

Important Facts Homebuyers Should Know About Professional Land Surveys

What is a land survey?

A land survey is a report in the form of a map showing the location of a parcel of real property. The map will also show the location of visible improvements on and adjacent to the property.

Why are land surveys so important?

Prior to the closing on your new home purchase, a land survey provides important information to you as the buyer. The survey map will show the limits of the land you are purchasing and identify any conflicts in your deed. It will also allow you to see if improvements such as driveways, fences, walls or even dwellings encroach over the property lines. Any existing property corner markers found by the surveyor will also be shown on the map.

How is a land survey performed?

The land surveyor's responsibility is to locate on the ground the boundaries of the land described in the deed. The surveyor also examines and maps various visible and apparent man-made and natural features as required for the purpose of the survey. Recorded deeds and maps are investigated along with information and documentation supplied to the surveyor by the owner or title company. Additionally, extensive data gathering is performed at and around the site.

Why have I been asked if I want property markers set?

In the course of performing a survey in New Jersey, State law requires that a land surveyor place permanent markers at all property corners where none currently exist. You may sign a written waiver instructing the surveyor to omit this work.

Why should I not waive the marking of property corners?

Boundary lines shown on a survey map of the property may be difficult to locate accurately on the ground without markers denoting the corners of the property. Placing markers helps to avoid future disputes and enables you to identify the physical location of your property.

Who can do a land survey?

In New Jersey a land survey may only be performed and signed by a licensed Professional Land Surveyor.

How does a land survey help identify title to property?

Land surveys identify the record title lines of your property. The survey map shows the limits of the land that you are purchasing. A land survey certified to you provides critical information which, when used with title insurance, allows the buyer to make informed decisions and negotiate with the seller to correct any defects prior to the purchase. A land survey prepared for you and certified to you and to your title company affords important protection against claims which may arise after the closing.

Buying a home is usually the single largest purchase you will ever make! It makes sound financial sense as well as good common sense to protect this important asset. A land survey prepared by a licensed Professional Land Surveyor is a cornerstone of protection and preservation of home ownership.

What is an Elevation Certificate?

The elevation certificate is an important administrative tool for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and an important risk management tool for property owners with buildings currently classified within FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). It provides information on elevation, building type, flood map location, and additional information used to determine the proper flood insurance premium rates.

An elevation certificate measures the difference in elevation between your home and the base flood elevation of your area. It is required in order to properly rate post-FIRM buildings, which are buildings constructed after the publication of the first Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) in a particular community. However, an elevation certificate is not required to buy flood coverage for pre-FIRM buildings unless the property owner or insurance agent wants to rate the buildings under the post-FIRM flood insurance rules to determine if the premium rate would be lower.

Most elevation certificates are prepared by surveyors licensed by the state in which the subject property is located.

Do elevation certificates reduce flood insurance premiums?

Very often, flood insurance premiums are reduced through the use of elevation certificates. In the absence of the data and information provided on elevation certificates, flood insurance companies assume the worse case scenario and charge the highest rates.