

LAND SURVEYOR-CLIENT RELATIONS

The Professional Land Surveyor renders a highly technical and complex service. The surveyor is a member of a professional team linking attorneys, title companies, architects, engineers, and others – preparing the foundation upon which your project is built.

In cases of controversy, a Professional Land Surveyor appears in court on your behalf as an expert witness. No one else can assume responsibility for the correctness and accuracy of the work performed by a Professional Surveyor.

CALIFORNIA LAND SURVEYORS ASSOCIATION

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The California Land Surveyors Association is dedicated to promoting the highest possible standards of professional practices in the public's interest.

Find a Land Surveyor near you



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LAND SURVEYING

HOW THE PROFESSION SERVES THE PUBLIC



INTRODUCTION

Since a person may require the services of a Professional Land Surveyor only once during their lifetime, this brochure has been prepared to answer a few commonly asked questions to assist in the selection of a Land Surveyor.

In general, a survey should be made before purchasing real property, when dividing any parcel of land for sale (in conformance with state laws and local ordinances), and prior to the construction of any improvements on property in which you have an interest.

The services of a Land Surveyor today will cost less in time, worry, and money than the cost of moving improvements or defending a lawsuit later!



HOW DO I CHOOSE A LAND SURVEYOR

Only a Professional Land Surveyor (or Civil Engineer registered prior to 1982) licensed by the State Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists is legally authorized to practice land surveying in the State of California.

Most active Land Surveyors are found online, or in the [Find a Surveyor](#) tool on the California Land Surveyors Association website.

A Land Surveyor is an integral part of a professional team composed of attorneys, engineers, architects, planners, and landscape architects. Some land surveying firms offer comprehensive services including some, or all, of the above.

Professional expertise can have a significant impact upon the planned use of your property. Select a reputable Land Surveyor in whose skill and judgment you can put your trust. Your selection should be made when you are sure that the professional you have chosen has all of the facts, and is completely aware of your requirements and the requirements of the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the property.

HOW MUCH WILL A SURVEY COST?

The cost for most land surveying work is determined, based on some of the following variables:

Record Search

This varies by (a) the number of parcels involved; and (b) the number of past transactions. (This necessary step is complicated by the casual manner in which land transactions have been handled in the past, resulting in many vague, incomplete, and often contradictory legal descriptions and land records).

Size and Shape of Property

An irregularly shaped parcel has more corners to monument and a longer boundary than a rectangular parcel containing the same area.

Sectionalized Survey Work

This could require the survey of the entire section (640 acres +) in which the land being surveyed lies, regardless of the area of the parcel. In some cases, a survey of more than one section is required, depending on the location of the parcel in question in relation to the sections shown on the government plat.

Terrain & Vegetation

A level parcel of land is easier to survey than a mountainous parcel. Interference with lines of sight and accessibility complicate field work.

Amount of Existing Evidence on the Property

Existing evidence such as iron, wood, or stone monuments, old fences, and occupation lines, witness trees, etc., aid the Surveyor. Their absence may compound difficulties involved in retracing boundaries.

Local Knowledge of Property

Someone pointing out accepted occupation lines and monumentation is a considerable aid to the Surveyor.

Abutter Difficulties

When neighbors are cooperative, an otherwise difficult or impossible boundary line location may be established by boundary line agreement.

Time of Year

In the summer, foliage may present problems making survey measurements difficult. In winter, weather may slow travel to and on site, and sometimes conceal field evidence.

Title Company & Public Agency Requirements

Title companies may require considerably more documentation than is normally required by the average land owner.

Record of Survey or Corner Record

This map or record is often required by state law, to protect the general public, if matters addressed by the Land Surveyors Act are encountered while surveying your property. This will cause the mapping costs to increase, and requires the payment of checking and recording fees.

Due to these variables, the Surveyor should furnish the client with an estimate of the survey, and provide periodic updates on the estimate, as the project proceeds.

TYPES OF LAND SURVEYS

ALTA/NSPS Survey or Extended Title Insurance Coverage Survey

A survey made for the purpose of supplying a title company and lender with survey and location data necessary for issuing American Land Title Association or Extended Coverage Title Insurance.

Boundary Survey

A survey for the purpose of locating the corners, boundary lines and/or easements of a given parcel of land. This involves record and field research, measurements, and computations to establish boundary lines in conformance with the Professional Land Surveyors Act.

Site Planning Survey

A combination of boundary and topographic surveys for preparation of a site plan to be used for designing improvements or developments.

Topographic Survey

A survey locating topographic features - natural and man made such as buildings, improvements, fences, elevations, trees, streams, contours of the land, etc. This type of survey may be required by a governmental agency, or may be used by engineers and/or architects for design of improvements or developments on a site.

Subdivision Survey

The subdivision of a tract of land into smaller parcels, showing monumentation and survey data on a map, in conformance with local ordinances and the Subdivision Map Act.

Control Survey

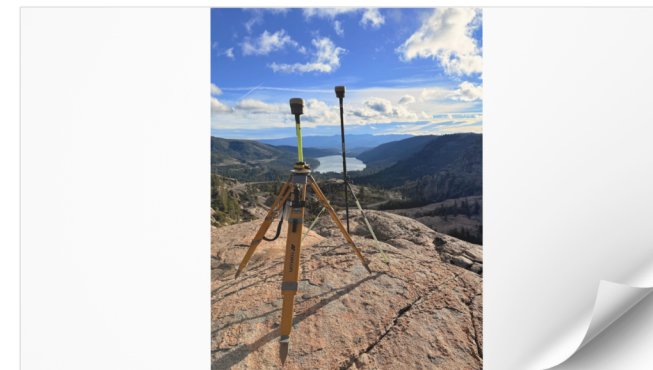
Precise location of horizontal and vertical positions of points for use in boundary determination, mapping from aerial photographs, construction staking, and other related purposes.

Court Exhibit Survey

Analysis of various legal descriptions and survey maps; field locating of record, existing monuments, and physical features; and mapping showing this information for the purpose of presenting a visual exhibit to be used in a courtroom.

Construction Survey

Construction staking to establish the correct location of structures shown on improvement plans for constructing roads, pipelines, building, etc.



Q & A: WHAT WILL A LAND SURVEYOR DO FOR ME?

Will a Land Surveyor tell me what I own?

No. It is your responsibility to furnish the Surveyor with a legal description, current title report, or policy concerning the parcel that you want surveyed. The Surveyor will then locate the property on the ground, and provide you with a record of survey map showing the results of the survey.

Will I be shown if there are any encroachments on the property?

Yes, if you instruct the land surveyor to show encroachments in the area of concern to you.

Will I be shown if there are any easements on my property?

Yes, if you instruct the Surveyor to do so, and provide a current title report or title policy to use for this purpose. The Surveyor will supply a map, plat, or exhibit showing this information.

How will I be shown what has been surveyed?

Corners of the property will be marked with stakes, pipes, or other such monuments with the Professional Land Surveyor's license number indicated thereon. The corners on the parcel will be pointed out to you, if requested. A record of survey or corner record will be filed when these monuments are set, indicating dimensions of property lines, monuments, and other relative data as required by the Land Surveyors Act, the client, or others.

Why are there conflicting boundary and easement lines?

It is often true that boundary disputes and overlaps are a result of legal descriptions which were originally written and recorded without the benefit of the services of a Professional Land Surveyor. It is important to have these lines properly described and surveyed, if necessary, when property or easement lines are created or changed.