

# Property Surveys



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**W**hether it is an office building, retail center or an industrial plant, the purchase of real property is a major investment. That's why it is important that a thorough boundary survey be done of the property prior to closing.

If you are purchasing property, you want to make sure you understand exactly what you are getting for your money. If you are selling property and the buyer has asked you to provide a survey, you should learn about the different types of boundary surveys before you agree to do so. Here we discuss the different types of property surveys so you can make informed decisions in your transaction.

## CATEGORY 1A SURVEY

In 1977, the Texas Society of Professional Surveyors (TSPS) published the first minimum standards for land surveys. While the TSPS standards have grown to ten different categories the most widely used remains the "Category 1A" Survey. A Category 1A Survey is specifically designed to meet the needs of purchasers, lenders and title companies in Texas transactions. Local lenders or buyers frequently request that the survey be prepared to these standards. More information on this survey is available at the the TSPS website: [www.tsp.org](http://www.tsp.org).

The three most common types of property surveys in Texas are:

- "ALTA" Surveys
- Category 1A Surveys
- Title Surveys

## ALTA SURVEY

In order to create a common nationwide standard for land surveys, the American Land Title Association (ALTA) and the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) jointly established minimum standards for property surveys. This is commonly called an, "ALTA Survey."

While sometimes referred to as the "cadillac of surveys" the cost of an ALTA Survey can still vary greatly. The biggest factor in determining the cost is which Items on Table A are required. Before a surveyor can give you a cost of an ALTA Survey it has to be determined which Table A Items are to be included.

## LAND TITLE SURVEYS

The surveying of real property in Texas is governed by the rules and regulations of The Texas Board of Professional Land Surveying (TBPLS). All property surveys done in Texas must meet the minimum requirements of the rules of the TBPLS. Rules governing the practice of land surveying can be found at the TBPLS website: [www.txls.state.tx.us](http://www.txls.state.tx.us).

If the property survey is being done as part of a real estate transaction where title insurance is issued then the survey must be sufficient to allow the title company to delete the "survey exception" from the title policy. Pretty much any survey done according to any of the standards described on here will meet that requirement.