

What is Land Surveying?

Land surveying is multifaceted, but the core of the profession is establishing or reestablishing corners, lines, boundaries, and setting monuments for real property (land) and infrastructure (fixed works) based upon recorded documents, historical evidence, and present standards of practice. A survey can be performed both for horizontal or vertical alignment of land and fixed works.

An Important Message from The Board

“Land is one of California’s most precious assets, the ownership of land, and consequently the ability to define boundaries is dependent of monuments and their perpetuation.”

December 2, 1985, letter from the Board of Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists (BPELSG) to all County Surveyors and City Engineers

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Save Our Survey Monuments

Destruction of survey monuments within the public rights-of-way, mainly as the result of public works projects and private developments permitted by public agencies, is increasing, due to a lack of oversight and education concerning the importance of these monuments.



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What Are Survey Monuments, Bench Marks & Geodetic Control?

Survey monuments, bench marks and geodetic control are essential physical markers used in land surveying and mapping throughout our cities, counties, and nation. Survey monuments, typically made of durable materials like concrete or metal, are placed at strategic locations, such as property corners and intersections, to establish precise property boundaries. Bench marks, are markers used for determining elevations. Geodetic control stations are reference points used to align data to a regional, national, or global coordinate system. All these markers are crucial for accurate and reliable land surveying data.



Figure 1: Located Centerline Monument.

Why Are They Important?

Almost all land boundaries and infrastructure projects are tied to survey monuments. For example, cities and counties want to maintain their rights-of-way and jurisdictional limits. Private property lines are established based upon the location of survey monuments. Survey monuments are expensive to establish and even more expensive to re-establish when they are destroyed. The cost to reset survey monuments not located and referenced prior to construction could be as much as four times for those properly perpetuated prior to construction.

What Can You Do to Preserve Survey Monuments?

County surveyors, city engineers, city planners, permit engineers, technical staff, plan checkers, and other professionals involved in urban development, all have a pivotal role to play in preserving survey monuments and bench marks. Here are actionable steps YOU can take:

- ✓ Show all existing land survey monuments on improvement plans, grading plans, site plans, etc.
- ✓ Educate engineers, surveyors, plan checkers, inspectors, GIS professionals, and the public about the importance of monuments and the requirements to preserve them.
- ✓ Prior to filing notice of completion for any project, have a licensed Land Surveyor validate that the monuments are in place.
- ✓ Request acknowledgement via a written statement in the permit process, that a licensed Land Surveyor has performed a field inspection and that no monuments are subject to destruction within the scope of the project, or that existing monuments have been referenced and perpetuated per Business and Professions Code §8771.

For each survey monument verify that there is a survey plat, map, or other exhibit filed by the County Surveyor so the pedigree can be determined.

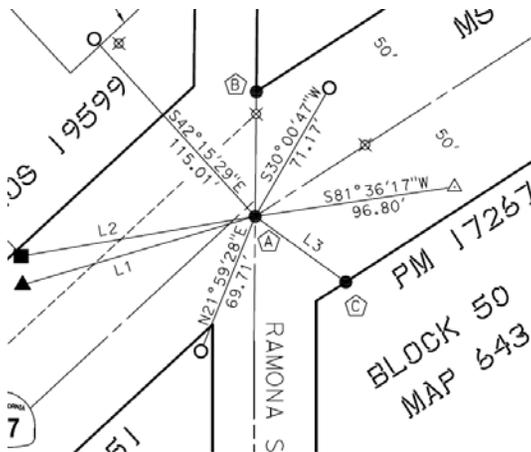


Figure 2: Corner Record filed for monument shown in figure 1.

Who Is Responsible?

The designated person in responsible charge of professional civil engineering work of any department or agency, per the Professional Engineers Act [Business and Professions Code §6730.2(c)]

Business and Professions Code §8771

(b) When monuments exist that control the location of subdivisions, tracts, boundaries, roads, streets, or highways, or provide horizontal or vertical survey control, the monuments shall be located and referenced by or under the direction of a licensed land surveyor or licensed civil engineer legally authorized to practice land surveying, prior to the time when any streets, highways, other rights-of-way, or easements are improved, constructed, reconstructed, maintained, resurfaced, or relocated, and a corner record or record of survey of the references shall be filed with the county surveyor.

How Many Survey Monuments Are Really Needed?

All of them! These monuments are set to allow for the retracement (or mark the location) of features and legal rights on the earth's surface.

Contact Us

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