

Information On Land Surveys

When is a Survey Usually Required?

Before title to land is conveyed, it is desirable to have an adequate description of the property for the deed, including an accurate determination of the acreage. It is also important to know if there are any physical features or title overlaps which might constitute encroachments or, in some other way adversely affect the title to the land. Only an up-to-date survey, by a *Professional Land Surveyor*, can give you this information. Most North Carolina cities and counties have subdivision ordinance procedures, which must be followed. For any subdivision, the *Professional Land Surveyor* can work with you to prepare the required maps. This may be a simple procedure, but may, depending on the situation, involve: a boundary survey, a topographical survey, site analysis, road and lot layout, road grade design, and the calculations for the necessary erosion control features. The *Professional Land Surveyor* can also prepare, for review, the subdivision plat for recording, the road plan & profile maps, and the erosion control plans. The *Professional Land Surveyor* can explain the requirements of the local Subdivision Ordinance and assist you in getting the necessary approvals for your development. Before land is improved by constructing driveways, fences, walls or buildings, it is desirable to know the location of the property corners and boundary lines. Using the services of a *Professional Land Surveyor*, for staking and grading the locations of the improvements, avoids encroachments upon adjoining property and possible litigation at a later date. It also insures the improvements will be constructed according to the design plans. Before land is partitioned by will or by Court Order, a survey of the land is needed. In the case of a will, the boundary of the property as well as the improvements, such as buildings, roads and drives, on the property need to be located. When the land is divided, the heirs can easily decide on the location of the new dividing lines. Also, before the Court can establish a disputed boundary line it needs an accurate survey of the land. The *Professional Land Surveyor* can provide the necessary maps. When a question arises as to the location of a boundary line between you and your neighbor, the first thing you need to do is get an accurate boundary survey. When the survey is completed, the *Professional Land Surveyor* can explain the location of the boundary line. In some cases, the surveyor can help solve the problem between you and your neighbor; at other times, the surveyor will appear in court as an expert witness on your behalf.

Selecting a Professional Land Surveyor

When it is determined that a land survey is needed, only a *Professional Land Surveyor*, licensed by the North Carolina State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, is legally permitted to survey the land in North Carolina. Every *Professional Land Surveyor* **MUST** follow the requirements listed in the "Standards of Practice for Land Surveying in North Carolina." The State Board publishes these standards and the *Professional Land Surveyor* you hire can provide a copy upon request. The Standards of Practice lists everything the land surveyor **MUST** do during a survey and what **MUST** appear on the final survey map. It is best to select a *Professional Land Surveyor* by qualifications. A well-qualified land surveyor will take the time to ask you about your needs for the survey. The surveyor will then explain what is required to complete your survey, and will answer all of your questions in a helpful manner so that you understand the process. The *Professional Land Surveyor* constantly updates field equipment and office computers in order to provide you with the best service. If you needed heart surgery, would you select the cheapest or the best surgeon? The same principle applies when selecting a *Professional Land Surveyor*. Remember, many times, the "**cheapest**" survey has cost the most in additional surveying and legal fees. Since any transaction involving land represents a large and important investment, the North Carolina Society of Surveyors, Inc., has prepared this article so you may understand the necessity for land surveying services, how they can benefit you, and the various types of surveys you may need.

What the Professional Land Surveyor Needs From You

The *Professional Land Surveyor* needs: Your name, current address & phone number, the name of the current owner of the land, the Parcel Identification Number (PIN) of the property, and the Deed Book and Page Number of the current deed. Any other information you have, such as deeds, wills, or maps, may be of help. It is not necessary for you to search for or get copies of the neighbors' deeds. The *Professional Land Surveyor* is an expert at this research and is required to do so by the Standards of Practice. The information you submit to the *Professional Land Surveyor* can be mailed. This is preferred because it gives written authorization to proceed. A retainer may be required for certain surveys before the land surveyor will begin your survey.

Why Survey Costs Vary

The *Professional Land Surveyor's* fee will include the time to search for deeds or court records, locate the physical boundary evidence at the property, make the necessary computations to check the boundary, place appropriate markers on the property, and prepare the survey map. The cost of the survey will vary because of missing corner evidence, disputed boundary lines, rough terrain, heavy underbrush, poor land descriptions in the deeds, and travel time to and from the property. Because of these varying conditions, it is difficult for the *Professional Land Surveyor* to predict an exact cost. The same conditions and the number of jobs pending will affect when your survey can be completed. This time can vary from days to months.

Additional Information

A survey is a highly technical and complex service utilizing the art of measuring, mathematics, and the proper interpretation of real property law. A Title Insurance policy is generally issued when property is purchased. This covers: the title of the property, protecting the owner; or the loan, protecting the lender. It can also cover the survey if specified. Discuss the provisions of title insurance with your lawyer. The *Professional Land Surveyor* can survey your land **ONLY** according to the deeds and other available information. The location of the boundary lines marked by the surveyor is **ONLY** a professional opinion based on the evidence found in the records and on the ground. However, the accuracy by which the *Professional Land Surveyor* accomplishes this service is backed by his professional integrity. In today's business world, lawyers, engineers, and architects rely heavily on the *Professional Land Surveyor's* integrity and accuracy. In the case of litigation, the *Professional Land Surveyor* will appear in court as an expert witness. The surveyor's testimony is accepted by the court as professional evidence. You will probably require the services of a land surveyor only a few times during your life, unless your business involves land use in some way. *The need usually arises when you buy a house, a lot, or a larger tract of land. If you are a Lawyer, Engineer, Architect, Realtor, Developer, or work for a utility company or any state or local government agency, then you will probably need the services of a Professional Land Surveyor many times.*