

Chapter 29. Minimum Standards of Practice for Property Boundary Surveys

§2901. General Scope and Purpose

~~A. The following minimum standards of practice for land surveying in the state of Louisiana have been adopted to help ensure that surveys are performed in accordance with acceptable procedures.~~

The purpose of these rules are to protect the safety, health and welfare of the public by establishing minimum technical standards of practice for every property boundary survey performed in the State of Louisiana so that professional performance can be evaluated for but not limited to research, field work, monuments, descriptions and plats. If higher standards are required by clients, or local, state and federal jurisdictions then those standards shall govern. When a land survey involves certain corners or lines that are covered under the appropriate edition of the "Manual of Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands of the United States" then the "Manual" rules or instructions for these particular surveys shall apply. Every Licensed Land Surveyor performing a property boundary survey in the State of Louisiana is required to follow these standards.

~~B. These standards are set forth to solely provide a means by which professional performance can be assessed by the board and to enable the surveying profession as a whole to better protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public. It should be recognized that surveying practices now in place may vary from one region of the state to another, and these practices should be evaluated when at variance with these standards.~~

A property boundary survey shall only be performed by a professional land surveyor or persons under his or her responsible charge, as defined by RS 37:682, of a Person qualified to practice land surveying and licensed in accordance with the provisions of the licensure law.

C. It is intended that these be recognized as minimum standards of practice and that they not be relied upon by the professional land surveyor as a substitute for the exercise of proper individual skill, professional discretion, and good professional judgment in fulfilling the legal and/or contractual requirements of any property boundary survey.

When in the professional land surveyor's opinion, special conditions exist that effectively prevent the survey from meeting these standards of practice, the special conditions and any necessary deviation from the standards shall be noted upon the drawing. It shall be a violation of this rule to use special conditions to circumvent the intent and purpose of these standards of practice.

~~D. When in the professional land surveyor's opinion, special conditions exist that effectively prevent the survey from meeting these minimum standards, the special conditions and any necessary deviation from the standards shall be noted upon the drawing. It shall be a violation of this rule to use special conditions to circumvent the intent and purpose of these minimum standards.~~

E. ~~A property boundary survey shall only be performed by persons qualified to practice land surveying and licensed in accordance with the provisions of the licensure law.~~

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 37:688.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Transportation and Development, Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, LR 16:1064 (December 1990), amended LR 22:713 (August 1996), amended by the Department of Transportation and Development, Professional Engineering and Surveying Board, LR 27:1042 (July 2001), LR 30:1725 (August 2004).

§2903. Definitions

A. Any terms not specifically defined herein shall be as defined in the most current publication of *Definitions of Surveying and Associated Terms* as published by the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping. For the purpose of this Chapter, all the definitions listed that differ from any other source are to be interpreted as written herein.

Artificial monuments—relatively permanent objects used to identify the location of a corner. Artificial monuments must retain a stable and distinctive location and must be of sufficient size and composition to resist the deteriorating forces of nature.

Client—the person with whom the contract for work is made. This may, or may not be the owner.

Corner—a point on a land boundary, at which two or more boundary lines meet. Not the same as monument, which refers to the physical evidence of the corner's location on the ground.

Deed—an instrument in writing which, when executed and delivered, conveys an estate in real property or interest therein.

Description, Legal—a written description usually contained in an act of conveyance, judgment of possession, or recognized by law which definitely locates property by metes and bounds or by reference to government surveys, coordinate systems or recorded maps; a description which is sufficient to locate the property without oral testimony.

Description, Metes and Bounds—a description of a parcel of land by reference to course and distances around the tract, or by reference to natural or record monuments.

Encroachment—any structure or obstruction which intrudes upon, invades or trespasses upon the property of another.

May—when used means that a choice on the part of the land surveyor is allowed.

Mineral Unit Survey (or Unit Plat)— a plan showing subsurface mineral boundaries prepared for the specific purpose of allocating mineral rights. A mineral unit survey should not be viewed as a property boundary survey subject to the requirements of the ~~Minimum~~ Standards of practice for Property Boundary Surveys. This does not absolve the

professional land surveyor from his/her obligation to use due diligence in the practice of and from complying with all applicable rules and laws pertaining to the practice of land surveying.

Monument—a physical structure which marks the location of a corner or other survey point. In public-land surveys, the term *corner* is employed to denote a point determined by the surveying process, whereas the *monument* is the physical structure erected to mark the corner point upon the earth's surface. Monument and corner are not synonymous, though the two terms are often used in the same sense.

Natural monuments- objects which are the works of nature; such as streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, bays, trees, rock outcrops, and other definitive topographic features.

Positional Accuracy—the difference between the actual position of a monument and the position as reported on the plat.

Positional Tolerance—the distance that any monument may be mislocated in relation to any other monument cited in the survey.

Prescription—title obtained in law by long possession. Occupancy for the period prescribed by the Louisiana Civil Code, as sufficient to bar an action for the recovery of the property, gives title by prescription.

Right of Way—any strip or area of land, including surface, overhead, or underground granted by deed or easement for construction and maintenance according to the designated use.

Servitude—a nonpossessing interest held by one person in land of another whereby the first person is accorded partial use of such land for a specific purpose. A servitude restricts but does not abridge the rights of the fee owner to the use and enjoyment of his land. The term easement is often used interchangeably with servitude and means the same thing.

Shall—the subject is imperative or mandatory and must be done by the land surveyor.

Should—when used means that a choice on the part of the land surveyor is allowed.

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§2905. Classification of Surveys

A. Presented below are categories which define the degree of accuracy which should be attained for surveys performed in Louisiana. These classifications are based upon the purposes for which the property is being used at the

time the survey is performed and any proposed developments which are disclosed by the client. Refer to this Chapter for accuracy standards for each of the following classes of surveys.

1. Class A Surveys. Surveys which require maximum surveying accuracy. This includes, but is not limited to, surveys of urban business district properties and highly developed commercial properties.

2. Class B Surveys. Surveys of properties which justify a high degree of surveying accuracy. This includes, but is not limited to, surveys of commercial properties and higher priced residential properties located outside urban business districts and highly developed commercial areas.

3. Class C Surveys. Surveys of residential and suburban areas. This includes, but is not limited to, surveys of residential areas which cannot be classified as Class A or Class B surveys.

4. Class D Surveys. Surveys of all remaining properties which cannot be classified as Class A, B or C surveys. This includes, but is not limited to, surveys of farm lands and rural areas.

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§2907. Property Boundary Survey

A. Definition

~~*Mineral Unit Survey (or Unit Plat)*—a plan showing subsurface mineral boundaries prepared for the specific purpose of allocating mineral rights. A mineral unit survey should not be viewed as a property boundary survey subject to the requirements of the Minimum Standards for Property Boundary Surveys. This does not absolve the professional land surveyor from his/her obligation to use due diligence in the practice of and from complying with all applicable rules and laws pertaining to the practice of land surveying.~~

~~*Property Boundary Survey*—a survey which, after careful study, investigation, and evaluation of major factors influencing the location of boundaries, results in the deliberate location or relocation on the ground of one or more boundaries. When all the boundaries of a parcel of land are surveyed, an area determination may be included if requested by the client.~~

~~Surveying activities which fall under the above definition can be found in the Louisiana Administrative Code – Title 46, Part LXI, Chapter 1.105 Definitions – Practice of Land Surveying. Any map or plat that is not a property boundary survey shall have a note stating such on the face of the map or plat.~~

B. Purpose. The primary purpose of the property boundary survey is to locate or relocate the physical position and extent of the boundaries of real property, and the discovery of visible evidence of prescriptive rights relating thereto. A

property boundary survey may also include the location or relocation of the physical position and extent of political boundaries which define the perimeters of public or private ownership. In addition, the property boundary survey is a means of marking boundaries for sufficient definition and identification to uniquely locate each lot, parcel, or tract in relation to other well recognized and established points of reference, adjoining properties and rights-of-way.

C. Product. A property boundary survey will result in the **recovery**, establishment **or reestablishment** of monumented corners; point of curvature and tangency; and reference points **when required** (see Subsection E, "Monuments"). In event that no plat of survey is required, the professional land surveyor must maintain adequate records to substantiate his professional opinion in reestablishing boundary lines and corners on a survey. If requested by the client, a boundary survey may also include the following:

1. a signed and sealed metes and bounds written description depicting the surveyed boundary (see Subsection H, "Descriptions");
2. a certified map or plat depicting the survey as made on the ground; and
3. a signed and sealed written report of the surveyor's findings and determinations.

D. Research and Investigation. A land surveyor shall be provided the **most recent** legal description or plats describing the property to be surveyed. The land surveyor shall then evaluate the necessity to obtain the following data based on the specific purpose of the survey:

1. ~~the most recent~~ **Additional** recorded legal descriptions and plats of the tract to be surveyed and tracts adjoining or in proximity to the property to be surveyed;
2. the recorded legal descriptions of adjoining, severing, or otherwise encumbering servitudes or rights-of-way, including but not limited to, highways, roadways, pipelines, utility corridors, and waterways used for drainage, navigation or flood control. Where the purpose of a survey neither requires nor includes research and investigation of servitudes, a note to that effect shall be placed upon the plat of survey; and
3. grants, patents, subdivision plats or other recorded data that will reference or influence the position of boundary lines.

E. ~~Monuments. Monuments set or called for, whether artificial or natural, represent the footsteps of the land surveyor and his/her professional opinion as to the proper location of the points or corners of a property boundary survey.~~

The land surveyor shall set monuments at all boundary or lot corners, including PC's and PT's unless monuments already exist or cannot be set due to physical obstructions.

~~The following guidelines for monumentation of property boundary surveys shall be observed.~~

~~1. Natural monuments are objects which are the works of nature; such as streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, bays, trees, rock outcrops, and other definitive topographic features.~~ **Moved to general definitions.**

~~2. Artificial monuments are relatively permanent objects used to identify the location of a corner. Artificial monuments must retain a stable and distinctive location and must be of sufficient size and composition to resist the deteriorating forces of nature.~~ **Moved to general definitions.**

3. The following guidelines apply to artificial monuments to be set.

a. ~~Monuments of a ferrous material must have at least 1/2 inch outside diameter, and must be at least 18 inches in length (longer in soft or unstable soil).~~

All monuments set shall be composed of a durable material and shall incorporate a ferrous material to aid in locating it by magnetic locators and must be a minimum of 1/2" outside diameter, and a minimum of 18" in length unless the corner falls in asphalt or concrete. If rebar rods are used as survey monuments the minimum size shall be a #4 bar.

b. Concrete monuments must be at least 3 inches in width or diameter by 24 inches in length, reinforced with an iron rod at least 1/4 inch in diameter, and may contain a precise mark on top indicating the exact location of the corner.

c. Marks on existing concrete, stone, or steel surface must consist of drill holes, chisel marks or punch marks and must be of sufficient size, diameter or depth to be definitive, stable and readily identifiable as a survey monument. Marks on asphalt roads may consist of railroad spikes, large nails, "PK nails", or other permanent ferrous spikes or nail-like objects.

d. It is unacceptable to set wooden stakes as permanent boundary monuments.

e. Monuments must be set vertically whenever possible and the top may be reasonably flush with the ground when practical. Monuments subject to damage from earthwork, construction or traffic should be buried at a sufficient depth to offer protection.

f. When physically impossible to set a monument at the corner, witness monuments shall be set ~~when possible~~, preferably on each converging line at measured distances from the corner and identified as such in the description and on the plat of the property.

F. Field Procedures. All field work shall be performed in accordance with accepted modern surveying theory, practice and procedures. Any person in charge of a **survey** field party shall be well-trained in the technical aspects of **boundary** surveying. Every professional land surveyor under whose responsible charge a survey is conducted is also required to adhere to the following.

~~1. All field measurements of angles and distance shall satisfy the closures and tolerances expressed in this Chapter.~~ All field measurement procedures shall be consistent with modern surveying theory, procedures and techniques.

2. In performing resurveys of tracts having boundaries defined by lines established in public lands surveys, the land surveyor shall, as nearly as possible, reestablish the original lines of any prior survey made under United States or state authority. In all townships or portions of townships where no survey has been made, the land surveyor, in surveying or platting the township or portion thereof, shall make it conform as nearly as practicable to the lots and section indicated upon the plats according to which the lands were granted by the state or by the United States (R.S. 50:125).

3. Where applicable, surveys necessitating the division of a section, shall be performed in accordance with the appropriate instructions for the subdivisions of sections as published by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, in its book entitled *Manual of Instruction for Survey of the Public Lands of the United States*, and all applicable federal laws.

4. Special consideration shall be afforded by the rules of evidence and "hierarchy of calls" before any decision is made regarding property boundaries. "... The legal guides for determining a question of boundary or the location of a land line in order of their importance and value are: 1–natural monuments, 2–artificial monuments, 3–distances, 4–courses, 5–quantity. But the controlling consideration is the intention of the parties." [See citation in *Myer vs. Comegys*, 147 La. 851, 86 So. 307, 309 (1920).]

5. A careful search shall be made for corner monuments affecting the location of the boundaries of land to be surveyed. Any evidence discovered shall be evaluated for its agreement in description and location with the call in the relevant deeds and/or plats.

6. All boundary discrepancies, visible evidence of possible encroachments, and visible indications of rights which may be acquired through prescription or adverse possession must be physically located. All evidence of servitudes that is visible without meticulous searching is to be physically located during the survey. Furthermore, nonvisible servitudes need to be located only upon the client's specific request and client delivering any necessary documentation..

7. All field data gathered shall satisfy the requirements of the following Subsection on plats, maps, and drawings.

G. Plats, Maps, and Drawings. Every original plat or map of a boundary survey should be a reproducible drawing at a suitable scale which clearly shows the results of the field work, computations, research and record information as compiled and checked. The plat map or drawing shall be prepared in conformity with the following guidelines.

1. Any reasonably stable and durable drawing paper, linen or film of reproducible quality will be considered suitable material for boundary survey plats and maps.

2. ~~No plats or maps shall have dimensions less than~~
The minimum dimensions for plats and maps shall be 8 inches by 10 1/2 inches.

3. All dimensions, bearings or angles, including sufficient data to define the curve shall be neatly and legibly shown with respect to each property or boundary line. To define curves these four elements are a minimum requirement: Chord Bearing, Chord Distance, Arc and radius. When possible, all bearings shall read in a clockwise direction around the property. All lines and curves shall show sufficient data on the map to calculate a map closure.

4. Monuments shall be labeled as "found" or "set" with a ~~brief definitive~~ sufficient description of the monument , which shall include but not be limited to the size and type of material, and relevant reference markers, if any, along with their position in relation to the corner. This description shall include the physical characteristics of the monument and its relevance to the survey.

5. When the purpose of the survey dictates, all pertinent natural or man-made features located during the course of the field survey (water courses, streets, visible utilities, etc.) shall be labeled or represented by an appropriate symbol on the plat in its proper location. When appropriate, the feature should be dimensioned and referenced to the nearest property line.

~~6. All maps or plats must show a north arrow and it is recommended that the drawings be oriented so that north is toward the top of the sheet.~~ This was moved to 15-H

7. A statement indicating the origin of angles or bearings shall be shown on each plat, map, or drawing. If bearings are used, the basis of the bearing shall include one or more of the following:

- a. reference to true north as computed by astronomic observation within one mile of the surveyed site;
- b. reference to the Louisiana State Plane Coordinate System with the ~~proper~~ appropriate zone and when applicable a controlling station(s) noted;
- c. reference to the record bearing of a well-established line found monumented on the ground as called for in a relevant deed, or survey plat;
- d. when none of the above alternatives are practical, a magnetic bearing (corrected for declination) may be used.

8. If a coordinate system other than the Louisiana State **Plane** Coordinate System is used on a map, that system must be identified. If that system is the Louisiana State **Plane** Coordinate System, the appropriate zone must be shown on the map.

9. Where the new survey results differ from the prior deed information in regard to course, distance, location or quantity, the plat shall indicate such differences or discrepancies.

10. Where separate intricate details, blowups or inserts are required for clarity, they shall be properly referenced to the portion of the map where they apply. This applies particularly to areas where lines of occupation do not conform to deed lines and to areas where a comparison of adjoining deeds indicates the existence of a gap or an overlap.

11. Cemeteries and burial grounds known by the surveyor to be located within the premises being surveyed shall be indicated on the plat. However, a detailed survey of the limits of the cemetery shall not be required unless directed by the client.

12. When the purpose of the survey dictates, properties, water courses and rights-of-way surrounding, adjoining, or severing the surveyed site shall be identified. Private lands or servitudes should be labeled with the name of the owner or with a reference to the deed under which ownership is held, provided that such information is furnished by the client.

13. Original section, grant, subdivision or survey lines, when an integral part of the deed, shall be shown in proper location with pertinent labeling. A measurement of course and distance must be shown to a parent tract corner, block corner, section corner, subdivision or grant corner, and existing monuments shall be indicated.

14. Differing line weights or delineating letters or numbers (A, B, C, etc. or 1, 2, 3, etc.) shall be used to clearly show the limits of what is being surveyed.

15. Each plat, map or drawing shall show the following:

a. caption or title;

b. client and/or purpose;

c. general location of the property ~~(or vicinity map)~~. **A vicinity map will not be required if there are sufficient features and landmarks (ie. officially named streets and street intersections, lots and blocks within a subdivision, adjoining subdivisions, Township-Range-Section lines, etc.) on the plat, map, or drawing that would reasonably enable a person to identify the location of the survey site.**

d. the date of the survey;

e. the name, ~~location~~ **telephone number, mailing address** and license number of the professional land surveyor; **and**

f. signature and ~~impression~~ seal of the professional land surveyor under whose direction the survey was done.

g. scale, written or graphic;

h. a north arrow and it is recommended that the drawings be oriented so that north is toward the top of the sheet.

i. legend for symbols and abbreviations used in the plat;

16. Final plats or maps issued to the client must contain a ~~certificate signed and sealed~~ **certification statement** by the professional land surveyor certifying its authenticity (that it represents his/her survey) and stating that the survey is in accordance with the applicable standards of practice as stipulated in this publication based on the current survey "classification" (see §2905 on Classification of Surveys).

H. Descriptions. A written ~~legal~~ description of the surveyed tract of land must provide information to properly locate the property on the ground and distinctly set it apart from all other lands. The following guidelines apply.

1. When the surveyed property's dimensions, boundaries and area are in agreement with the existing recorded deed or platted calls, the existing recorded description may be used if it approximates the standards contained herein.

2. When the property is an aliquot part of a rectangular section or a lot in a platted subdivision, the aliquot method or the lot, block and subdivision method (including recordation data) of describing the property can be used. Metes and bounds descriptions of this type of property are optional.

3. Every aliquot description must contain the following basic information: aliquot part of section, township, range, parish, land district and meridian (if applicable), parish and state.

4. Every subdivision lot description must also contain the following basic information: lot, block, unit (if applicable), name of subdivision, city (if applicable), parish and state.

5. Every metes and bounds description may be written in at least two parts. The first part, called the "General Description," should indicate the general location of the property by naming the particular lot or block, within which it is located if in a subdivision or by naming the grant or aliquot part of a rectangular section within which it is located, along with the township, range, land district and meridian (if applicable), city (if applicable), parish and state. The second part called the "Particular Description," shall logically compile and incorporate calls for the following:

a. courses and distances of the new survey, preferably in a clockwise direction;

b. adjoining apparent rights-of-way or servitudes;

c. monuments (when controlling), including descriptions of type, size, material, reference monuments (if applicable), and whether found, set or replaced;

d. parenthetical deed calls where the deed calls differ from the new survey; and

e. the area, if stated, shall be in square feet or acres or hectares within the tolerances specified in this Chapter.

6. The "Point of Beginning" should be the property corner that is most accessible and most easily identifiable by interested parties. This point shall be carefully chosen and described in a manner which will distinguish it indisputably from any other point. The "Commencing Point" shall be any identifiable point used to locate the "Point of Beginning."

7. The courses in the written description shall be as brief and yet as explanatory as the land surveyor can construct. Brevity should not cause important locative information to be omitted, and explanatory phrases should not enlarge the description to the extent of confusion.

8. Curved boundaries shall be identified ~~as tangent or non-tangent curves~~, and sufficient data to define the curve shall be presented. **To define curves these four elements are a minimum requirement: Chord Bearing, Chord Distance, Arc and radius.**

9. Each metes and bounds description must return to the Point of Beginning and close mathematically within the tolerances stated in this Chapter.

10. A statement at the end of the description should connect the description to the specific survey on which it is based and to the map or plat which depicts the survey. Such a statement may be phrased:

"This description is based on the boundary survey and plat made by _____(name)_____ Professional Land Surveyor, dated _____." or

"This description is based on plat recorded _____ (give recordation data)."

11. The metes and bounds description shall then be signed and sealed by the land surveyor.

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§2909. Accuracy Specification and Positional Tolerances

If radial survey methods, GPS or other acceptable technologies or procedures are used to locate or establish points on the survey, the surveyor shall apply appropriate procedures in order to assure that the allowable Relative Positional Accuracy of such points is not exceeded.

Condition	A	B	C	D	
	Urban Business District	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Remarks And Formula
Unadjusted Closure (maximum allowable)	1:15,000	1:10,000	1:7,500	1:5,000	Traverse Loop or between Control Monuments <i>(closed traverse)</i>
Angular Closure (maximum allowable)	$10''\sqrt{N}$	$15''\sqrt{N}$	$25''\sqrt{N}$	$30''\sqrt{N}$	N = Number of Angles in Traverse <i>(closed traverse)</i>
Accuracy of Bearing	± 15 Sec.	± 20 Sec.	± 30 Sec.	± 40 Sec.	In Relation to Source <i>(closed traverse, radial or GPS)</i>
Linear Distances Accurate to: (maximum allowable)	0.05 ft ± ± 0.05 ft per 1,000 ft	0.05 ft ± ± 0.1 ft per 1,000 ft	0.07 ft + ± 0.15 ft per 1,000 ft	0.1 ft + ± 0.2 ft per 1,000 ft	Applies when the Distance is not part of a Closed Traverse <i>(radial or GPS)</i>
Positional Tolerance and Positional Accuracy of any Monument (maximum)	0.1' + AC/15,000	0.1' + AC/10,000	0.1' + AC/7,500	0.2' + AC/5,000	AC = Length of Any Course* <i>(closed traverse, radial or GPS)</i>
Calculation of area - Accurate and carried to nearest ____ (decimal place) of an acre <i>(closed traverse, radial or GPS)</i>	0.001 0.001 0.01 0.1	0.001 0.001 0.01 0.1	0.001 0.01 0.1 0.2	0.001 0.01 0.1 0.3	To 1 acre To 10 acres To 100 acres To 1,000 acres

Condition	A	B	C	D	
	Urban Business District	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Remarks And Formula
Elevations for Boundaries Controlled by Tides, Contours, Rivers, etc. Accurate to:	0.2 ft.	0.3 ft.	0.4 ft.	0.5 ft.	Based on Accepted Local Datum (closed traverse, radial or GPS)
Location of Improvements, Structures, Paving, etc. (Tie Measurements) Adjusted Mathematical Closure to Survey (Minimum)	± 0.1 ft. 1:50,000	± 0.2 ft. 1:50,000	± 0.5 ft. 1:50,000	± 1 ft. 1:50,000	(closed traverse, radial or GPS)

*Short courses in categories "A" and "B" may generate positional errors of less than 0.01 feet. A minimum course distance of 200 feet should be used in calculating positional error.

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