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1. WHY DO I NEED A SURVEY?

What services do professional land surveyors provide?

Professional land surveyors render a highly technical and complex service, often as the member of a professional team. Land surveyors can:

- Perform boundary, construction, as-built, topographic, leveling (elevation), route (roadway), mortgage inspection, topographic, hydrographic surveys.
- Examine your deed and those of adjacent land owners and look for evidence on the ground to determine if there are discrepancies.
- Find your property corners and mark them properly.
- Mark and/or paint boundary lines.
- Stake out buildings, streets, utilities and other structures for construction.
- Locate buildings, fences, structures, improvements, oil and gas wells, rights-of-way, easements, encroachments, and other evidence of possession.
- Advise and cooperate with attorneys, title insurance companies, real estate agents, brokers, bankers, engineers, architects, developers, and contractors.
- Appear in court to provide testimony as an expert witness.

When is getting a survey required, or a good idea?

It is a good idea to have your property surveyed if you have a question or concern about the location of your property boundaries. Certain specific situations call for having a survey done, including:

- When purchasing land, to protect your investment.
- When selling land, to make the property more marketable and to ensure that you are selling only what you intend.
- When land is not clearly and accurately described in a deed or plat.
- At the time you prepare a will to leave land to your heirs, or when you inherit land from someone who has passed away.
- When a mortgage lender requires a survey.
- Before constructing fences, driveways, buildings, or other structures.
- When a parcel is to be divided and conveyed from a larger tract.
- Before cutting timber or doing excavation work near a boundary line.
- When purchasing title insurance.
- When a property line or corner location is unknown or in dispute.
- When purchasing flood insurance or planning to build in a flood zone.
- When you believe someone is encroaching on your land.



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I think my land has been surveyed before, because the tax assessor (or local GIS system) has a map of it. Is this true?

No, property tax and GIS maps only show approximate locations of property boundaries. These types of maps are not tied very closely (if at all) to actual property corner markers located on the ground. GIS maps are generally used for informational purposes only and are not accurate enough to be relied upon for situations when property lines are involved.

What is an encroachment? Is it a problem?

An encroachment occurs where a structure, fence or some other permanent object crosses over onto an adjoining property. An encroachment can affect your ability to sell, mortgage or subdivide your property, and in some cases, may cause you to lose your claim of title to the property. If you believe there may be an encroachment on your property, you should consider having LandTech perform a boundary survey for you.

My neighbors are building a garage next to my property. Were they required to get their land surveyed?

Local building code requirements vary, but a survey may not be required in order for someone to obtain a building permit. If you have reason to believe a neighbor is building on or too close to your property, it would benefit you and your neighbor both to have a survey done before construction progresses.

Can my neighbor take part of my land by using it?

Although it does not happen frequently, losing property to a neighbor is a common concern among landowners. Under the legal doctrine of adverse possession, it is possible to lose part of your land because someone else has been occupying or using it. However, before loss of property through adverse possession can occur, certain legal conditions must be met and court must grant title to the land to the adverse possessor. If you think a neighbor is occupying or using part of your land, the first step to protecting your property from adverse possession is to get an accurate survey. The survey will identify any issues of possession and allow you and your attorney, with our help, to seek a resolution of the problem.



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The real estate agent (seller, neighbor, contractor, friend, etc.) showed me where the lines and corners of my property are located. Do I still need a survey?

A licensed, professional land surveyor is the only person who can legally determine property lines and corners, and the opinions of others on such matters do not carry the weight of expert testimony in court. In addition, professional land surveyors are licensed by the state to protect the public good. Other persons may not be subject to such a duty, and could even be biased to follow their own interests rather than yours. If you want to know where your boundary lines and corners are located, the best authority is an accurate, up-to-date survey performed by a licensed, professional land surveyor.

I found stakes and markers around my property. Do I still need a survey?

The stakes and markers you found may not be your corners or they may not be in the proper locations. Over the years, your corner markers may have been moved, neighbors or prior homeowners may have placed their own markers where they believe the corners should be, or the markers you may have found could actually reference adjoining properties rather than your own. A survey performed by a professional land surveyor is the best way to confirm the proper locations of your property lines and corners.

Do I need an “ALTA Survey”?

An ALTA survey is a survey that is prepared according to the strict standards of the American Land Title Association, standards that go well beyond the usual state standards which apply to all other surveys. Residential real estate transactions rarely require an ALTA survey; they are usually requested by lenders or title agents for purchase and financing of commercial properties. If you are contemplating having commercial property surveyed, you should determine from the outset whether you want an ALTA survey, and you should ask your lender or attorney if one is required. The time and cost of an ALTA survey is significantly greater than a normal survey, so be sure to let us know you need one when asking us for a quote on a survey of commercial property.

I want to sell a portion of my parcel. Is a survey required for the sale?

Yes. Subdividing land, even if it is only dividing one parcel into two, requires a plat that meets local planning regulations and is approved by the appropriate government agencies. If you want to subdivide your land, we will provide you with a boundary survey of your existing parcel, help you to decide the best boundaries for the new lot or lots, make sure that your prospective subdivision is



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in full compliance with all applicable regulations, and guide you through the approval process.

What is an Elevation Certificate? My house has never flooded, so why am I required by my lender to get a flood certificate?

A FEMA Elevation Certificate is a federal form that must be prepared by a land surveyor or engineer for any structure that is located in a FEMA Flood Hazard Area, even if your house may have never flooded. If so, your lender will require you to purchase flood insurance, and you will need a completed FEMA Elevation Certificate. The process of getting an elevation certificate requires measuring the height of the floor level of your house (according to FEMA regulations) in relation to a point of known elevation (benchmark). In the past, if your property was not located near an established benchmark, the cost of getting an elevation certificate could be high. Today, we can use precise, surveying-grade GPS equipment to set a benchmark on your property, measure the elevation of your home or building, and complete a FEMA elevation certificate form for you.

What type of survey do I need for design of new construction?

A boundary and topographic survey will assist your design engineer or architect in planning new construction, which will help them determine the best location, size and height of the proposed improvements. Such surveys are common for commercial properties, but they are important to consider for residential construction as well, especially when the lot is small or steep, the footprint of the planned home is large or complex, or when the location of driveway access or orientation of the proposed home is uncertain.

What are the advantages of having a professional land surveyor stake out my construction project?

Property owners, developers, and builders will see distinct benefits from using a qualified professional land surveyor to stake out their construction projects because surveyors use the most precise positioning methods and equipment available. We will take the plans drawn by your architect or engineer and set out the project in a way that integrates the site conditions, the nature of the construction and the boundaries of the property. We will coordinate with your builder to quickly and accurately set the stakes the builder needs to construct grades, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, utilities, building foundations, walls, and column lines. By having your project staked out by someone with the license, skills and knowledge of a professional land surveyor, you and your builder can be certain of consistent, reliable results.