

It's Your Land

Before you buy, sell, build, improve, or divide ...
find out the many reasons why and how you should secure the services of
a Professional Land Surveyor in the State of South Dakota.



Provided by:

The South Dakota Society of Professional Land Surveyors
A statewide organization representing
Professional Land Surveyors
licensed to practice in the state of South Dakota.

*Additional consumer information can be found online by
following the link to our consumer's guide to surveying services.*



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www.sdspls.org

WHY do I need a Professional Land Surveyor?

For most of us, the land on which our homes and businesses are located is often our largest single investment and most valuable asset. For many, it is important to be as informed as possible about this significant investment. In South Dakota a Registered Land Surveyor is the only one qualified and licensed to perform property surveys (SDCL 43-18-1).

WHEN do I need a survey?

In South Dakota, a survey is required for the platting or subdivision of land – whether changing a common or shared lot line, exchanging land area with an adjoining neighbor, or subdividing to create a new lot or multiple lots.

A survey can also inform you of the correct location of your property boundaries and the location of your improvements. If you are adding onto your home, building a new garage, fencing, or landscaping it is important to know the location of your property boundaries.

The buying or selling of a home or parcel of land may also come with the requirement for various types of surveys (boundary or otherwise) and it is important to understand the different types of services that are associated with a typical real estate transaction. Most surveys associated with the sale of a residence do not require a full or standard boundary survey. Review your purchase or sales agreement and be sure to ask your surveyor if you have questions about the different types of services offered.

WHAT are the different types of surveys?

Platting or *Subdivision* is the division of property and the creation of new lots. There are certain state requirements that govern this process but often there are many other local ordinances and requirements that must be met in order to complete this process. Choose a surveyor that is familiar with the subdivision and zoning regulations in your area.

A *Boundary Survey* is the verification and/or establishment of property

boundaries and can include a full parcel of land/ lot or it can be verification of just one or more lot lines. Existing corners or monuments will be found and verified and missing corners will be set or replaced. The encroachment of buildings, drives, fences and/or landscaping can be noted. A drawing or Record of Survey may be provided for your personal information or to record at the Register of Deeds.

When ordering a boundary survey it is important to remember that your lot or parcel is like a puzzle piece and it needs to fit appropriately with the adjoining and surrounding properties. The survey of just a portion of a property is generally not proportionally less than a full survey since the surveyor must complete thorough research and retracement to ensure that any one corner or property line is in correct relation to the adjoining lands.

A *Topographic Survey* will generally show some or all of the physical features of a parcel, lot, or multiple lots. It may include elevation or contour information, buildings, decks, walks, adjoining roads, fences, rivers, observed and marked utility services, landscaping, etc. These surveys are often associated with new construction or development and can be used for design purposes for homes, businesses, streets and utilities. The details of these surveys are specific to the needs of the individual or circumstance. You should review your list of needs carefully with your surveyor.

A *Site Plan* or *As-Built Survey* is a drawing or record of existing or proposed improvements and may often include aspects of the boundary survey and topographic survey.

An *ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey* is a detailed and high level accuracy survey that is typically provided in association with a commercial real estate transaction. There are published specifications and options that can be included with these detailed surveys.

A *Mortgage Location Survey* or *Improvement Location Exhibit* is normally provided in a residential real estate transaction for either the lender or title insurer. This service will typically include a sketch or drawing showing the approximate location of the improvements on the subject property. It does not generally require the surveyor to provide full or complete boundary

information. Review your purchase or sales agreement closely and ask your surveyor if you have questions about what services are included.

Consult your surveyor for other types of surveys and services.

HOW much will a survey cost?

There are many variables associated with the cost of a survey, including the type of survey needed, the location, the amount of time required for research, calculations and completion of the field survey itself and any associated drawings. The size of the property, the terrain and vegetation, the quality of the original survey, availability and reliability of existing information and the surveyor's personal knowledge of the area can all be factors in the price of the survey. Even the weather can be a factor – frozen ground and snow cover in the winter and dense vegetation in the summer can all affect the time and cost for completion.

Be prepared to provide your surveyor with basic information such as your street address, legal description and/or parcel or tax identification number so that they can complete initial research and provide you with an estimate of cost and time frame for completion. A contract or service agreement may be required to engage their services.

A surveyor provides a highly technical and complex service. They are licensed by the State of South Dakota and are required to meet education, experience and examination requirements. The most qualified professional land surveyor is rarely the least expensive. Remember, your land is one of your most important assets. Expertise, quality and reliability are the best protections for your investment.

The South Dakota Society of Professional Land Surveyors (SDSPLS) promotes ethics and professionalism in surveying. It provides its members with continuing education programs that help surveyors stay in touch with the latest developments in surveying technology and the laws relating to land boundaries and development.

This general survey information may be helpful to you as a landowner. Please contact a Professional Land Surveyor for information on your specific project.

This information is not intended to serve as legal advice. Please contact a qualified attorney for questions pertaining to legal matters.