

THE BOUNDARY SURVEY PROCESS

We are often asked for estimates to perform boundary surveys. The purpose of a boundary survey is to reestablish or recover the property corners of a parcel of land and accurately define the limits of the subject property. A common misconception is that this is a very simple process, or an individual can pay to have just one side of their property surveyed. But for an accurate, professional survey this is not the case. As a professional engineering and survey firm, we take our time to ensure your survey is 100% accurate.



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The First Step:

Research

The first step involves the research that must take place before a field visit can occur. This initial phase of a land survey involves searching for any records concerning the property and adjacent properties. These include title certificates, deeds, and other records. Then, the land surveyor analyzes the records obtained. Most of today's homes are built on property that was sold after dividing up a larger piece of property, if this was done after 1979 monuments were set which will make locating the property corners much easier. However, if it was done prior to 1979 the surveyor's job can be more challenging if the division was not surveyed or recorded properly.

If necessary, any right-of-way plans from the Department of Transportation for any adjoining road rights-of-way will also be obtained. It's important to note that a road right-of-way is a property line.

We will also interview the property owner and the adjacent owners for any documents or verbal information that may assist us in arriving at our final analysis of the boundary location. We also often rely on information that can be obtained from a title report for the subject property. The title report is usually provided by the client.

This initial phase of a land survey involves searching for any records concerning the property and adjacent properties.





The Second Step:

Field Measurements

Our next step is to visit the site with our equipment and accurately measure the location of all field evidence. We will search for monuments at all property corners, especially for those that are referenced in our research, as well as for “uncalled” for monuments. Monuments usually are iron pins, concrete monuments, trees, and/or stones. We will locate other evidence of ownership, such as fences, walls or bushes. Improvements near property lines will be located as well to confirm whether encroachments exist.

To aid their equipment in locating the property’s corner points, the surveyors may create random observation point marks or traverse points. Often, landowners confuse these points for the actual corner points, so it’s important to understand the surveying process and wait for the final evaluation. At times, we may have to make multiple property visits if many corners are missing or other problems exist.

Why can't I have just one side of my property surveyed?

For a survey to be done properly, just one line can’t be surveyed because mathematically you can’t prove the corner is in the correct spot. A minimum of 3 property corners must be met to determine if a monument is in the correct place or if an error has occurred. Most surveyors will want five or six survey monuments before they make any conclusions.


Since we have to do the extra work, the fee will be the same whether you want just one line, or the entire lot.

The Final Step:

OFFICE EVALUATION AND DRAWING PREPARATION

The final step in the preparation of a Boundary Survey is the analysis of our field data as compared to our research. We will analyze calculated and measured distances and compare them to the research, attempting to determine the final location of all boundary lines. All property corners will be visibly flagged and marked with a witness stake and iron pins will be set at all missing corners upon completion of our survey.

A drawing, or in the case of a smaller property, a survey report, will be prepared and delivered to the client detailing all information related to the boundaries of the subject property. Upon request, we will meet with the client to discuss problem areas, possible courses for problem resolutions or simply to walk the boundaries of the tract.

A photograph showing two surveyors in a field. One person, wearing a yellow hard hat and a neon green safety vest, is operating a surveying instrument (a total station) mounted on a tripod. The other person, wearing a white hard hat and a neon green safety vest, is standing next to them, looking towards the instrument. The background is a dry, grassy field with some trees in the distance under a clear blue sky.

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