excel or AI import, an assembly insert, or a dialog you confirm with OK. Undo history lives inside the `.sbid` file, so you can still undo yesterday's changes after closing and reopening the estimate. Actions that touch many rows — imports (Excel, AI, `.COL`, library), **New from Template...**, a pasted block, deleting a change order, pay item, cost item or crew, inserting resources or an assembly — are all-or-nothing: if one fails part-way, nothing is written, the grids reload from the file and the status bar shows the reason in red.

Cost items white = input · gray = calculated · blue = your override Undo Redo Indirect Costs Insert Resource/Assembly Resource/Assembly Inputs Add Detail Item Delete

Code	Description	Pay Item	Unit	Quantity	Total Cost	Method	Fac	Prod Rate	Hr/Sh	Crew	Plug \$/U	Plug Total	Ind	Calc Basis	Calc %
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	0100	LS	1.00	25,000.00	Plug		0.0000	8.0			25000	☐	Total Direct	0.00
0200	Traffic accommodation	0200	LS	1.00	18,000.00	Plug		0.0000	8.0			18000	☐	Total Direct	0.00
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	0300	M2	3,600.00	9,626.85	Detail	UH	120.0000	10.0	GRADE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	0400	M3	4,200.00	168,834.25	Detail	UH	15.0000	10.0	PIPE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	0500	LM	1,200.00	180,927.95	Detail	UH	12.0000	10.0	PIPE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
0600	Hydrant assembly	0600	EA	6.00	52,157.26	Detail	HU	6.0000	10.0	PIPE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
0700	300 mm gate valve	0700	EA	8.00	29,171.51	Detail	HU	3.0000	10.0	PIPE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
0800	Pipe bedding	0800	M3	650.00	53,754.11	Detail	UH	15.0000	10.0	PIPE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	0900	T	1,150.00	197,225.00	Detail		0.0000	10.0				☐	Total Direct	0.00
1000	Granular base 250 mm	1000	M3	900.00	62,078.13	Detail	UH	40.0000	10.0	GRADE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	1100	M2	2,400.00	16,894.32	Detail	UH	150.0000	10.0	GRADE1			☐	Total Direct	0.00
TOTAL					813,669.37										

Materials / subs / trucking on the selected item Haul Calculator Add Resource Remove

Resource	Qty per Unit	Waste %	Unit	Unit Cost
Mat-PVC300	1.0000	2.00	LM	95.00
Mat-BEDSTONE	0.3500	10.00	M3	50.00

SuperBid 0.31.0 Ready — all changes save automatically. Margin 13.46% Total cost: 813,669.37 **BID TOTAL: 940,240.16**

Figure 25. The Estimate screen; the Undo and Redo buttons sit beside the search box in the Cost items bar.

To undo or redo a change

1. Finish the edit first: leave the cell or press Enter. A cell you are still typing in is not yet a change.
2. Press **Ctrl+Z** (or **Edit ► Undo**, or the **Undo** button on the Estimate screen). The status bar shows **Undone.** and every screen reloads from the file.
3. Press **Ctrl+Y** (or **Edit ► Redo**, or **Redo**) to put the change back. The status bar shows **Redone.**
4. Keep pressing **Ctrl+Z** to walk further back. History runs all the way to the moment the file was created.

After a change that moves the bid, the status bar shows an amber figure such as **Δ +1,234.56** or **Δ -1,234.56**: the effect of your most recent change on the target bid.

Note: There is one undo history for the whole file, in time order. Pressing **Ctrl+Z** on the Bid Summary screen may revert something you did on the Quotes screen. Making a new change after an undo discards the redo history.

Tip: **Ctrl+1** to **Ctrl+9** switch to Overview through Cost History in left-rail order, and **Ctrl+0** opens Item Assemblies. **Ctrl+N** and **Ctrl+O** open the New Estimate dialog and the Open dialog. All of these commit the cell you are editing first, so nothing half-typed is lost. **Ctrl+F** jumps to the filter box on the Estimate, Pay Items and Resources screens only.

Audit trail

Every undo step that carries a label is also written to an audit trail inside the file, along with a row for each undo and redo. Some actions are sealed without a label and do not appear in the trail. Cells you changed in the current session are tinted in the grids, with a tooltip **was <old value>** showing what the value was; that tint clears when you open another estimate.

To view or print the audit trail

1. Open the estimate.
2. Choose **Reports ▸ Audit Trail....** The report preview opens with the heading **Changes (N, newest first)**.
3. Read the table. Rows labelled **undo** and **redo** are undo and redo presses. An estimate with no changes shows **(no recorded changes)**.
4. Click **Print...** to print, or **Save as PDF...** (the dialog **Save report as PDF** suggests `audit-trail.pdf`).

Bid Summary
Demo Bid — 118 Avenue Watermain Replacement
Generated 2026-09-02 06:52

Markup Chain

Direct cost	813,669.37
Indirect items	0.00
Escalation	0.00
Type markups	0.00
Overhead	32,546.77
Profit	84,621.61
Contingency	0.00
Bid-day adjustment	0.00
Bond	9,402.40
TARGET BID	940,240.16
Priced total	940,240.16
Residual	0.00

Pay Item Pricing

Item	Description	Pay Qty	Direct Cost	Spread	Unit Price	Extended
0100	Mobilization and demobilization	1.00	25,000.00	3,888.89	28,916.28	28,916.28
0200	Traffic accommodation	1.00	18,000.00	2,800.00	20,800.00	20,800.00
0300	Remove existing asphalt pavement	3,600.00	9,626.85	1,497.51	3.09	11,124.00
0400	Trench excavation and backfill	4,200.00	143,509.11	22,323.64	39.48	165,816.00
0500	300 mm PVC watermain	1,200.00	206,253.08	32,083.81	198.61	238,332.00
0600	Hydrant assembly	6.00	52,157.26	8,113.35	10,045.10	60,270.60
0700	300 mm gate valve	8.00	29,171.51	4,537.79	4,213.66	33,709.28
0800	Pipe bedding	650.00	53,754.11	8,361.75	95.56	62,114.00
0900	Asphalt pavement 100 mm	1,150.00	197,225.00	30,679.44	198.18	227,907.00
1000	Granular base 250 mm	900.00	62,078.13	9,656.60	79.71	71,739.00
1100	Topsoil and hydroseed	2,400.00	16,894.32	2,628.00	8.13	19,512.00
TOTAL						940,240.16

Figure 26. A report preview; the Audit Trail report opens in the same window.

Column	What it means	You can edit?
When (UTC)	Time of the action in UTC as yyyy-MM-dd HH:mm:ss, newest first. Not local time.	No
Action	The label of the step: named actions such as paste from clipboard , sync estimate from pay items , seed default terms , Excel pay-item import , AI takeoff import , AI schedule import , DOT .COL import , library import , Insert assembly <code> or Haul calculator <code> ; structural actions such as add pay item 100 , delete pay item 100 , add cost item <code> , delete cost item <code> , add resource Lab-RES1 , add crew <code> , delete crew <code> , delete crew member , add item assembly <code> , allocate <code> to <number> and remove allocation <code> ; for a plain cell edit, the internal name of the field that changed (for example Code). A structural action or an assembly save that failed after writing something is logged as <action> (failed: <reason>) rather than under the plain label.	No

Note: The trail records labels only. It does not store old and new values or who made the change, and the report shows at most the newest 500 entries.

Estimate files, copies and templates

File	What it holds
<name>.sbid	One estimate: pay items, cost items, resources, crews, quotes, bid summary, proposal terms, plus its undo history and audit trail.
<name>.sblib	A library of reusable resources, crews and assemblies. Same format as an estimate; the extension is a convention.
<name>.sbhist	A company history database of estimate snapshots for History ▸ Capture estimate to history... and History ▸ Benchmark vs history... (default name company-history.sbhist).

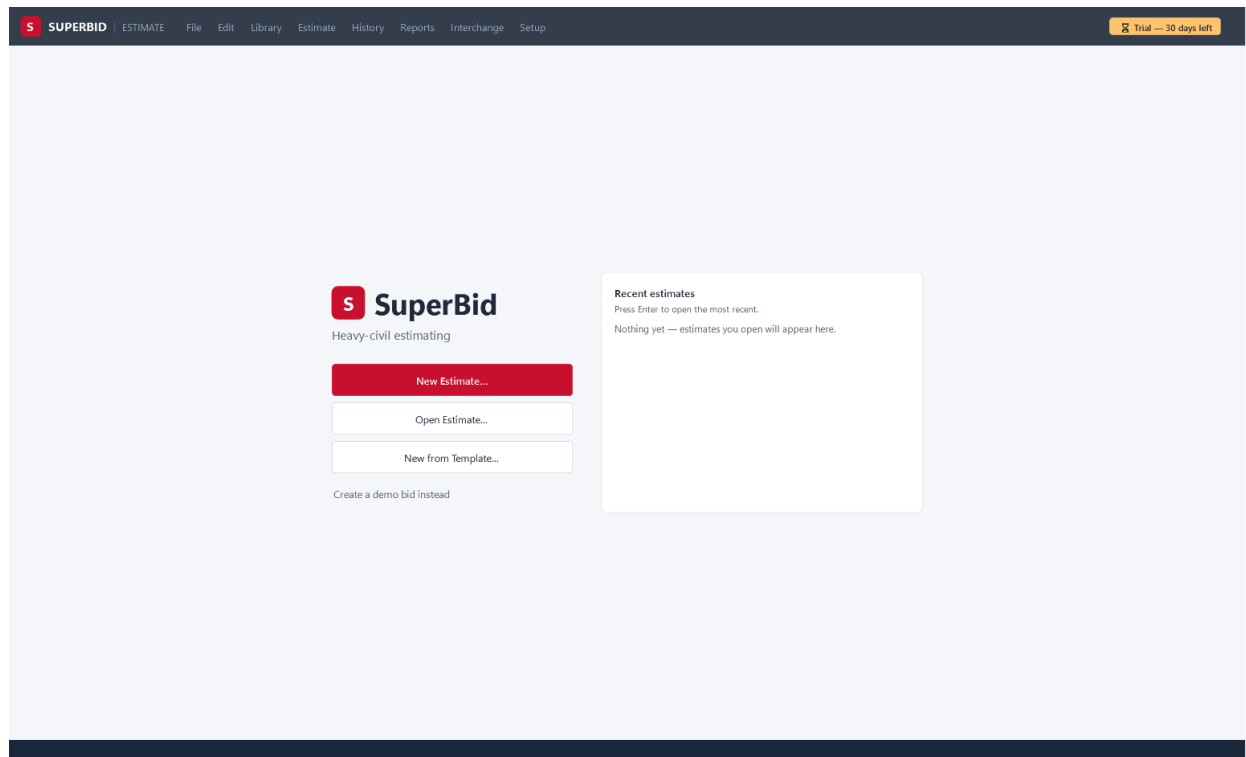


Figure 27. The welcome screen with the Recent estimates card.

To create a new estimate

1. Choose **File ► New Estimate... (Ctrl+N)** or click **New Estimate...** on the welcome screen.
2. Type the **Estimate name**. It becomes the file name; characters Windows does not allow in file names become `_`. An empty name is refused with **Give the estimate a name**.
3. Set the **Folder** (click **Browse...**). The default is the folder of the estimate you opened most recently or, before you have one, `%USERPROFILE%\Estimates` (for example `C:\Users\<you>\Estimates`), a local folder SuperBid creates for you. **New Demo Bid...** and **New from Template...** open their save dialog in the same default folder.
4. Under **Start from**, choose **Blank estimate**, **Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)**, **Copy of a template / master estimate:** (then **Pick...**), or **Demo bid (Maple Street sample data)**.
5. Click **Create estimate**. If `<name>.sbid` already exists in that folder, a box titled **New Estimate** asks **<name>.sbid already exists here. Create a new one? The existing file is kept beside it as <name>.replaced-<date>.sbid**. **Yes** builds the new estimate as `<name>.sbid.sb-tmp` beside the old file and swaps it in only once it is complete, so a failed create (a bad template, for example) leaves the old file untouched. The old file is not deleted: it is renamed `<name>.replaced-<yyyyMMdd-HHmss>.sbid` in the same folder, the status bar reads **Previous <name>.sbid kept as <name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid in the same folder.**, and it opens like any other estimate.

Unless it came from a template, the new estimate starts with your company default proposal terms (or the built-in text until you save a default).

Figure 28. The New Estimate dialog.

Note: The demo bid (**Demo Bid — Maple Street Improvements**, also available from **File ► New Demo Bid...** and the welcome screen's **Create a demo bid instead**) is built in imperial units (LF, SY, CY) with sample rates. Use it to learn the screens, not as a template for metric work.

To make a copy of an estimate

There is no Save As. Use one of these:

1. **File ► New from Template...** (also on the welcome screen): pick the source in **Choose a template estimate (master)** (a `.sbid` or a `.sblib`), then choose the new name and location in **Create estimate file**. The copy is a complete duplicate with fresh internal IDs and an empty audit trail; the source is not changed, and a write-protected source (an email attachment, a file on a USB stick) works even though it cannot be opened for editing. Choosing a name that already exists keeps the old file as `<name>.replaced-<stamp>.sbid`, and the status bar reports where it was kept. Naming the template itself as the new file is refused with **The new estimate cannot be the template itself — choose a different file name**.
2. For an exact file copy, close the estimate and copy the `.sbid` in Windows Explorer. The copy carries the full undo history and audit trail.

To reuse a master estimate for repeat work

1. Build an estimate that holds your standard resources, crews, assemblies, indirect items, bid-summary markups and proposal terms. Name it as the template, for example `Master - Utilities.sbid`.
2. For each new job use **File ▶ New from Template...**, or the wizard's **Copy of a template / master estimate:** option, and pick the master.
3. Edit the job copy freely. Copies are snapshots: changing the master later never changes existing jobs, and a job never changes the master. A master carries its own proposal terms into the job. Change-order locks come across with the copy; the base-bid lock does not, so a job made from a locked master starts unlocked.

To save resources and crews to a company library and import them later

1. With the source estimate open, choose **Library ▶ Save resources to library...** and pick or create a `.sblib` (default `company.sblib`). Choosing an existing library appends to it; there is no overwrite prompt.
2. Read the confirmation **Saved N resource(s) and N crew(s) to the library.**
3. In another estimate, choose **Library ▶ Import resources & crews...** and pick the library (any `.sbid` also works as a source).
4. Read **Imported N resource(s) and N crew(s). (Existing codes were skipped.)** The import is one undo step.

Assemblies travel with the resources and crews; the status bar shows the assembly count. Matching is by code, ignoring case. A code that already exists in the destination is skipped, so importing never changes the rates of resources you already have, in either direction.

To create the starter library file

1. Choose **Library ▶ Create starter library...** and pick a location (default `starter.sblib`). An existing file at that path is kept beside the new one as `<name>.replaced-<stamp>.sblib` once the new library is complete.
2. Read **Starter library created with common labor and equipment build-ups.** When a file was replaced, the box adds **The previous <name>.sblib was kept as <name>.replaced-<stamp>.sblib in the same folder.**
3. Import it into any estimate with **Library ▶ Import resources & crews....**

The starter library holds labour classes (`Lab-FOREMAN`, `Lab-OPERATOR`, `Lab-LABORER`, `Lab-TEAMSTER`, `Lab-CARPENTER`, `Lab-FINISHER`), equipment build-ups (`Eqp-EXC320`, `Eqp-DOZERD6`, `Eqp-LOADER`, `Eqp-ROLLER`, `Eqp-GRADER`, `Eqp-GOMACO`), two materials priced per M3 (`Mat-BEDSTONE`, `Mat-READYMIX`), crews `PIPE1`,

GRADE1, CONC1, CURB1 and assemblies CURB-GUTTER, PIPE-TRENCH, CONC-FLAT. The rates are illustrative and meant to be edited.

To reopen recent work

1. On the welcome screen, click an entry under **Recent estimates**, or press **Enter** to open the most recent one.
2. Or choose **File ► Open Recent** and pick by name; hovering shows the full path.
3. For anything else, use **File ► Open... (Ctrl+O)** or the welcome screen's **Open Estimate...**

The list holds the last 8 files. An estimate that has been moved, renamed or deleted drops off the list silently; find it with **File ► Open....**

File versions

When you open an estimate made with an older SuperBid, the file's internal format is upgraded in place, silently. Before upgrading, SuperBid copies the untouched file to `<name>.sbid.v<N>.bak` beside it, where N is the old format version (Master - Utilities.sbid.v11.bak, for example). An existing `.bak` of that name is never overwritten. If the file being upgraded differs from that copy (you went back to the `.bak`, kept working in the old version and are upgrading again), a second copy named `<name>.sbid.v<N>.<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.bak` is written with the current content; if it is identical, nothing more is written. In a read-only folder the copy is simply skipped rather than blocking the open. The upgraded file will not open in the older version.

Warning: If an older SuperBid install must still read a file, rename the newest `.bak` copy back to `.sbid` for it (or copy the file before opening it in the new version). The upgraded file itself cannot be taken back.

A file from a newer SuperBid is refused with **Estimate file version N is newer than this SuperBid (12) understands.**, followed by the advice to update SuperBid or, if the upgrade left a `<name>.sbid.v<old version>[.<timestamp>].bak` copy beside the file, to rename the newest such copy back to `.sbid` and open it here.

Backups

SuperBid keeps copies of its own in four situations, and nothing else is copied:

- Before a format upgrade: `<name>.sbid.v<N>.bak`, plus `<name>.sbid.v<N>.<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.bak` when a copy of the first name already exists and differs (above).
- When you replace a file through the New Estimate dialog, **New Demo Bid...**, **New from Template...** or **Create starter library...**: the new file is built as `<name>.sbid.sb-tmp` (or `.sblib.sb-tmp`) beside the old one and swapped in only when it is complete, so a failed create leaves the old file exactly as it was. The old file is then renamed `<name>.replaced-<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.sbid` (or `.sblib`) rather than deleted; the Open dialog lists these copies and they open directly. Delete them yourself when they are no longer wanted.

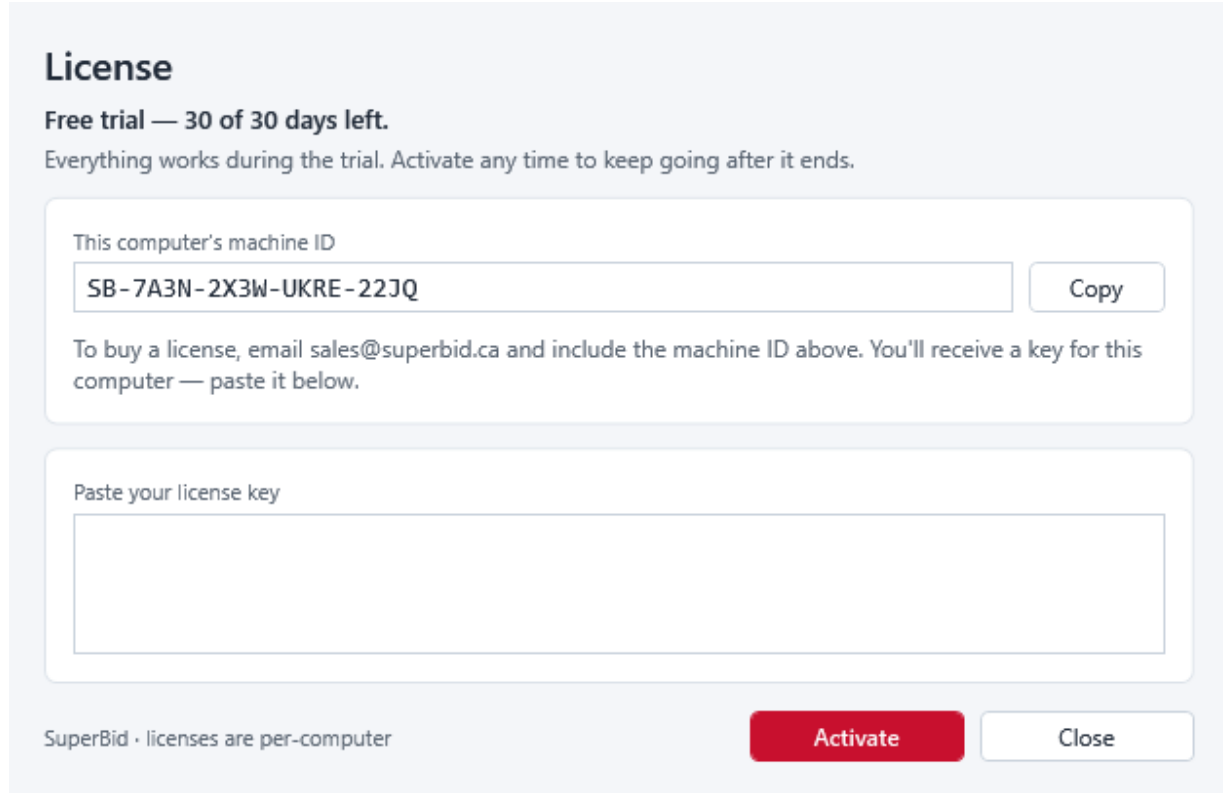
- When **Interchange ► Write prices to DOT (.COL)...** rewrites an agency `.col` file: `<name>.col.bak` is the first-ever copy (the agency's original) and is never overwritten; every later run that changes the file adds `<name>.col.<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>.bak` beside it, and a run with unchanged prices adds nothing. Delete the dated copies yourself once the bid is submitted.
- During an update: the install folder is copied to `<folder>.old` beside it and removed once the new version is in place. If a folder of that name already holds files, it is left alone and the copy goes to `<folder>.old-<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>` instead (see "Updates").

Beyond those, backing up is your job:

- Keep every `.sbid`, `.sblib` and `.sbhist` in a folder your normal backup covers, and keep the `.bak` and `.replaced-` copies with them until you are sure the upgraded or replacing files are sound.
- Copy a file before a large import (with SuperBid closed). The format-upgrade `.bak` covers the new-version case.
- Back up `%APPDATA%\SuperBid` as well if you rely on saved contacts, catalogues or default terms (see the table under "Troubleshooting").
- Keep estimates in a local folder such as `%USERPROFILE%\Estimates`. When an estimate you open or create sits in a OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive or iCloud Drive folder, or is a cloud placeholder file not fully on this disk, the status bar shows a one-time red warning — **Warning: this estimate is in a OneDrive folder. SuperBid writes the file as you work — pause syncing while it is open, or keep estimates in a local folder such as C:\Users\<you>\Estimates.** — once per file per session, never as a pop-up. Nothing is blocked; pause syncing while the estimate is open, or move it.
- Do not have two people work in the same `.sbid` on a network share at once. An estimate that another SuperBid window on this PC already has open, even an idle one, is refused at once with **This estimate is open in another SuperBid window. Close it there first.** (it still works as a template or library source, and a window that crashed releases its file by itself). A file that some other program is holding — a sync client, antivirus, or a window on another PC writing to it at that moment — is refused after a short wait with **This estimate file is locked by another program — another SuperBid window, a sync client (OneDrive/Dropbox) or antivirus scanning it. Close that window or wait a moment, then try again.** An edit that meets such a hold waits up to five seconds, then reports **The estimate file is locked by another program (another SuperBid window, a sync client or antivirus) — this edit did not go through. Wait a moment and repeat it.** on the status bar; if the edit itself had already been written, it reads **The edit was saved, but the estimate file was locked by another program (another SuperBid window, a sync client or antivirus) before it could be recorded for Undo. Wait a moment and repeat the edit.** SuperBid has no multi-user locking beyond that.
- A write-protected file (an email attachment still in its attachment folder, a USB stick, the read-only attribute) will not open for editing: copy it to a local folder first. It still works as a template or as a library to import from.
- A stray `<name>.sbid.sb-tmp` file left behind after a crash can be deleted, and so can an empty `<name>.sbid-journal` beside an estimate that is not open. While the estimate is open, leave the journal alone and do not sync it separately.

Licence and trial

Every install runs a 30-day free trial from its first launch. While unlicensed, the top bar shows the amber chip  **Trial — N days left**; after the trial, SuperBid blocks at startup behind the **SuperBid License** dialog until a key is entered (its **Exit SuperBid** button closes the program). Your files are never touched by the block. Keys are bound to one computer and are verified on the computer itself, without an internet connection.



License

Free trial — 30 of 30 days left.
Everything works during the trial. Activate any time to keep going after it ends.

This computer's machine ID

SB-7A3N-2X3W-UKRE-22JQ Copy

To buy a license, email sales@superbid.ca and include the machine ID above. You'll receive a key for this computer — paste it below.

Paste your license key

SuperBid · licenses are per-computer Activate Close

Figure 29. The SuperBid License dialog.

To buy and enter a licence key

1. Choose **Setup ► License key...** or click the trial chip. The dialog reads **Free trial — N of 30 days left**.
2. Click **Copy** beside **This computer's machine ID** (format SB-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX) and email it to sales@superbid.ca.
3. When the key arrives, paste the whole key (it starts with SB1.) into **Paste your license key**; line breaks from email are fine.
4. Click **Activate** or press **Enter**. The status changes to **Licensed to ...** and the trial chip disappears.

If activation fails, the reason appears in red under the box: the key is incomplete, was altered, was issued for a different machine, has expired, or could not be saved because %APPDATA%\SuperBid is not writable.

To move a licence to a new computer

1. On the new computer, open **Setup ▶ License key...** With the old key on file the dialog reads **Your license was issued for a different computer.** and shows both machine IDs.
2. Copy the new machine ID and email `support@superbid.ca`. The same address handles renewals (**The key on file expired on <date>.**).
3. Paste the replacement key and click **Activate**.

The machine ID survives renames, reboots and reinstalls of SuperBid; it changes when Windows is reinstalled.

Note: Rolling the clock back more than 3 days ends the trial. Deleting %APPDATA%\SuperBid does not restart it. A trial that ends mid-session shows  **Trial ended — enter license key** but keeps working until the next launch.

Updates

SuperBid checks the release feed silently at every launch. When a newer version exists, the top bar shows **↓ Update vX.Y.Z — install & restart**.

To install an update

1. Optionally choose **Setup ▶ Check for updates...** to check now. You see **You are on the latest version (vY).**, **SuperBid vX is available (you are on vY).** or **Could not reach the update feed:** with the reason.
2. Click the update chip. The **Install update** box asks **Install SuperBid vX now?** and explains that the app closes, updates itself and reopens; that your estimates stay in your `.sbid` files; and that if this version changes the estimate file format, each estimate is upgraded the first time you open it and, where the folder allows, a copy named `<name>.sbid.v<old>.bak` is left beside it so you can go back — older SuperBid builds cannot open an upgraded file. The message includes the start of the release notes under **What's new:**. Answer **Yes**.
3. The chip shows **Downloading vX...**, **Unpacking...**, then **Restarting....** SuperBid closes, the install folder is copied to `<folder>.old` beside it (or to `<folder>.old-<yyyyMMdd-HH:mm:ss>` when a folder named `.old` already holds files — a copy you kept, or the previous version left by an earlier failed update — which is left alone), the new files are copied over the install folder and checked, and SuperBid relaunches; the backup folder is removed on success. The update itself does not touch estimate files; if the file format changed, each is upgraded when you next open it, with its `.bak` copy left beside it (see "File versions"). Every attempt is logged to `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\update.log`.

The updater refuses to start while another SuperBid window is open: **Update failed** reads **Another SuperBid window is open (N more). Close every other SuperBid window, then click the update again — the program files cannot be replaced while a second copy is running.** The same box, with the chip back in its install state, appears when the downloaded package is incomplete or carries a different version from the one the feed announced; nothing has been changed. It also appears, before anything is downloaded, when the updater cannot create a folder beside the install folder: **The updater cannot write beside the SuperBid folder (<parent>), so it could not keep the previous version safe while the files are swapped (<reason>).** If SuperBid lives in a folder you cannot write to (**Program Files, a shared drive**), move it to a folder you own or unzip the new version by hand. Another known cause: an install folder path containing %, & or " cannot be updated automatically; download the new version and unzip it over the install folder instead. If the swap itself fails after SuperBid has closed, the previous version is restored from the backup copy and the next launch shows a box titled **SuperBid update** reading **Update failed — previous version restored.** with the reason; close every other SuperBid window and check for updates again. If the restore fails as well, the box names the backup folder (<folder>.old, or the <folder>.old-<stamp> folder used instead) that holds the complete previous install: copy its contents over the install folder. Failed updates are also written to `crash.log`. If SuperBid does not come back on its own, start it from the desktop shortcut.

Troubleshooting

To fix "SuperBid — cannot open estimate"

1. **Estimate file not found.:** the file was moved, renamed or deleted. Find it and use **File ► Open....**
2. **This is a SuperJob job file (.sbjob) — open it in SuperJob.:** wrong product.
3. **Estimate file version N is newer than this SuperBid (12) understands.:** update SuperBid, or, if a <name>.sbid.v<old version>.bak (or <name>.sbid.v<old version>.<timestamp>.bak) copy sits beside the file, rename the newest one back to .sbid and open it instead. The message says so.
4. **This file is read-only (attachment / USB / locked by another program). Save a copy to a local folder to edit it.:** the file cannot be written where it is — an email attachment still in its attachment folder, a USB stick, the read-only attribute, or another program holding it. Copy it to a local folder and open the copy; the original still works as a template or library source.
5. **This estimate is open in another SuperBid window. Close it there first.:** another SuperBid window on this PC has the estimate open, even if it is sitting idle. Close the estimate there and open it again. (A window that crashed releases its file by itself.)
6. **This estimate file is locked by another program — another SuperBid window, a sync client (OneDrive/Dropbox) or antivirus scanning it. Close that window or wait a moment, then try again.:** something is holding the file at this moment — a sync client uploading it, antivirus scanning it, or a SuperBid window on another PC writing to it. Wait a moment and try again; if it persists, pause syncing or move the file to a local folder.
7. **Estimate file has no estimate row.** or a database error: the file is not a SuperBid estimate or is damaged. Restore it from your backup.

- Any other text comes straight from Windows or the database engine, usually a permissions or file-sharing problem.

If a box titled "SuperBid" says "Something went wrong"

- An unexpected error inside SuperBid does not close the program. A box titled **SuperBid** reads **Something went wrong, but your estimate is safe — every change is already saved in the .sbid file. You can keep working.**, then the error text, then **Details were written to:** and the path `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\crash.log`.
- Click **OK** and carry on. Nothing you committed is lost.
- When you report the problem, attach `crash.log`; it holds one dated block per incident with the SuperBid version.

If an add, delete, import, undo or redo cannot be completed (for example because a sync client or another SuperBid window holds the file at that moment), the status bar shows the reason in red instead, the grids reload from the file, and nothing from the failed action is written. An edit that meets a hold on the file waits up to five seconds, then reads **The estimate file is locked by another program (another SuperBid window, a sync client or antivirus) — this edit did not go through. Wait a moment and repeat it.**; when the edit itself was written and only its undo record failed, it reads **The edit was saved, but the estimate file was locked by another program (another SuperBid window, a sync client or antivirus) before it could be recorded for Undo. Wait a moment and repeat the edit.** A pasted block in which any cell cannot be saved is undone as a whole in the same way (a cell whose value is refused is only skipped). In the rare case that part of an action did reach the file, the audit trail logs it as **<action> (failed: <reason>)** and one **Ctrl+Z** backs it out.

To run the self-test for support

- Close SuperBid.
- Open a Command Prompt in the install folder and run `SuperBid.App.exe --selftest`. The SuperBid window opens on its own, steps through the screens and closes itself; do not click in it.
- Open `%TEMP%\superbid-selftest.txt`. Each line starts with `PASS` or `FAIL`; the last line is `SELFTEST_OK` or `SELFTEST_FAILED`. Screenshots are saved as `%TEMP%\superbid-selftest*.png`.
- Email the `.txt` (and the screenshots if asked) to `support@superbid.ca`.

The self-test works on temporary copies only. It does not open your estimates or change your recent list, settings, contacts, catalogues or licence.

To restore the desktop shortcut or read the licence agreement

- Setup ► Add desktop shortcut** recreates `SuperBid.lnk` and confirms **Shortcut added to your desktop**. SuperBid also creates this shortcut once, on its first run.
- Setup ► View license agreement...** shows the terms you accepted on first run; click **Close**.

On first run you must click **I Accept** in the **SuperBid License Agreement** dialog; **Decline** exits. If the acceptance cannot be saved, SuperBid tells you and asks again next time.

Settings that are not part of any estimate live in %APPDATA%\SuperBid:

File	What it holds
settings.json	AI provider and keys, Bid Scraper settings, licence key, trial start, EULA acceptance
recent.txt	The recent estimates list
window.txt	Window size and position
grids.txt	Saved column widths, order and visibility
default-terms.txt	Company default proposal terms
contacts.json	The Library ▶ Contacts... directory
ratebook.txt, trucks.txt, indirects.txt, crew-catalog.txt, terms-catalog.txt	Rate book, haul trucks, indirect-cost checklist, crew-builder catalogue, standard clauses
estimate-check.txt	Estimate Check rule preferences
scraper-pipeline.json	Bid Scraper triage list
crash.log	One block per unexpected error (and per failed update), for support
update.log	One line per update attempt and its outcome

Tips and gotchas

- A brand-new estimate already has undo steps (the demo seed, the starter import, the template copy, the default terms). Pressing **Ctrl+Z** on a fresh file strips that content; press **Ctrl+Y** to put it back.
- Locking the base bid or a change order (**Estimate ▶ Change Orders...**) makes its items reject edits, with a red status message such as **The base bid is locked — unlock the block to edit <number>**. Locking does not clear undo history, and the lock itself is undoable.
- Undo history and the audit trail travel with the file. Anyone you send a .sbid to can undo your work and read the change log; a **New from Template...** copy starts with an empty trail.
- Library import and save never update existing codes. To bring a new rate into an estimate, edit it there or delete the old resource before importing.
- **Save as company default** on the Proposal screen writes default-terms.txt; it is not part of the estimate and is not undoable. **Insert company default** asks **Replace the current terms with the company default?** before overwriting the estimate's terms.
- Copying settings.json to another PC does not carry AI keys (they only decrypt for the same Windows user) or the licence (bound to the machine).

- Shortcuts fire only with Ctrl alone; AltGr and Ctrl+Shift combinations are left for typing on non-US keyboards.
- SuperBid is a 64-bit Windows program. There is no installer: unzip the release and run SuperBid.App.exe.

Keyboard shortcuts and conventions

Shortcuts fire with **Ctrl** alone; **Ctrl+Shift** and AltGr combinations are ignored so typing on non-US keyboards is not hijacked. The screen shortcuts, **Ctrl+N** and **Ctrl+O** commit the cell you are editing first, so nothing half-typed is lost. The AI TOOLS screens have no shortcuts.

Shortcut	Where	What it does
Ctrl+N	Anywhere	File ▶ New Estimate...
Ctrl+O	Anywhere	File ▶ Open...
Ctrl+Z / Ctrl+Y	Estimate open	Edit ▶ Undo / Edit ▶ Redo ; status bar shows Undone. / Redone.
Ctrl+1 to Ctrl+9	Estimate open	Overview, Estimate, Pay Items, Quotes, Bid Summary, Proposal, Resources, Crew Builder, Cost History
Ctrl+0	Estimate open	Item Assemblies
Ctrl+F	Estimate, Pay Items, Resources	Jump to that screen's search box; does nothing elsewhere
Ctrl+V	Grids	Paste an Excel block starting at the current cell, as one undo step; gray, dropdown and hidden columns are skipped
Ctrl+C	Resources grid	Copy without headers
Enter	Welcome screen	Open the most recent estimate
Enter	Grid cell	Commit and move down
Enter	Dialogs	Default button: I Accept, Activate, Add pay item, Apply to proposal
Tab	Grid cell, markup boxes	Commit and move right
Esc	Grid cell; licence agreement	Cancel the edit; Decline
F2	Grid cell	Start editing
Delete	Selected cell	Clear a text cell; numeric cells and rows are left alone
Ctrl+click	Benchmark file dialog	Select several .sbhist files

Colour conventions

- Grids: white cell = you type it; gray = calculated; blue text = your override (a plug, a lock value, a quote entry). Parent rows are bold on a tint. A cell edited this session gets an amber tint with a tooltip "was ...".
- Quotes: green = low bid; blue = awarded;  * after a price = substituted.

- Top bar: amber ⌚ **Trial — N days left**; red ↓ **Update vX.Y.Z — install & restart**; green ✓ **Auto-save**.
- Status bar: grey message = information; red bold = error; amber Δ = bid movement from your last change; red pill = **BID TOTAL**..
- Overview: ⚠ = a data-quality warning you can click. AI grids: **Conf** H green, M amber, L red; PreBid rows amber for `quantity_check`, red for `no_doc_basis`.

Glossary

- **Allocation** — A share, typed as a whole percent on the Pay Items screen, that splits one top-level cost item across several pay items. Allocations replace the cost item's simple **Pay Item** assignment.
- **Alternate** — A group label (for example **ALT-1**) on a pay item. Each alternate is priced stand-alone on its own markup chain and bond; the base bid carries the shared indirect pool, contingency and bid-day adjustment. The Bid Proposal prints each alternate as its own schedule with an **ALTERNATE ... TOTAL**.
- **Assembly** — Reusable work priced once: it asks for typed inputs, then generates a subtree of cost items with crews and materials attached. Managed on the Item Assemblies screen and under **Library ▶ Assemblies....**
- **Audit trail** — The list of labelled undo steps, plus every undo and redo, stored inside the **.sbid** and printed by **Reports ▶ Audit Trail...** with times in UTC.
- **Award** — The Quotes-screen decision that reprices the estimate: a resource line sets the resource's rate to the vendor price; a cost item line switches the item to Comparison or Subcontracted with the vendor price as **Plug \$/U**.
- **Balance item** — The pay item that absorbs the penny-rounding residual of the spread. Blank means the unlocked item with the largest extended amount.
- **Bid-day adjustment** — A flat dollar or percent change in the **Bid day** card of Bid Summary, applied before the bond gross-up and respread at once.
- **Block** — Either the base bid or one change order. Pay items and cost items belong to a block; a locked block refuses every edit to its rows.
- **Change order** — Extra work priced separately from the base bid in **Estimate ▶ Change Orders...** as its own direct cost times (1 + Markup %).
- **Cost item** — One row of the Estimate screen: a work activity with a unit, a forecast quantity, a cost method and either a crew and production rate or a plugged price. Top-level cost items are created from pay items; detail items sit under them.
- **Crew** — A named set of labour and equipment resources with a quantity of each, built on the Crew Builder screen. Its **\$/Crew-Hr** times crew hours is a cost item's labour-plus-equipment cost.
- **Data-quality checks** — The always-on list on the Overview that flags unassigned cost, allocations not totalling 100%, uncosted pay items, zero pay quantities carrying cost or price, locks below cost, unlocked prices spread below cost or negative, and unreviewed quotes.
- **Direct cost** — The cost of every costed row that is not an indirect item. It is what type markups apply to.
- **Estimate Check** — The deeper, rule-based scan under **Estimate ▶ Estimate Check...** whose rule choices are remembered in **%APPDATA%\SuperBid\estimate-check.txt**.
- **Estimate file** — A **.sbid** file: one estimate with its pay items, cost items, resources, crews, quotes, bid summary, proposal terms, undo history and audit trail.

- **Fit** — The Bid Scraper's 0 to 3 star score: one point each for a scope match, a municipal or government owner, and a location within your radius.
- **Forecast Qty** — Your takeoff quantity for a pay item, the number cost is built on. If it is 0 the Pay Qty is used instead.
- **History database** — A `.sbhist` file of estimate snapshots created by **History ▶ Capture estimate to history...** and read by **History ▶ Benchmark vs history....**
- **Indirect item** — A cost item marked **Ind** (for example the `IND-...` lines from the **Indirect Costs** checklist). It is kept out of direct cost and spread across pay items by the markup chain.
- **Leaf** — A pay item or cost item with nothing nested under it. Only leaf pay items are priced and mirrored; only leaf cost items carry cost.
- **Leveling** — Filling a vendor's blank line with a substitute price (the awarded price, else the lowest active quote, else self-perform) so quote totals compare apples to apples. The result is the *leveled total*.
- **Library** — A `.sblib` file of reusable resources, crews and assemblies, written by **Library ▶ Save resources to library...** and read by **Library ▶ Import resources & crews....** Any `.sbid` can also be a library source.
- **Lock** — Holding a pay item's unit price at a fixed **Price**, a **Markup %** over cost or a **Margin %** of price; the spread rebalances the other lines.
- **Machine ID** — The `SB-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX` code in the **SuperBid License** dialog that a licence key is bound to. It changes only when Windows is reinstalled.
- **Markup chain** — The order in which cost becomes bid: direct cost, indirect items, escalation, type markups, overhead, profit, contingency, bid-day adjustment, bond, target bid.
- **Method** — How a cost item is costed: Detail (crew and production rate), Plug, Quick, Subcontracted, Comparison or Calculated.
- **Pay item** — One line of the owner's bid schedule: item number, description, unit and quantity, entered on the Pay Items screen. The pay-item list drives the estimate tree.
- **Pay Qty** — The owner's bid-schedule quantity. Unit price times Pay Qty is the extended amount on the bid form.
- **Plug** — A hand-typed cost, per unit (**Plug \$/U**) or as a lump sum (**Plug Total**), shown in blue.
- **Productivity factor** — The **Fac** column: how **Prod Rate** is read, for example `UH` units per crew-hour, `HU` hours per unit, `US` units per shift or `MU` manhours per unit. It sets a cost item's crew hours.
- **Quote adjustment** — The **Adjustment \$** on a vendor quote: a lump sum added to that vendor's leveled total for freight, terms, exclusions or bond.
- **Quote folder** — A package of lines (resources or leaf cost items) to be priced by vendors on the Quotes screen, each vendor attaching one quote per folder.
- **Rate book** — A published equipment rental rate book imported as CSV into `%APPDATA%\SuperBid\ratebook.txt`; a resource can be priced as a percentage of a book line.
- **Rate Source** — How a resource's rate is built: **Manual**, **Labor build-up**, **Equipment (USACE)** or **Rate book (%)**.

- **Residual** — Target bid minus the sum of every rounded Extended, shown in **Full chain (audit view)**. It should read 0.00 before you submit.
- **Resource** — The smallest priced thing in an estimate: a labour class, a machine, a material, a subcontract item or a trucking rate, held on the Resources screen.
- **Resource line** — A material, sub or trucking resource hung on a leaf cost item with a **Qty per Unit** and **Waste %**.
- **Self-perform** — Doing a quoted line with your own forces at the estimate's current cost; shown as (self) in **Awarded To** when no vendor is awarded.
- **Spread** — Sharing the pooled markups, indirects and bond across the pay items so unit price times pay quantity equals the target bid to the penny, either **Proportional** to direct cost or **Even**.
- **Starter library** — The built-in metric set of six labour classes, six machines, two materials, four crews and three assemblies, seeded by **Blank + starter library (common labor, equipment & crews)** or written by **Library ► Create starter library...**
- **Substituted price** — A leveling fill-in for a line the vendor did not quote, marked * on screen and in the report and never eligible for the green low-bid colour.
- **Target bid** — The bid total after the full markup chain including bond: card **A. TARGET BID** on the Overview and **BID TOTAL:** in the status bar.
- **Template** — A master .sbid or .sblib copied by **File ► New from Template...** or the wizard's **Copy of a template / master estimate:** option into an independent new estimate with fresh IDs.
- **Undo step** — One committed edit, add, delete, paste, import or confirmed dialog, reversed by **Ctrl+Z**. History lives in the .sbid and survives reopening.
- **Vendor** — A supplier or subcontractor in the estimate's Vendors list on the Quotes screen. Names must be unique; the list is separate from **Library ► Contacts....**