

## How to Locate Property Lines.

The first step in finding your property lines is to determine the dimensions of your lot. You can get this information from your deed or from a plat map obtainable at City Hall. If you have a certificate of survey with the as-built location of the house you can measure from the house to find the property lines. Use caution when using a certificate of survey because some show a *proposed* location of the house prior to being built rather than the actual location.

The next step is to locate the survey pins. Often these are located at the corners of your lot and at the beginning of curves. However, not all lots are marked with survey pins. Ask your neighbors if they have recently located survey pins for their properties. This could save you the trouble of having to find them yourself. If no one knows where they are, you may wish to use a shovel to probe the ground where they are assumed to be located. They can be a foot or more below grade. If that proves fruitless, you may need to use a metal detector or magnetic locator to help find them.

Once you find a survey pin *do not disturb* its location. It is a misdemeanor violation of Minnesota law to intentionally remove, destroy or deface a survey monument or marker.

### What is a survey pin?

When land is surveyed, metal pins, also known as "irons" or "monuments", mark the corners of the lot. These markers are typically a hollow, metal pipe, approximately 1/2 inch in diameter and 1/5 feet long. Newer pins may have plastic caps on top or have the tip painted a bright color.

### Where are they located?

When survey pins are originally set, they are placed level to the ground at the corners of the original lot boundaries. After many years, the pins may become buried due to landscaping and grade changes. Most are buried a few inches deep; some may be as deep as a foot. Renting a metal detector can be helpful in locating the pins.

### What if I cannot find my survey pin?

It may have been removed or relocated by previous owners. The pin may also be buried beneath retaining walls, paved driveways, hedges, etc.

### Does finding my survey pin guarantee the location of my property line?

Possibly. Only a licensed land surveyor can determine your actual property line. Sometimes, survey pins have been moved or removed. It is also possible that the original lot has been subdivided and new survey pins have been inserted in addition to the older, original pins.

### When would I need a survey?

You need a survey for new home construction, building additions, garages and other major projects. The Building Inspections Office or the Planning Department,

depending on the type of project, would make that decision. Home improvement contractors typically expect the homeowner to assume the responsibility for locating the lot lines. You may also need a survey to provide legal evidence if you are involved in a lot line dispute. A survey is the only document that can accurately show your property boundaries.

#### **How do I get my lot surveyed?**

A typical residential lot survey costs approximately \$700 to \$900. It can be more if your land is irregular in shape or has other unusual features. Surveying is a competitive business and you should obtain estimates from several sources. Surveyors are licensed by the State of Minnesota. Look in the Yellow Pages under "Surveyors' Land." While it may seem expensive to hire a surveyor, it may be cheaper than relocating improvements or legal costs caused by encroaching on someone else's property. That is a decision for you to make. For more information surveys, visit the [Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors](#) website.