

Please send your input and/or feedback to Tim Burch at timothy.burch@cgl-ltd.com. Thank you for your help.

As your NSPS Governor, I also participate in the ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey Standards committee. We are currently scheduled for a meeting during the ACSM Conference at the end of April, so any comments you may have about the below revisions can be forwarded to me. All of the comments are to be reviewed during our meeting chaired by Gary Kent and presented to ALTA for endorsement. Now is the time to make your voice heard and revise the current standards to fall in line with today's surveying standards as performed professional land surveyors. Please forward your comments to me by Tuesday, April 20 for inclusion to the list of proposed changes/enhancements. Your time, input and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully yours,

Tim

*Timothy W. Burch, P.L.S.
NSPS Governor - Illinois*

**2011 MINIMUM STANDARD DETAIL REQUIREMENTS FOR
ALTA/ACSM LAND TITLE SURVEYS
as adopted by
the American Land Title Association
~ and ~
the National Society of Professional Surveyors
(a member organization of the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping)**

1. **Purpose** - Members of the American Land Title Association (ALTA) have specific needs, peculiar to title insurance matters, when asked to insure title to land without exception as to the many matters which might be discoverable from survey and inspection, and which are not evidenced by the public records.

For a survey of real property and the plat, map or record of such survey to be acceptable to a title insurance company for the purpose of insuring title to said real property free and clear of survey matters (except those matters disclosed by the survey and indicated on the plat or map), certain specific and pertinent information must be presented for the distinct and clear understanding between the client (insured), the title insurance company (insurer), the lender and the Surveyor professionally responsible for the survey.

In order to meet such needs, title insurance companies, lenders and clients are entitled to rely on surveyors to conduct surveys and prepare associated plats or maps that are of a professional quality and appropriately uniform, complete and accurate. To that end, and in the interests of the general public, the surveying profession, title insurers and abstractors, the ALTA and the National Society of Professional Surveyors, Inc. (NSPS) jointly promulgate the within details and criteria setting forth a minimum standard of performance for ALTA/ACSM Land Title Surveys. **A complete ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey includes the on-site fieldwork required under Section 5 herein, the preparation of a plat or map showing the results of the fieldwork and its relationship to record documents as required under Section 6 herein, any information in Table A herein that may have been negotiated with the client, and the certification outlined in Section 7 herein.**

2. **Request for Survey** - The client shall request the survey or arrange for the survey to be requested, and shall provide a written authorization to proceed from the person or entity responsible for paying for the survey. Unless specifically authorized in writing by the insurer, the insurer shall not be responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of the survey. The request shall specify that an "ALTA/ACSM LAND TITLE SURVEY" is required and shall designate which of the optional items listed in Table A are to be incorporated. Certain properties, including but not limited to marinas, campgrounds, trailer parks and lease areas, may present issues ~~somewhat~~ outside those normally encountered on an ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey. ~~the norm, including personal property which gives the appearance of real property, such as mobile homes, boats and certain other features.~~ The scope of work related to such properties should be discussed and agreed upon with the client, lender and title company.

3. **Surveying Standards and Standards of Care**

- A. *The 2011 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM Land Title Surveys are effective January 1, 2011. As of that date, all previous versions of the Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM Land Title Surveys are superseded.*
- B. Many states and some local jurisdictions have adopted statutes, administrative rules and/or ordinances that set out standards regulating the practice of surveying within their jurisdictions. In addition to the standards set forth herein, surveyors shall also conduct their surveys in accordance with all applicable jurisdictional requirements. Surveyors may also be subject to unwritten local, state and/or regional standards of care defined by the practice of the 'prudent surveyor' in those locales at any given point in time. Where conflicts between the standards set forth herein and any such jurisdictional requirements or normal standards of care occur, the more stringent requirement shall apply.
- C. **Boundary Resolution** - The boundary lines and corners of any property being surveyed as part of an ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey shall be established and/or retraced in accordance with (a) the applicable standard of care and (b) the appropriate boundary law principles as governed by the set of facts and evidence found in the course of performing the research and survey.
- D. **Measurement Standards** - The following measurement standards address Relative Positional Accuracies for the corners of the surveyed ~~property real-estate~~:
 - i. "Relative Positional Accuracy" means the length of the semi-major axis, expressed in feet or meters, of the error ellipse representing the uncertainty due to random errors in measurements in the location of the monument or witness marking any corner of the surveyed ~~property real-estate~~ relative to the monument or witness marking any other corner of the surveyed ~~property real-estate~~ at the 95 percent confidence level (two standard deviations). Relative Positional Accuracy is estimated by the results of a minimally constrained, correctly weighted least squares adjustment of the survey.
 - ii. Any boundary lines and corners established or retraced may have uncertainties in location resulting from (1) the availability, condition, history and integrity of reference or controlling monuments, (2) ambiguities in the record descriptions or plats of the surveyed ~~tract property~~ or its adjoining, (3) occupation or possession lines as they may differ from the written title lines, and (4) Relative Positional Accuracy.
 - iii. The first three of these sources of uncertainty must be weighed as part of the evidence in the determination of where, in the Surveyor's opinion, the boundary lines and corners of the surveyed ~~tract property~~ should be located. Relative Positional Accuracy is related to how precisely the Surveyor is able to

monument and report those positions. Of these four sources of uncertainty, only Relative Positional Accuracy is controllable, although due to the inherent errors in any measurement, it cannot be eliminated. The first three uncertainties can be estimated based on evidence; Relative Positional Accuracy can be estimated using statistical means.

- iv. For any measurement technology or procedure used ~~to locate or establish points~~ on an ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey, the Surveyor shall (1) use trained personnel, (2) compensate for systematic errors, including those associated with instrument calibration, and (3) use appropriate error propagation and measurement design theory (selecting the proper instruments, geometric layouts, and field and computational procedures) to control random errors such that the maximum allowable Relative Positional Accuracy is not exceeded.
 - v. The maximum allowable Relative Positional Accuracy for an ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey is 2 cm (0.07 feet) plus 50 parts per million (based on the distance between the two corners being tested). It is recognized that in certain circumstances, the size or configuration of the ~~real-estate surveyed property being surveyed~~, or the relief, vegetation or improvements on the surveyed property will result in survey measurements for which the maximum allowable Relative Positional Accuracy ~~may will~~ be exceeded. If the maximum allowable Relative Positional Accuracy is exceeded ~~in such circumstances~~, the Surveyor shall note the reason as explained in Paragraph 6.B.ix below.
4. **Records Research** - The request for survey shall set forth the current record description of the property to be surveyed or, in the case of an original survey, the current record description of the parent parcel that contains the property to be surveyed. Complete copies of a current title commitment, the current record description of the property (or, in the case of an original survey, the parent parcel), the current record descriptions of adjoining, any record easements benefiting the property, the record easements or servitudes and covenants burdening the property (all hereinafter referred to collectively as "Record Documents"), documents of record referred to in the Record Documents, and any other documents containing desired appropriate information affecting the property being surveyed, and to which the ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey shall make reference, shall be provided to the Surveyor for use in conducting the survey.
5. **Field Work** - The Survey shall be performed on the ground, except as otherwise allowed and negotiated under Table A, Item 15 if selected by the client, and the field work shall include the following:
- A. **Monuments**
 - i. The location and description of any monuments or lines that control the boundaries of the surveyed property.
 - ii. The location of any monuments found or set on the boundary of the surveyed property and, when requested, any monuments found or set on the boundary of any offsite easements benefitting the surveyed property and identified in Record Documents provided to the Surveyor.
 - B. **Rights of Way and Access**
 - i. The perpendicular distances from corners of the surveyed property to the nearest right-of-way lines of streets in urban or suburban areas.
 - ii. The name of any street, highway or other public or private way abutting the surveyed property, and the width and location of pavement relative to the nearest boundary line of the surveyed property.
 - iii. Visible evidence of physical access (such as curb cuts and driveways) to any abutting streets, highways or other public ways.
 - iv. The location and character of vehicular, pedestrian or other forms of access to or across the surveyed property, including, but not limited to driveways, alleys, private roads and footpaths observed in the process of conducting the survey.
 - v. Without expressing a legal opinion, the location and extent of encroaching ways of access driveways or alleys from adjoining properties onto the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the survey.
 - vi. Evidence of the use of any such ways of access by other than the occupants of the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the survey.
 - vii. Where documentation of the width of any abutting street, road or highway right of way was not provided to the Surveyor or available from the controlling jurisdiction (see Section 6.C.iv. below), the evidence and location of parcel corners which might evidence the location of the right of way line.
 - viii. Visible evidence of access to and from waters adjoining the surveyed property, such as boat slips, launches, piers and docks
 - C. **Lines of Possession and Improvements along the Boundaries**
 - i. The character and character of evidence of possession or occupation on the perimeter of the surveyed property.
 - ii. The character and location of all walls, buildings, fences, and other visible improvements within five feet of each side of the boundary lines.
 - iii. Without expressing a legal opinion, the visible evidence, location and extent of encroaching structural appurtenances and projections, such as fire escapes, bay windows, windows and doors that open out, flue pipes, stoops, eaves, cornices, areaways, steps, trim, etc., by or onto adjoining property, or onto rights of way, easements or setback lines shown by Record Documents provided to the Surveyor.
 - D. **Buildings**
 - i. The location of all buildings on the surveyed property expressed perpendicularly to the nearest 0.1 feet from the nearest perimeter boundary lines.
 - ii. Addresses as observed on buildings, signs or mailboxes.
 - E. **Easements and Servitudes**
 - i. ~~Visible~~ Evidence of any easements or servitudes included in the Record Documents provided to the

- ii. Surveyor observed in the process of conducting the survey.
 - iii. Evidence of easements or servitudes on or affecting the property observed in the process of conducting the survey, such as those created by roads; rights-of-way; water courses; drains; telephone, ~~telegraph fiber~~ optic, or electric lines; water, sewer, oil or gas pipelines on or across the surveyed property and on adjoining properties if they appear to affect the surveyed property.
 - iv. Surface indications of underground easements ~~and~~ or servitudes observed in the process of conducting the survey.
 - v. ~~Observed~~ Evidence of use of the surveyed property by other than the occupants observed in the process of conducting the survey.
- F. Cemeteries**
As accurately as the evidence permits, the location of cemeteries, gravesites and burial grounds (i) disclosed in the Record Documents provided to the Surveyor by client, or (ii) observed in the process of conducting performing the field work for the survey.
- G. Water Features**
- i. The location of springs observed during the process of conducting the survey, together with ponds, lakes, streams and rivers bordering on or running through the surveyed property.
 - ii. The location of any natural water boundary on the surveyed property. The attribute(s) of the water feature located (e.g. top of bank, edge of water, high water mark, etc.) should be congruent with the boundary as described in the record description or, in the case of an original survey, in the new description. (See Section 6.B.vi. below)
- 6. Plat or Map -** ~~The~~ A plat or map of an ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey shall be prepared at a minimum size of 8 ½ by 11 inches and shall show the following information items. Where dimensioning is appropriate, dimensions shall be in accordance with the normal standard of care.
- A. The evidence and locations gathered during the field work as outlined in Section 5 above**
 - B. Boundary, Descriptions, Dimensions and Closures**
 - i. The record description of the surveyed property and any new description of the surveyed property that was prepared in conjunction with the survey, including a statement explaining why the new description was prepared. Preparation of a new description should be avoided unless necessary.
 - ii. The location and description of any monuments, lines or other evidence that control the boundaries of the surveyed ~~tract~~ property or that were otherwise relied upon in establishing or retracing the boundaries of the surveyed ~~tract~~ property, and the relationship of that evidence to the surveyed boundary. In some cases, this will require notes on the plat or map.
 - iii. All distances and directions identified in the record description of the surveyed property (and in the new description, if one was prepared). Where ~~the corresponding a~~ measured or calculated dimension distances and directions differs from the record by an amount are deemed significant enough by the Surveyor, to be reported as differing from the record, those such dimension measured distances and directions shall be shown in addition to, and differentiated from, the corresponding record dimension.
 - iv. The directional, distance and curve data necessary to compute a mathematical closure of the surveyed boundary. A note if the record description does not close. Basis of bearings and, when it differs from the record basis, the difference.
 - v. The balance of any recorded lot or existing parcel, when the surveyed property is comprised of only a portion of such lot or parcel same, shall be depicted. Such balance does not need to be included as part of the actual survey except to the extent necessary to locate the lines and corners of the surveyed property.
 - vi. When the surveyed property includes a natural water boundary or is otherwise affected by a navigable or tidal body of water, a note on the face of the plat or map noting the date the boundary was measured, which attribute(s) of the water feature was/were located, and the caveat that the boundary is subject to change due to natural causes and that it may or may not represent the actual location of the limit of title. When the Surveyor is aware of natural or artificial realignments or changes in such boundaries, the extent of those changes and facts shall be shown or explained.
 - vii. The relationship of the boundaries of the surveyed ~~tract~~ property (i.e. contiguity, gores, or overlaps) with its adjoiners, where ascertainable from Record Documents and/or from field evidence gathered during the process of conducting the survey of the property being surveyed or Record Documents. If the surveyed property is composed of multiple parcels, the extent of any gaps or overlaps between those parcels shall be identified.
 - viii. When, in the opinion of the Surveyor, the results of the survey differ significantly from the record, or if a fundamental decision related to the boundary resolution is not clearly reflected on the plat or map, the Surveyor shall explain this information with notes on the face of the plat or map or in accompanying attachments.
 - ix. A note on the face of the plat or map explaining the site conditions that resulted in a Relative Positional Accuracy that exceeds the maximum does not meet that allowed under Section 3.D.v. of these standards.
 - x. A note on the survey identifying the commitment/policy number, effective date and name of the title company for any title work provided to the Surveyor.
 - C. Easements, Servitudes, Rights of Way, Access and Record Documents**
 - i. All plottable rights of way, easements and servitudes evidenced by Record Documents which have been provided to the Surveyor, both those burdening and those benefitting the property surveyed, including recording information. When requested, all distances and directions identified in the record description of any offsite easements benefitting the surveyed property and identified in Record Documents provided to the Surveyor.

- ii. A note regarding any such right of way, easement or servitude (a) the location of which cannot be identified from the record document, or (b) of which there was no observed evidence at the time of the survey, or (c) that is a blanket easement, or (d) that is not on, or does not touch, the surveyed property, or (e) that limits access to an otherwise abutting right of way, or (f) in cases where the surveyed property is comprised of multiple parcels, which of such parcels the various easements cross.
- iii. A note if no physical access to a public way was observed in the process of conducting the survey-field work.
- iv. The width of abutting rights of way and the source of such information where available from the controlling jurisdiction.
- v. The identifying titles of all recorded plats, filed maps, right of way maps, or similar documents which the survey represents, wholly or in part, with their recording or filing data.
- vi. For non-platted adjoining land, names and recording data identifying adjoining owners as they appear of record. For platted adjoining land, the recording data of the subdivision plat.
- vii. Platted setback or building restriction lines which have been recorded in subdivision plats or which appear in Record Documents which have been delivered to the Surveyor.

D. Presentation

- i. The survey drawn at a convenient, legible, standard scale, with that scale clearly indicated in words or numbers and with a graphic scale. The survey boundary shall be drawn in a manner that clearly distinguishes it from other lines on the survey. A north arrow (with north to the top of the drawing when practicable). A legend of symbols and abbreviations.
- ii. Supplementary or detail diagrams when necessary.
- iii. If there are no visible buildings on the surveyed property, a note stating “*No Buildings Existing on Surveyed Property*” shall appear on the face on the survey.
- iv. The Surveyor’s project number (if any), and the name, registration or license number, signature, seal, address and email or telephone number of the Surveyor. The date(s) of any revisions made by the Surveyor.
- v. Sheet number where the survey is comprised of more than one sheet.
- vi. The caption “ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey.”

7. Certification – The plat or map of an ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey shall bear only the following certification, unaltered except as may be required under Section 3.B. above. The surveyor may negotiate or agree to an alternate certification. Such certificate may be provided separately and cross-referenced to the survey; however, may not appear on the face of the plat or map.

To (name of client), (name of lender, if known), (name of title insurance company, if known), (name of others as instructed by client):

This is to certify that this map or plat and the survey on which it is based were made in accordance with the "2011 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM Land Title Surveys," jointly established and adopted by ALTA and NSPS, and includes Items _____ of Table A thereof. The field work was completed on _____.

Date of Plat or Map: _____ (Signature and Printed Name) (Seal with Registration Number)

8. Deliverables - The Surveyor shall furnish prints of the plat or map of survey to the title insurance company and client, and or as otherwise directed by the client. Prints shall be on durable and dimensionally stable material of a quality standard acceptable to the title insurance company. Digital copies of the survey may be provided in accordance with the terms of the contract.

TABLE A

OPTIONAL SURVEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

NOTE: The items of Table A must be negotiated between the Surveyor and client. It may be necessary for the Surveyor to qualify or expand upon the description of these items, e.g., in reference to Item 6b, there may be a need for an interpretation of a restriction. The Surveyor cannot make a certification on the basis of an interpretation or opinion of another party. ~~Items 16, 17 and 18 are offered herein for use on projects for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).~~

If checked, the following optional items are to be included in the ALTA/ACSM LAND TITLE SURVEY, except as otherwise negotiated:

- 1. _____ *Monuments placed (or a reference monument or witness to the corner) at all major corners of the boundary of the property, unless already marked or referenced by an existing monument or witness to the corner.*
- 2. _____ *Vicinity map showing the property surveyed in reference to nearby highway(s) or major street intersection(s).*
- 3. _____ *Flood zone classification designation (with proper annotation based on federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps or the state or local equivalent) depicted by scaled map location and graphic plotting only.)*

4. _____ Gross land area (and other areas if specified by the client).
5. _____ Contours and the datum of the elevations.
6. _____ (a) Identify current zoning classification
_____ (b) Identify current zoning classification and list building setback lines, and height and floor space area restrictions disclosed by that classification. If none, so state. The source of such information shall be disclosed. See "Note" above.
7. _____ (a) Exterior dimensions of all buildings at ground level
_____ (b) Square footage of:
_____ (1) exterior footprint of all buildings at ground level
_____ (2) other areas to be defined by the client
_____ (c) Measured height of all buildings above grade at a defined location. If no defined location is provided, the point of measurement shall be shown
8. _____ Substantial, visible improvements (in addition to buildings) such as parking lots, billboards, signs, swimming pools, etc.
9. _____ Striping, number and type (e.g. handicapped, motorcycle, regular, etc.) of parking spaces in parking areas, lots and structures
10. _____ (a) Determination of the relationship and location of certain division or party walls designated by the client (client to obtain necessary permissions)
_____ (b) Determination of whether certain walls designated by the client are plumb (client to obtain necessary permissions)
11. _____ Location of utilities (representative examples of which are listed below) existing on or serving the surveyed property as determined by:
_____ (a) Observed evidence
_____ (b) Observed evidence together with evidence from plans obtained from utility companies or provided by client, and markings by utility companies and other appropriate sources (with reference as to the source of information)
 - railroad tracks, spurs and sidings;
 - manholes, catch basins, valve vaults or other surface indications of subterranean uses;
 - wires and cables (including their function, if readily identifiable) crossing the surveyed property premises, all poles on or within ten feet of the surveyed premises, and the dimensions of all crossmembers or overhangs affecting the surveyed property premises; and
 - utility company installations on the surveyed property premises.
12. _____ Governmental Agency survey-related requirements as specified by the client, such as for HUD surveys and surveys for leases on Bureau of Land Management lands.
13. _____ Names of adjoining owners of platted lands.
14. _____ Distance to the nearest intersecting street as specified by the client
15. _____ Rectified orthophotography, photogrammetric mapping, laser scanning and other similar products, tools or technologies may be utilized as the basis for the location of certain features (excluding boundaries) where ground measurements are not otherwise necessary to locate those features to an appropriate and acceptable accuracy relative to a nearby boundary. The Surveyor shall (a) discuss the ramifications of such methodologies (e.g. the potential accuracy and completeness of the data gathered thereby) with the title company, lender and client prior to the performance of the survey and, (b) place a note on the face of the survey explaining the source, date, relative accuracy and other relevant qualifications of any such data.
16. _____ Observable evidence of earth moving work, building construction or building additions within recent months.
17. _____ Any changes in street right of way lines either completed or proposed, and available from the controlling jurisdiction. Observable evidence of recent street or sidewalk construction or repairs.
18. _____ Observable evidence of site use as a solid waste dump, sump or sanitary landfill.
19. _____

Adopted by the American Land Title Association on _____.
Adopted by the Board of Directors, National Society of Professional Surveyors on _____.
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