

# The NEW 2021 ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey Standards

Wisconsin Society  
~ of ~  
Land Surveyors

A virtual program

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**Presented by**  
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## Biography of Gary R. Kent

Gary Kent is a part-time Professional Surveyor with Schneider Geomatics, a land surveying and consulting engineering firm based in Indianapolis. He is in his 37th year with the firm and upon his shift to part-time status, he formed Meridian Land Consulting, LLC in order to provide professional land consulting and expert witness services.

Gary is a graduate of Purdue University with a BS in Land Surveying; he is registered to practice as a professional surveyor in Indiana and Michigan. He has been chair of the Joint ALTA/NSPS Committee on the ALTA/NSPS Standards since 1995 and is the liaison to NSPS for the American Land Title Association. He is also past-president of both the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping and Indiana Society of Professional Land Surveyors.

A member of the adjunct faculty for Purdue University from 1999-2006, Gary taught Boundary Law, Legal Descriptions, Property Surveying and Land Survey Systems and was awarded “*Outstanding Associate Faculty*” and “*Excellence in Teaching*” awards for his efforts. He is on the faculty of GeoLearn ([www.geo-learn.com](http://www.geo-learn.com)), an online provider of continuing education and training for surveyors and other geospatial professionals. He is also an instructor for the International Right of Way Association.

Gary has served on the Indiana State Board of Registration for Professional Surveyors since 2004 and is currently liaison to the Indiana Attorney General’s Professional Licensing Enforcement and Homeowner Protection Unit. He is frequently sought as an expert witness in cases involving boundaries, easements, riparian rights, survey standards and land surveying practice. Gary has presented programs on a variety of topics including boundaries and boundary law, survey standards and practice, easements and rights of way, safety, risk management, and leadership in all 50 states and three times in Europe. He also writes a column for *The American Surveyor* magazine.

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**MINIMUM STANDARD DETAIL REQUIREMENTS FOR  
ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEYS**  
(Effective February 23, 2016~~21~~)

***NOTE** – Attention is directed to the fact that the National Society of Professional Surveyors, Inc. (NSPS) is the legal successor organization to the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) and that these 2016 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys are the next version of the former Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM Land Title Surveys.*

1. **Purpose** - Members of the American Land Title Association® (ALTA®) have specific needs, unique 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 insured, the client (if different from the insured), the title insurance company (insurer), the lender, and the surveyor professionally responsible for the survey.

In order to meet such needs, clients, insurers, insureds, and lenders 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 NSPS jointly promulgate the within details and criteria setting forth a minimum standard of performance for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys. A complete 2016~~21~~ ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey includes:

- (i) the on-site fieldwork required pursuant to Section 5,
- (ii) the preparation of a plat or map pursuant to Section 6 showing the results of the fieldwork and its relationship to documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4,
- (iii) any information from Table A items requested by the client, and
- (iv) the certification outlined in Section 7.

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 **must shall** specify that an "**ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEY**" is required and which of the optional items listed in Table A, if any, are to be incorporated. Certain properties or interests in real properties may present issues outside those normally encountered on an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey (e.g., marinas, campgrounds, **trailer mobile home** parks; easements, leases, **mineral interests**, other non-fee simple interests). The scope of work related to surveys of such properties or interests in real properties should be discussed with the client, lender, and insurer, and agreed upon in writing prior to commencing work on the survey. **When required** ~~The client shall -may need to~~ secure permission for the surveyor to enter upon the property to be surveyed, adjoining properties, or offsite easements.

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

- A. **Effective Date** - The 2016~~21~~ Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys are effective February 23, 2016~~21~~. As of that date, all previous versions of the Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM **or ALTA/NSPS** Land Title Surveys are superseded

by these standards.

- B. **Other Requirements and Standards of Practice** - 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 **must shall** also conduct their surveys in accordance with applicable jurisdictional survey requirements and standards of practice. Where conflicts between the standards set forth herein and any such jurisdictional requirements and standards of practice occur, the more stringent **must shall** apply.
- C. **The Normal Standard of Care** - Surveyors should recognize that there may be unwritten local, state, and/or regional standards of care defined by the practice of the “prudent surveyor” in those locales.
- D. **Boundary Resolution** - The boundary lines and corners of any property **or interest in real property** being surveyed (**hereafter, the “surveyed property” or “property to be surveyed”**) as part of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey **must shall** be established and/or retraced in accordance with appropriate boundary law principles governed by the set of facts and evidence found in the course of performing the research and fieldwork.
- E. **Measurement Standards** - The following measurement standards address Relative Positional Precision for the monuments or witnesses marking the corners of the surveyed property.
- i. “Relative Positional Precision” means the length of the semi-major axis, expressed in **meters or feet or meters**, of the error ellipse representing the uncertainty **in the position of the monument or witness marking any boundary corner of the surveyed property relative to the position of the monument or witness marking an immediately adjacent boundary corner of the surveyed property resulting from due to random errors in the measurements made in determining those positions at the 95 percent confidence level. in the location of the monument, or witness, marking any corner of the surveyed property relative to the monument, or witness, marking any other corner of the surveyed property at the 95 percent confidence level.** Relative Positional Precision **can be** is estimated by the results of a correctly weighted least squares adjustment of the survey. **Alternatively, Relative Positional Precision can be estimated by the standard deviation of the distance between the monument or witness marking any boundary corner of the surveyed property and the monument or witness marking an immediately adjacent boundary corner of the surveyed property (called local accuracy) that can be computed using the full covariance matrix of the coordinate inverse between any given pair of points, understanding that Relative Positional Precision is based on the 95 percent confidence level, or approximately 2 standard deviations.**
  - 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 property or its adjoiners, (3) occupation or possession lines as they may differ from the written title lines, or (4) Relative Positional Precision. Of these four sources of uncertainty, only Relative Positional Precision is controllable, although, due to the inherent errors in any measurement, it cannot be eliminated. The magnitude of the first three uncertainties can be projected based on evidence; Relative Positional Precision is estimated using statistical means (see Section 3.E.i. above and Section 3.E.v. below).
  - 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 property should be located (see Section 3.D. above). Relative Positional Precision is a measure of how precisely the surveyor is able to monument and report those positions; it is not a substitute for the application of proper boundary law principles. A boundary corner or line may have a small Relative Positional Precision because the survey measurements were precise, yet still be in the wrong position (*i.e.*, inaccurate) if it was established or retraced using faulty or improper application of boundary law principles.
  - iv. For any measurement technology or procedure used on an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, the surveyor **must shall** (1) use appropriately 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 Precision outlined in Section 3.E.v. below is not exceeded.
- v. The maximum allowable Relative Positional Precision for an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey is 2 cm (0.07 feet) plus 50 parts per million (based on the direct distance between the two corners being tested). It is recognized that in certain circumstances, the size or configuration of the surveyed property, or the relief, vegetation, or improvements on the surveyed property, will result in survey measurements for which the maximum allowable Relative Positional Precision may be exceeded: in which case ~~If the maximum allowable Relative Positional Precision is exceeded, the surveyor shall note~~ the reason shall be noted as explained in pursuant to Section 6.B.x. below.

- 4. Records Research** - It is recognized that for the performance of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, the surveyor will be provided with appropriate and, when possible, legible data which that can be relied upon in the preparation of the survey. ~~The request for an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey shall set forth the current record description of the property to be surveyed or, in the case of an original survey prepared for purposes of locating and describing real property that has not been previously separately described in documents conveying an interest in the real property, the current record description of the parent parcel that contains the property to be surveyed.~~ In order to complete an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, the surveyor must be provided with complete copies of the most recent title commitment or, if a title commitment is not available, other title evidence satisfactory to the title insurer. In addition, the surveyor must be provided with the following:
- A. ~~The following records established under state statutes for the purpose of imparting constructive notice of matters relating to real property (public records):~~
- (a) ~~The current record descriptions of any adjoining to the property to be surveyed, except where such adjoining are lots in platted, recorded subdivisions;~~
- (b) ~~Any recorded easements benefitting the property;~~
- (c) ~~Any recorded easements, servitudes, or covenants burdening the property;~~
- The current record description of the property to be surveyed or, in the case of an original survey prepared for purposes of locating and describing real property that has not been previously separately described in documents conveying an interest in the real property, the current record description of the parent parcel that contains the property to be surveyed.;
- B. ~~Any unrecorded documents affecting the property being surveyed and containing information to which the survey shall make reference, if desired by the client.~~  
Complete copies of the most recent title commitment or, if a title commitment is not available, other title evidence satisfactory to the title insurer.;
- C.(i) The following documents from records established under state statutes for the purpose of imparting constructive notice of matters relating to real property (public records):
- i. The current record descriptions of any adjoining to the property to be surveyed, except where such adjoining are lots in platted, recorded subdivisions;
- ii. Any recorded easements benefitting the property to be surveyed; and
- iii. Any recorded easements, servitudes, or covenants burdening the property to be surveyed; and
- D.(ii) If desired by the client, any unrecorded documents affecting the property to be surveyed and containing information to which the survey shall make reference.

Except, however, if the documents outlined ~~above~~ in (i) and (ii) of this section are not provided to the surveyor, or if non-public or quasi-public documents are otherwise required to complete the survey, the surveyor must shall be required to conduct only that research that which is required pursuant to the statutory or administrative requirements of the jurisdiction where the surveyed property being surveyed is located and that research (if any) which is negotiated and outlined in the terms of the contract between the surveyor and the client.

- 5. Fieldwork** - The survey must shall be performed on the ground (except as may be otherwise negotiated pursuant to Table A, Item 15 below, ~~if selected by the client~~). Except as related to the precision



of the boundary, which is addressed in Section 3.E. above. The features located during the fieldwork shall be include the following; located to what is, in the surveyor's professional opinion, the appropriate degree of precision based on (a) the planned use of the surveyed property, if reported in writing to the surveyor by the client, lender, or insurer, or (b) the existing use, if the planned use is not so reported.∴ The fieldwork shall include the following:

**A. Monuments**

- i. The location, size, character, and type of any monuments found during the fieldwork.
- ii. The location, size, character, and type of any monuments set during the fieldwork, if item 1 of Table A was selected or if otherwise required by applicable jurisdictional requirements and/or standards of practice.
- iii. The location, description, and character of any lines that control the boundaries of the surveyed property.

**B. Rights of Way and Access**

- i. The distance from the appropriate corner or corners of the surveyed property to the nearest right of way line, if the surveyed property does not abut a right of way.
- ii. The name of any street, highway, or other public or private way abutting the surveyed property, together with the width of the travelled way and the location of each edge of the travelled way including on divided streets and highways. If the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4 indicate no access from the surveyed property to the abutting street or highway, the width and location of the travelled way need not be located.
- iii. Visible evidence of physical access (e.g., curb cuts, driveways) to any abutting streets, highways, or other public or private ways.
- iv. The location and character of vehicular, pedestrian, or other forms of access by other than the apparent occupants of the surveyed property to or across the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., driveways, alleys, private roads, railroads, railroad sidings and spurs, sidewalks, footpaths).
- v. Without expressing a legal opinion as to ownership or nature, the location and extent of any potentially encroaching driveways, alleys, and other ways of access from adjoining properties onto the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- vi. Where documentation of the location of any street, road, or highway right of way abutting, on, or crossing the surveyed property was not disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor, or was not otherwise available from the controlling jurisdiction (see Section 6.C.iv. below), the evidence and location of parcel corners on the same side of the street as the surveyed property recovered in the process of conducting the fieldwork which may indicate the location of such right of way lines (e.g., lines of occupation, survey monuments).
- vii. Evidence of access to and from waters adjoining the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., paths, boat slips, launches, piers, docks).

**C. Lines of Possession and Improvements along the Boundaries**

- i. The character and location of evidence of possession or occupation along the perimeter of the surveyed property, both by the occupants of the surveyed property and by adjoining, observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- ii. Unless physical access is restricted, the character and location of all walls, buildings, fences, and other improvements within five feet of each side of the boundary lines, observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (see Section 5.E.iv. regarding utility poles). Trees, bushes, shrubs, and other natural vegetation need not be located other than as specified in the contract, unless they are deemed by the surveyor to be evidence of possession or occupation pursuant to Section 5.C.i.
- iii. Without expressing a legal opinion as to the ownership or nature of the potential encroachment, the evidence, location, and extent of potentially encroaching structural appurtenances and projections observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., fire escapes, bay windows, windows and doors that open out, flue pipes, stoops, eaves, cornices, areaways, steps, trim) by or onto adjoining property, or onto rights of way, easements, or setback lines disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor.



**D. Buildings**

The location of buildings on the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.

**E. Easements and Servitudes**

- i. Evidence of any easements or servitudes burdening the surveyed property as disclosed in the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4 and observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- ii. Evidence of easements, servitudes, or other uses by other than the apparent occupants of the surveyed property not disclosed in the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4, but observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork if they ~~appear to affect~~ are on or across the surveyed property (e.g., roads, drives, sidewalks, paths and other ways of access, utility service lines, utility locate markings (including the source of the markings, with a note if unknown), water courses, ditches, drains, telephone lines, fiber optic lines, ~~or~~ electric lines, ~~or~~ water lines, sewer lines, oil pipelines, ~~or~~ gas pipelines ~~on or across the surveyed property and on adjoining properties~~).
- iii. Surface indications of underground easements or servitudes on or across the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., utility cuts, vent pipes, filler pipes, utility locate markings (including the source of the markings, with a note if unknown)).
- iv. Evidence on or above the surface of the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork, which evidence may indicate utilities located on, over or beneath the surveyed property. Examples of such evidence include pipeline markers, utility locate markings (including the source of the markings, with a note if unknown), manholes, valves, meters, transformers, pedestals, clean-outs, utility poles, overhead lines, and guy wires, and utility poles on or within ten feet of the surveyed property. Without expressing a legal opinion as to the ownership or nature of the potential encroachment, the extent of all encroaching utility pole crossmembers or overhangs.

**F. Cemeteries**

As accurately as the evidence permits, the perimeter of cemeteries and burial grounds, and the location of isolated gravesites not within a cemetery or burial ground, (i) disclosed in the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor, or (ii) observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.

**G. Water Features**

- i. The location of springs, ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, canals, ditches, marshes, and swamps on, running through, or outside, but within five feet of the perimeter boundary of, the surveyed property, and observed during the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- ii. The location of any water feature forming a boundary of the surveyed property. The attribute(s) of the water feature located (e.g., top of bank, edge of water, high water mark) 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** - A plat or map of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey shall show the following information. Where dimensioning is appropriate, dimensions shall be annotated to what is, in the surveyor's professional opinion, the appropriate degree of precision based on (a) the planned use of the surveyed property, if reported in writing to the surveyor by the client, lender, or insurer, or (b) existing use, if the planned use is not so reported.

**A. Field Locations.** The evidence and locations gathered, and the monuments and lines located during the fieldwork pursuant to Section 5 above, with accompanying notes if deemed necessary by the surveyor or as otherwise required as specified below.

**B. Boundary, Descriptions, Dimensions, and Closures**

- i. (a) The current record description of the surveyed property, or  
(b) In the case of an original survey, the current record document number description of the parent tract that contains the surveyed property.
- ii. 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. Except in the case of an original survey, preparation of a new description should be avoided unless deemed necessary or appropriate by the surveyor and insurer. Preparation of a new description should also generally be avoided when the record description is a lot or block in a platted, recorded subdivision. Except in the case of an original survey, if a new description is prepared, a note **must shall** be provided stating (a) that the new description describes the same real estate as the record description or, ~~if it does not~~; (b) ~~if it does not~~, how the new description differs from the record description.
- iii. The point of beginning, the remote point of beginning or point of commencement (if applicable) and all distances and directions identified in the record description of the surveyed property (and in the new description, if one was prepared). Where a measured or calculated dimension differs from the record by an amount deemed significant by the surveyor, such dimension **must shall** be shown in addition to, and differentiated from, the corresponding record dimension. All dimensions shown on the survey and contained in any new description shall be **horizontal** ground dimensions unless otherwise noted.
  - 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 mathematically close. The basis of bearings and, where it differs from the record basis, the difference.
  - v. The remainder of any recorded lot or existing parcel, when the surveyed property is composed of only a portion of such lot or parcel, shall be graphically depicted. Such remainder need not be included as part of the actual survey, except to the extent necessary to locate the lines and corners of the surveyed property, and it need not be fully dimensioned or drawn at the same scale as the surveyed property.
  - vi. When the surveyed property includes a title line defined by a water boundary, 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 property with its adjoiners (e.g., contiguity, gaps, overlaps); where ascertainable from documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4 and/or from field evidence gathered during the process of conducting the fieldwork. If the surveyed property is composed of multiple parcels, the extent of any gaps or overlaps between those parcels **must shall** be identified. Where gaps or overlaps are identified, the surveyor **must shall**, prior to or upon delivery of the final plat or map, disclose this to the insurer and client.
  - 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 **must shall** explain this information with notes on the face of the plat or map.
  - ix. The location of **all** buildings on the surveyed property, ~~located pursuant to Section 5.D.,~~ dimensioned perpendicular to those perimeter boundary lines that the surveyor deems appropriate (i.e., where potentially impacted by a setback line) and/or as requested by the client, lender or insurer.
  - x. A note on the face of the plat or map explaining the site conditions that resulted in a Relative Positional Precision that exceeds the maximum allowed pursuant to Section 3.E.v.
  - xi. A note on the face of the plat or map identifying areas, if any, on the boundaries of the surveyed property, to which physical access within five feet was restricted (see Section 5.C.ii.).
  - xii. A note on the face of the plat or map identifying the source of the title commitment or other title evidence provided pursuant to Section 4, and the effective date and the name of the insurer of same.
- C. Easements, Servitudes, Rights of Way, Access, and Documents**
- i. The location, width, and recording information of all plottable rights of way, easements, and servitudes burdening and benefitting the **surveyed** property **surveyed**, as evidenced by

- documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4.
- ii. A summary of all rights of way, easements and other survey-related matters servitudes burdening and benefitting the surveyed property surveyed and identified in the title evidence provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4. Such summary must shall include the record information of each such right of way, easement or other survey-related matter servitude, a statement indicating whether or not it lies within or crosses the surveyed property is shown on the plat or map, and a related note if:
- (a) its location is shown;
  - (a)(b) the its location cannot be determined from the record document;
  - (b)(c) there was no observed evidence at the time of the fieldwork;
  - (c)(d) it is a blanket easement;
  - (d)(e) it is not on, or does not touch, and/or- based on the description contained in the record document – does not affect, the surveyed property;
  - (e)(f) it limits access to an otherwise abutting right of way;
  - (f)(g) the documents are illegible; or
  - (g)(h) the surveyor has information indicating that it may have been released or otherwise terminated.
- In cases where the surveyed property is composed of multiple parcels, indicate which of such parcels the various rights of way, easements, and servitudes cross or touch.
- iii. A note if no physical access to an abutting street, highway, or other public or private way was observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- iv. The locations and widths of rights of way abutting or crossing the surveyed property, and the source of such information, (a) where available from the controlling jurisdiction, or (b) where disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4.
- v. The identifying titles of all recorded plats, filed maps, right of way maps, or similar documents which that the survey represents, wholly or in part, with their recording or filing data.
- vi. For non-platted adjoining land, recording data and, where available, tax parcel number, identifying adjoining tracts according to current public records. For platted adjoining land, the recording data of the subdivision plat.
- vii. Platted setback or building restriction lines which appear on recorded subdivision plats or which were disclosed in documents provided or obtained by the surveyor.
- viii. If, in the process of preparing the survey, the surveyor becomes aware of a recorded easement not otherwise listed in the title evidence provided, the surveyor must advise the insurer prior to delivery of the plat or map and, unless the insurer provides evidence of a release of that easement, show or otherwise explain it on the face of the plat or map, with a note that the insurer has been advised.

#### D. Presentation

- i. The plat or map must shall be drawn on a sheet of not less than 8 ½ by 11 inches in size at a legible, standard engineering scale, with that scale clearly indicated in words or numbers and with a graphic scale.
- ii. The plat or map must shall include:
- (a) The boundary of the surveyed property drawn in a manner that distinguishes it from other lines on the plat or map.
  - (b) If no buildings were observed on the surveyed property in the process of conducting the fieldwork, a note stating *"No buildings observed."*
  - (c) A north arrow (with north to the top of the drawing when practicable).
  - (d) A legend of symbols and abbreviations.
  - (e) A vicinity map showing the surveyed property in reference to nearby highway(s) or major street intersection(s).
  - (f) Supplementary or detail diagrams when necessary.
  - (g) Notes explaining any modifications to Table A items and the nature of any additional Table A items (e.g., 21(a), 21(b), 21(e) 20(a), 20(b), 20(c)) that were negotiated between the surveyor and client.
  - (h) The surveyor's project number (if any), and the name, registration or license number, signature, seal, street address, telephone number, company website, and email address



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- (if any) of the surveyor who performed the survey.
- (i) The date(s) of any revisions made by the surveyor who performed the survey.
  - (j) Sheet numbers where the plat or map is composed of more than one sheet.
  - (k) The caption "ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey."
- iii. When recordation or filing of a plat or map is required by state statutes or local ordinances, such plat or map shall be produced in the required form.
7. **Certification** - The plat or map of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey ~~must shall~~ bear only the following certification, unaltered, except as may be required pursuant to Section 3.B. above:

To (name of insured, if known), (name of lender, if known), (name of insurer, if known), (names of others as negotiated with the client):

This is to certify that this map or plat and the survey on which it is based were made in accordance with the 20~~16~~<sup>21</sup> Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys, jointly established and adopted by ALTA and NSPS, and includes Items \_\_\_\_\_ of Table A thereof. The fieldwork was completed on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

*Date of Plat or Map:* \_\_\_\_\_ (Surveyor's signature, printed name and seal with Registration/License Number)

8. **Deliverables** - The surveyor shall furnish copies of the plat or map of survey to the insurer and client and as otherwise negotiated with the client. Hard copies shall be on durable and dimensionally stable material of a quality standard acceptable to the insurer. A digital image of the plat or map may be provided in addition to, or in lieu of, hard copies pursuant to the terms of the contract. ~~When required by law or requested by the client, the plat or map shall be produced in recordable form and recorded or filed in the appropriate office or with the appropriate agency. If the surveyor is required to record or file a plat or map pursuant to state statute or local ordinance it shall be so recorded or filed.~~



**TABLE A**

**OPTIONAL SURVEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS**

NOTE: ~~Whether any of the nineteen (19) twenty (20) items of Table A are to may be selected, and the exact wording of and fee for any selected item, may be~~ negotiated between the surveyor and client. Any additional items negotiated between the surveyor and client ~~must shall~~ be identified as ~~21(a), 21(b), 20(a), 20(b), etc. Any additional items negotiated between the surveyor and client, and any negotiated changes to the wording of a Table A item, must be and~~ explained pursuant to Section 6.D.ii.(g).

Notwithstanding Table A Items 5 and 11, if an engineering design survey is desired as part of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, such services should be negotiated under Table A, Item ~~21~~ 20.

If checked, the following optional items are to be included in the ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEY, except as otherwise qualified (see note above):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Monuments placed (or a reference monument or witness to the corner) at all major corners of the boundary of the surveyed property, unless already marked or referenced by existing monuments or witnesses in close proximity to the corner.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Address(es) of the surveyed property if disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor, or observed while conducting the fieldwork.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Flood zone classification (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. \_\_\_\_\_ Vertical relief with the source of information (e.g., ground survey, aerial map), contour interval, datum, and originating benchmark identified when appropriate.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (a) If the current zoning classification, setback requirements, the height and floor space area restrictions, and parking requirements specific to the surveyed property are set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client or the client's designated representative, list the above items on the plat or map current zoning classification, setback requirements, the height and floor space area restrictions, and parking requirements. and identify the date and source of the report or letter.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (b) If the zoning setback requirements specific to the surveyed property are set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client or the client's designated representative, and if those requirements do not require an interpretation by the surveyor, graphically depict the building setback requirements on the plat or map. Identify the date and source of the report or letter.
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 as specified by the client.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (c) Measured height of all buildings above grade at a location specified by the client. If no location is specified, the point of measurement shall be identified.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Substantial features observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (in addition to the improvements and features required pursuant to Section 5 above) (e.g., parking lots, billboards, signs, swimming pools, landscaped areas, substantial areas of refuse).



9. \_\_\_\_\_ Number and type (e.g., disabled, motorcycle, regular and other marked specialized types) of clearly identifiable parking spaces on surface parking areas, lots and in parking structures. Striping of clearly identifiable parking spaces on surface parking areas and lots.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ (a) As designated by the client, a determination of the relationship and location of certain division or party walls with respect to adjoining properties ~~(client to obtain necessary permissions).~~

\_\_\_\_\_ (b) ~~As designated by the client, a determination of whether certain walls are plumb (client to obtain necessary permissions).~~

11. \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence Location of underground utilities existing on or serving the surveyed property (in addition to the observed evidence of utilities required pursuant to Section 5.E.iv.) as determined by:

- \_\_\_\_\_ ~~observed evidence collected pursuant to Section 5.E.iv.~~
- \_\_\_\_\_ ~~plans requested by the surveyor and obtained from utility companies (with reference as to the sources of information).~~
- \_\_\_\_\_ ~~markings requested by the surveyor pursuant to an 811 utility locate or similar request~~  
\_\_\_\_\_ (a) plans and/or reports provided by client (with reference as to the sources of information)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (b) markings coordinated by the surveyor pursuant to a private utility locate request

~~Representative examples of such utilities include, but are not limited to:~~

- \_\_\_\_\_ ~~Manholes, catch basins, valve vaults and other surface indications of subterranean uses;~~
- \_\_\_\_\_ ~~Wires and cables (including their function, if readily identifiable) crossing the surveyed property, and all poles on or within ten feet of the surveyed property. Without expressing a legal opinion as to the ownership or nature of the potential encroachment, the dimensions of all encroaching utility pole crossmembers or overhangs; and~~
- \_\_\_\_\_ ~~Utility company installations on the surveyed property.~~

Note to the client, insurer, and lender - With regard to Table A, item 11, source information from the sources checked above plans and markings will be combined with observed evidence of utilities pursuant to Section 5.E.iv. to develop a view of the underground utilities. However, lacking excavation, the exact location of underground features cannot be accurately, completely, and reliably depicted. In addition, in some jurisdictions, 811 or other similar utility locate requests from surveyors may be ignored or result in an incomplete response, in which case the surveyor shall note on the plat or map how this affected the surveyor's assessment of the location of the utilities. Where additional or more detailed information is required, the client is advised that excavation ~~and/or a private utility locate request~~ may be necessary.

12. \_\_\_\_\_ As specified by the client, Governmental Agency survey-related requirements (e.g., HUD surveys, surveys for leases on Bureau of Land Management managed lands). The relevant survey requirements are to be provided by the client or client's designated representative.

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Names of adjoining owners according to current tax records. If more than one owner, identify the first owner's name listed in the tax records followed by "et al."

14. \_\_\_\_\_ As specified by the client, distance to the nearest intersecting street.

15. \_\_\_\_\_ Rectified orthophotography, photogrammetric mapping, remote sensing, airborne/mobile laser scanning and other similar products, tools or technologies as the basis for the showing 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 must shall (a) discuss the ramifications of such methodologies (e.g., the potential precision and completeness of the data gathered thereby) with the insurer, 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, precision, and



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*other relevant qualifications of any such data.*

16. \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence of recent earth moving work, building construction, or building additions observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed changes in street right of way lines, if such information is made available to the surveyor by the controlling jurisdiction. Evidence of recent street or sidewalk construction or repairs observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.

~~18. \_\_\_\_\_ If there has been a field delineation of wetlands conducted by a qualified specialist hired by the client, the surveyor shall locate any delineation markers observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork and show them on the face of the plat or map. If no markers were observed, the surveyor shall so state.~~

~~18-19. \_\_\_\_\_ Pursuant to Sections 5 and 6 (and applicable selected Table A items, excluding Table A item 1), include as a part of the survey any plottable offsite (i.e., appurtenant) easements or servitudes disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor as a part of the survey pursuant to Sections 5 and 6, (and applicable selected Table A items) (client to obtain necessary permissions).~~

~~19-20. \_\_\_\_\_ Professional Liability Insurance policy obtained by the surveyor in the minimum amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be in effect throughout the contract term. Certificate of Insurance to be furnished upon request, but this item shall not be addressed on the face of the plat or map.~~

~~20-21. \_\_\_\_\_~~

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Adopted by the Board of Governors, American Land Title Association, on October ~~81~~, 20~~20~~15.

American Land Title Association, 1800 M St., N.W., Suite 300S, Washington, D.C. 20036-5828.  
[www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org)

Adopted by the Board of Directors, National Society of Professional Surveyors, on ~~October~~ September ~~309~~, 20~~20~~15.

National Society of Professional Surveyors, Inc., 5119 Pegasus Court, Suite Q, Frederick, MD 21704.  
<http://www.nspss.us.com/>



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## MINIMUM STANDARD DETAIL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEYS (Effective February 23, 2021)

1. **Purpose** - Members of the American Land Title Association® (ALTA) have specific needs, unique 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 insured, the client (if different from the insured), the title insurance company (insurer), the lender, and the surveyor professionally responsible for the survey.

In order to meet such needs, clients, insurers, insureds, and lenders 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 abstracters, the ALTA and the NSPS jointly promulgate the within details and criteria setting forth a minimum standard of performance for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys. A complete 2021 ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey includes:

- (i) the on-site fieldwork required pursuant to Section 5,
- (ii) the preparation of a plat or map pursuant to Section 6 showing the results of the fieldwork and its relationship to documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4,
- (iii) any information from Table A items requested by the client, and
- (iv) the certification outlined in Section 7.

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 must specify that an "**ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEY**" is required and which of the optional items listed in Table A, if any, are to be incorporated. Certain properties or interests in real properties may present issues outside those normally encountered on an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey (e.g., marinas, campgrounds, mobile home parks, easements, leases, mineral interests, other non-fee simple interests). The scope of work related to surveys of such properties or interests in real properties should be discussed with the client, lender, and insurer, and agreed upon in writing prior to commencing work on the survey. When required, the client shall secure permission for the surveyor to enter upon the property to be surveyed, adjoining properties, or offsite easements.

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

- A. **Effective Date** - The 2021 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys are effective February 23, 2021. As of that date, all previous versions of the Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM or ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys are superseded by these standards.
- B. **Other Requirements and Standards of Practice** - 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 must also conduct their surveys in accordance with applicable jurisdictional survey requirements and standards of practice. Where conflicts between the standards set forth herein and any such jurisdictional requirements and standards of practice occur, the more stringent must apply.

- C. **The Normal Standard of Care** - Surveyors should recognize that there may be unwritten local, state, and/or regional standards of care defined by the practice of the “prudent surveyor” in those locales.
- D. **Boundary** - The boundary lines and corners of any property or interest in real property being surveyed (hereafter, the “surveyed property” or “property to be surveyed”) as part of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey must be established and/or retraced in accordance with appropriate boundary law principles governed by the set of facts and evidence found in the course of performing the research and fieldwork.
- E. **Measurement Standards** - The following measurement standards address Relative Positional Precision for the monuments or witnesses marking the corners of the surveyed property.
- i. “Relative Positional Precision” means the length of the semi-major axis, expressed in meters or feet, of the error ellipse representing the uncertainty in the position of the monument or witness marking any boundary corner of the surveyed property relative to the position of the monument or witness marking an immediately adjacent boundary corner of the surveyed property resulting from random errors in the measurements made in determining those positions at the 95 percent confidence level. Relative Positional Precision can be estimated by the results of a correctly weighted least squares adjustment of the survey. Alternatively, Relative Positional Precision can be estimated by the standard deviation of the distance between the monument or witness marking any boundary corner of the surveyed property and the monument or witness marking an immediately adjacent boundary corner of the surveyed property (called local accuracy) that can be computed using the full covariance matrix of the coordinate inverse between any given pair of points, understanding that Relative Positional Precision is based on the 95 percent confidence level, or approximately 2 standard deviations.
  - 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 property or its adjoiners, (3) occupation or possession lines as they may differ from the written title lines, or (4) Relative Positional Precision. Of these four sources of uncertainty, only Relative Positional Precision is controllable, although, due to the inherent errors in any measurement, it cannot be eliminated. The magnitude of the first three uncertainties can be projected based on evidence; Relative Positional Precision is estimated using statistical means (see Section 3.E.i. above and Section 3.E.v. below).
  - 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 property should be located (see Section 3.D. above). Relative Positional Precision is a measure of how precisely the surveyor is able to monument and report those positions; it is not a substitute for the application of proper boundary law principles. A boundary corner or line may have a small Relative Positional Precision because the survey measurements were precise, yet still be in the wrong position (i.e., inaccurate) if it was established or retraced using faulty or improper application of boundary law principles.
  - iv. For any measurement technology or procedure used on an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, the surveyor must (1) use appropriately 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 Precision outlined in Section 3.E.v. below is not exceeded.
  - v. The maximum allowable Relative Positional Precision for an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey is 2 cm (0.07 feet) plus 50 parts per million (based on the direct distance between the two corners being tested). It is recognized that in certain circumstances, the size or configuration of the surveyed property, or the relief, vegetation, or improvements on the surveyed property, will result in survey measurements for which the maximum allowable Relative Positional Precision may be exceeded in which case the reason shall be noted pursuant to Section

6.B.x. below.

4. **Records Research** - It is recognized that for the performance of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, the surveyor will be provided with appropriate and, when possible, legible data that can be relied upon in the preparation of the survey. In order to complete an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, the surveyor must be provided with the following:
- A. The current record description of the real property to be surveyed or, in the case of an original survey prepared for purposes of locating and describing real property that has not been previously separately described in documents conveying an interest in the real property, the current record description of the parent parcel that contains the property to be surveyed;
  - B. Complete copies of the most recent title commitment or, if a title commitment is not available, other title evidence satisfactory to the title insurer;
  - C. The following documents from records established under state statutes for the purpose of imparting constructive notice of matters relating to real property (public records):
    - i. The current record descriptions of any adjoiningers to the property to be surveyed, except where such adjoiningers are lots in platted, recorded subdivisions;
    - ii. Any recorded easements benefitting the property to be surveyed; and
    - iii. Any recorded easements, servitudes, or covenants burdening the property to be surveyed; and
  - D. If desired by the client, any unrecorded documents affecting the property to be surveyed and containing information to which the survey shall make reference.

Except, however, if the documents outlined in this section are not provided to the surveyor or if non-public or quasi-public documents are otherwise required to complete the survey, the surveyor must conduct that research which is required pursuant to the statutory or administrative requirements of the jurisdiction where the surveyed property is located and that research (if any) which is negotiated and outlined in the terms of the contract between the surveyor and the client.

5. **Fieldwork** - The survey must be performed on the ground (except as may be otherwise negotiated pursuant to Table A, Item 15 below). Except as related to the precision of the boundary, which is addressed in Section 3.E. above, features located during the fieldwork shall be located to what is, in the surveyor's professional opinion, the appropriate degree of precision based on (a) the planned use of the surveyed property, if reported in writing to the surveyor by the client, lender, or insurer, or (b) the existing use, if the planned use is not so reported. The fieldwork shall include the following:

**A. Monuments**

- i. The location, size, character, and type of any monuments found during the fieldwork.
- ii. The location, size, character, and type of any monuments set during the fieldwork, if item 1 of Table A was selected or if otherwise required by applicable jurisdictional requirements and/or standards of practice.
- iii. The location, description, and character of any lines that control the boundaries of the surveyed property.

**B. Rights of Way and Access**

- i. The distance from the appropriate corner or corners of the surveyed property to the nearest right of way line, if the surveyed property does not abut a right of way.
- ii. The name of any street, highway, or other public or private way abutting the surveyed property, together with the width of the travelled way and the location of each edge of the travelled way including on divided streets and highways. If the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4 indicate no access from the surveyed property to the abutting street or highway, the width and location of the travelled way need not be located.
- iii. Visible evidence of physical access (e.g., curb cuts, driveways) to any abutting streets, highways, or other public or private ways.
- iv. The location and character of vehicular, pedestrian, or other forms of access by other than the apparent occupants of the surveyed property to or across the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., driveways, alleys, private roads, railroads, railroad sidings and spurs, sidewalks, footpaths).

- v. Without expressing a legal opinion as to ownership or nature, the location and extent of any potentially encroaching driveways, alleys, and other ways of access from adjoining properties onto the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
  - vi. Where documentation of the location of any street, road, or highway right of way abutting, on, or crossing the surveyed property was not disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor, or was not otherwise available from the controlling jurisdiction (see Section 6.C.iv. below), the evidence and location of parcel corners on the same side of the street as the surveyed property recovered in the process of conducting the fieldwork which may indicate the location of such right of way lines (e.g., lines of occupation, survey monuments).
  - vii. Evidence of access to and from waters adjoining the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., paths, boat slips, launches, piers, docks).
- C. Lines of Possession and Improvements along the Boundaries**
- i. The character and location of evidence of possession or occupation along the perimeter of the surveyed property, both by the occupants of the surveyed property and by adjoining, observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
  - ii. Unless physical access is restricted, the character and location of all walls, buildings, fences, and other improvements within five feet of each side of the boundary lines observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (see Section 5.E.iv. regarding utility poles). Trees, bushes, shrubs, and other vegetation need not be located other than as specified in the contract, unless they are deemed by the surveyor to be evidence of possession or occupation pursuant to Section 5.C.i.
  - iii. Without expressing a legal opinion as to the ownership or nature of the potential encroachment, the evidence, location, and extent of potentially encroaching structural appurtenances and projections observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., fire escapes, bay windows, windows and doors that open out, flue pipes, stoops, eaves, cornices, areaways, steps, trim) by or onto adjoining property, or onto rights of way, easements, or setback lines disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor.
- D. Buildings**  
The location of buildings on the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- E. Easements and Servitudes**
- i. Evidence of any easements or servitudes burdening the surveyed property as disclosed in the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4 and observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
  - ii. Evidence of easements, servitudes, or other uses by other than the apparent occupants of the surveyed property not disclosed in the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4, but observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork if they are on or across the surveyed property (e.g., roads, drives, sidewalks, paths and other ways of access, utility service lines, utility locate markings (including the source of the markings, with a note if unknown), water courses, ditches, drains, telephone lines, fiber optic lines, electric lines, water lines, sewer lines, oil pipelines, gas pipelines).
  - iii. Surface indications of underground easements or servitudes on or across the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., utility cuts, vent pipes, filler pipes, utility locate markings (including the source of the markings, with a note if unknown)).
  - iv. Evidence on or above the surface of the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork, which evidence may indicate utilities located on, over, or beneath the surveyed property. Examples of such evidence include pipeline markers, utility locate markings (including the source of the markings, with a note if unknown), manholes, valves, meters, transformers, pedestals, clean-outs, overhead lines, guy wires, and utility poles on or within ten feet of the surveyed property. Without expressing a legal opinion as to the ownership or nature of the potential encroachment, the extent of all encroaching utility pole crossmembers or overhangs.
- F. Cemeteries**

As accurately as the evidence permits, the perimeter of cemeteries and burial grounds, and the location of isolated gravesites not within a cemetery or burial ground, (i) disclosed in the documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor, or (ii) observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.

**G. Water Features**

- i. The location of springs, ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, canals, ditches, marshes, and swamps on, running through, or outside, but within five feet of, the perimeter boundary of the surveyed property and observed during the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- ii. The location of any water feature forming a boundary of the surveyed property. The attribute(s) of the water feature located (e.g., top of bank, edge of water, high water mark) 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** - A plat or map of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey shall show the following information. Where dimensioning is appropriate, dimensions shall be annotated to what is, in the surveyor's professional opinion, the appropriate degree of precision based on (a) the planned use of the surveyed property, if reported in writing to the surveyor by the client, lender, or insurer, or (b) existing use, if the planned use is not so reported.

**A. Field Locations.** The evidence and locations gathered, and the monuments and lines located during the fieldwork pursuant to Section 5 above, with accompanying notes if deemed necessary by the surveyor or as otherwise required as specified below.

**B. Boundary, Descriptions, Dimensions, and Closures**

- i. (a) The current record description of the surveyed property, or  
(b) In the case of an original survey, the current record document number of the parent tract that contains the surveyed property.
- ii. 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. Except in the case of an original survey, preparation of a new description should be avoided unless deemed necessary or appropriate by the surveyor and insurer. Preparation of a new description should also generally be avoided when the record description is a lot or block in a platted, recorded subdivision. Except in the case of an original survey, if a new description is prepared, a note must be provided stating (a) that the new description describes the same real estate as the record description or, (b) if it does not, how the new description differs from the record description.
- iii. The point of beginning, the remote point of beginning or point of commencement (if applicable) and all distances and directions identified in the record description of the surveyed property (and in the new description, if one was prepared). Where a measured or calculated dimension differs from the record by an amount deemed significant by the surveyor, such dimension must be shown in addition to, and differentiated from, the corresponding record dimension. All dimensions shown on the survey and contained in any new description must be horizontal ground dimensions unless otherwise noted.
- iv. The direction, distance, and curve data necessary to compute a mathematical closure of the surveyed boundary. A note if the record description does not mathematically close. The basis of bearings and, where it differs from the record basis, the difference.
- v. The remainder of any recorded lot or existing parcel, when the surveyed property is composed of only a portion of such lot or parcel, shall be graphically depicted. Such remainder need not be included as part of the actual survey, except to the extent necessary to locate the lines and corners of the surveyed property, and it need not be fully dimensioned or drawn at the same scale as the surveyed property.
- vi. When the surveyed property includes a title line defined by a water boundary, 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 property to its adjoiners (e.g., contiguity, gaps, overlaps) where ascertainable from documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4 and/or from field evidence gathered during the process of conducting the fieldwork. If the surveyed property is composed of multiple parcels, the extent of any gaps or overlaps between those parcels must be identified. Where gaps or overlaps are identified, the surveyor must, prior to or upon delivery of the final plat or map, disclose this to the insurer and client.
  - 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 must explain this information with notes on the face of the plat or map.
  - ix. The location of buildings on the surveyed property dimensioned perpendicular to those perimeter boundary lines that the surveyor deems appropriate (i.e., where potentially impacted by a setback line) and/or as requested by the client, lender or insurer.
  - x. A note on the face of the plat or map explaining the site conditions that resulted in a Relative Positional Precision that exceeds the maximum allowed pursuant to Section 3.E.v.
  - xi. A note on the face of the plat or map identifying areas, if any, on the boundaries of the surveyed property, to which physical access within five feet was restricted (see Section 5.C.ii.).
  - xii. A note on the face of the plat or map identifying the source of the title commitment or other title evidence provided pursuant to Section 4, and the effective date and the name of the insurer of same.

**C. Easements, Servitudes, Rights of Way, Access, and Documents**

- i. The location, width, and recording information of all plottable rights of way, easements, and servitudes burdening and benefitting the surveyed property, as evidenced by documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4.
- ii. A summary of all rights of way, easements, and other survey-related matters burdening the surveyed property and identified in the title evidence provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4. Such summary must include the record information of each such right of way, easement, or other survey-related matter, a statement indicating whether it lies within or crosses the surveyed property, and a related note if:
  - (a) its location is shown;
  - (b) its location cannot be determined from the record document;
  - (c) there was no observed evidence at the time of the fieldwork;
  - (d) it is a blanket easement;
  - (e) it is not on, does not touch, and/or – based on the description contained in the record document – does not affect, the surveyed property;
  - (f) it limits access to an otherwise abutting right of way;
  - (g) the documents are illegible; or
  - (h) the surveyor has information indicating that it may have been released or otherwise terminated.

In cases where the surveyed property is composed of multiple parcels, indicate which of such parcels the various rights of way, easements, and other survey-related matters cross or touch.

- iii. A note if no physical access to an abutting street, highway, or other public or private way was observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.
- iv. The locations and widths of rights of way abutting or crossing the surveyed property and the source of such information (a) where available from the controlling jurisdiction, or (b) where disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4.
- v. The identifying titles of all recorded plats, filed maps, right of way maps, or similar documents that the survey represents, wholly or in part, with their recording or filing data.
- vi. For non-platted adjoining land, recording data and, where available, tax parcel number, identifying adjoining tracts according to current public records. For platted adjoining land, the

- recording data of the subdivision plat.
- vii. Platted setback or building restriction lines that appear on recorded subdivision plats or that were disclosed in documents provided to, or obtained by, the surveyor.
  - viii. If in the process of preparing the survey the surveyor becomes aware of a recorded easement not otherwise listed in the title evidence provided, the surveyor must advise the insurer prior to delivery of the plat or map and, unless the insurer provides evidence of a release of that easement, show or otherwise explain it on the face of the plat or map, with a note that the insurer has been advised.

**D. Presentation**

- i. The plat or map must be drawn on a sheet of not less than 8 ½ by 11 inches in size at a legible, standard engineering scale, with that scale clearly indicated in words or numbers and with a graphic scale.
- ii. The plat or map must include:
  - (a) The boundary of the surveyed property drawn in a manner that distinguishes it from other lines on the plat or map.
  - (b) If no buildings were observed on the surveyed property in the process of conducting the fieldwork, a note stating “*No buildings observed.*”
  - (c) A north arrow (with north to the top of the drawing when practicable).
  - (d) A legend of symbols and abbreviations.
  - (e) A vicinity map showing the surveyed property in reference to nearby highway(s) or major street intersection(s).
  - (f) Supplementary or detail diagrams when necessary.
  - (g) Notes explaining any modifications to Table A items and the nature of any additional Table A items (e.g., 20(a), 20(b), 20(c)) that were negotiated between the surveyor and client.
  - (h) The surveyor’s project number (if any), and the name, registration or license number, signature, seal, street address, telephone number, company website, and email address (if any) of the surveyor who performed the survey.
  - (i) The date(s) of any revisions made by the surveyor who performed the survey.
  - (j) Sheet numbers where the plat or map is composed of more than one sheet.
  - (k) The caption “ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey.”
- iii. When recordation or filing of a plat or map is required by state statutes or local ordinances, such plat or map shall be produced in the required form.

**7. Certification** - The plat or map of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey must bear only the following unaltered certification except as may be required pursuant to Section 3.B. above:

To (name of insured, if known), (name of lender, if known), (name of insurer, if known), (names of others as negotiated with the client):

This is to certify that this map or plat and the survey on which it is based were made in accordance with the 2021 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys, jointly established and adopted by ALTA and NSPS, and includes Items \_\_\_\_\_ of Table A thereof. The fieldwork was completed on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

*Date of Plat or Map: \_\_\_\_\_ (Surveyor’s signature, printed name and seal with Registration/License Number)*

**8. Deliverables** - The surveyor shall furnish copies of the plat or map of survey to the insurer and client and as otherwise negotiated with the client. Hard copies shall be on durable and dimensionally stable material of a quality standard acceptable to the insurer. A digital image of the plat or map may be provided in addition to, or in lieu of, hard copies pursuant to the terms of the contract. If the surveyor is required to record or file a plat or map pursuant to state statute or local ordinance it shall be so recorded or filed.

**TABLE A**

**OPTIONAL SURVEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS**

*NOTE: Whether any of the nineteen (19) items of Table A are to be selected, and the exact wording of and fee for any selected item, may be negotiated between the surveyor and client. Any additional items negotiated between the surveyor and client must be identified as 20(a), 20(b), etc. Any additional items negotiated between the surveyor and client, and any negotiated changes to the wording of a Table A item, must be explained pursuant to Section 6.D.ii.(g). Notwithstanding Table A Items 5 and 11, if an engineering design survey is desired as part of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, such services should be negotiated under Table A, Item 20.*

*If checked, the following optional items are to be included in the ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEY, except as otherwise qualified (see note above):*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ *Monuments placed (or a reference monument or witness to the corner) at all major corners of the boundary of the surveyed property, unless already marked or referenced by existing monuments or witnesses in close proximity to the corner.*
2. \_\_\_\_\_ *Address(es) of the surveyed property if disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor, or observed while conducting the fieldwork.*
3. \_\_\_\_\_ *Flood zone classification (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. \_\_\_\_\_ *Vertical relief with the source of information (e.g., ground survey, aerial map), contour interval, datum, with originating benchmark, when appropriate.*
6. \_\_\_\_\_ *(a) If the current zoning classification, setback requirements, the height and floor space area restrictions, and parking requirements specific to the surveyed property are set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client or the client's designated representative, list the above items on the plat or map and identify the date and source of the report or letter.*  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ *(b) If the zoning setback requirements specific to the surveyed property are set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client or the client's designated representative, and if those requirements do not require an interpretation by the surveyor, graphically depict those requirements on the plat or map and identify the date and source of the report or letter.*
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 as specified by the client.*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *(c) Measured height of all buildings above grade at a location specified by the client. If no location is specified, the point of measurement shall be identified.*
8. \_\_\_\_\_ *Substantial features observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (in addition to the improvements and features required pursuant to Section 5 above) (e.g., parking lots, billboards, signs, swimming pools, landscaped areas, substantial areas of refuse).*
9. \_\_\_\_\_ *Number and type (e.g., disabled, motorcycle, regular, and other marked specialized types) of clearly identifiable parking spaces on surface parking areas, lots, and in parking structures. Striping of clearly identifiable parking spaces on surface parking areas and lots.*
10. \_\_\_\_\_ *As designated by the client, a determination of the relationship and location of certain*

*division or party walls with respect to adjoining properties.*

11. *Evidence of underground utilities existing on or serving the surveyed property (in addition to the observed evidence of utilities required pursuant to Section 5.E.iv.) as determined by:*

- (a) *plans and/or reports provided by client (with reference as to the sources of information)*
- (b) *markings coordinated by the surveyor pursuant to a private utility locate request.*

*Note to the client, insurer, and lender – With regard to Table A, item 11, information from the sources checked above will be combined with observed evidence of utilities pursuant to Section 5.E.iv. to develop a view of the underground utilities. However, lacking excavation, the exact location of underground features cannot be accurately, completely, and reliably depicted. In addition, in some jurisdictions, 811 or other similar utility locate requests from surveyors may be ignored or result in an incomplete response, in which case the surveyor shall note on the plat or map how this affected the surveyor’s assessment of the location of the utilities. Where additional or more detailed information is required, the client is advised that excavation may be necessary.*

12.  *As specified by the client, Governmental Agency survey-related requirements (e.g., HUD surveys, surveys for leases on Bureau of Land Management managed lands). The relevant survey requirements are to be provided by the client or client’s designated representative.*

13.  *Names of adjoining owners according to current tax records. If more than one owner, identify the first owner’s name listed in the tax records followed by “et al.”*

14.  *As specified by the client, distance to the nearest intersecting street.*

15.  *Rectified orthophotography, photogrammetric mapping, remote sensing, airborne/mobile laser scanning and other similar products, tools or technologies as the basis for showing 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 must (a) discuss the ramifications of such methodologies (e.g., the potential precision and completeness of the data gathered thereby) with the insurer, 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, precision, and other relevant qualifications of any such data.*

16.  *Evidence of recent earth moving work, building construction, or building additions observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.*

17.  *Proposed changes in street right of way lines, if such information is made available to the surveyor by the controlling jurisdiction. Evidence of recent street or sidewalk construction or repairs observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork.*

18.  *Pursuant to Sections 5 and 6 (and applicable selected Table A items, excluding Table A item 1), include as part of the survey any plottable offsite (i.e., appurtenant) easements disclosed in documents provided to or obtained by the surveyor.*

19.  *Professional liability insurance policy obtained by the surveyor in the minimum amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be in effect throughout the contract term. Certificate of insurance to be furnished upon request, but this item shall not be addressed on the face of the plat or map.*

20.  \_\_\_\_\_

*Adopted by the American Land Title Association on October 1, 2020. More at: [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org).  
Adopted by the National Society of Professional Surveyors on October 30, 2020. More at: [www.nsp.us.com](http://www.nsp.us.com).*

## **Frequently Asked Questions and other guidance on the 2021 ALTA/NSPS Standards**

### **Transition period leading up to February 23, 2021**

During the transition period, surveyors may encounter situations whereby they have entered into a contract to perform an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey prior to the effective date of the 2021 Standards (February 23, 2021), but the survey is not anticipated to be completed until after February 23, 2021. In such cases, the surveyor may discuss this with the client, title company and lender and include an appropriate clause in the contract, viz., *“This survey will be prepared using the 2016 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for Land Title Surveys as established by ALTA and NSPS since said standards are still currently in effect at the time of this contract. It is understood and accepted by all parties involved that said standards may no longer be current upon completion of the survey, but will still be used for the purpose of this survey.”*

### **Providing professional guidance to the client**

When deemed appropriate, surveyors might want to consider suggesting to their clients that the advice of a wetlands, flood plain, environmental, archeological or other appropriate expert might be beneficial.

### **Section 4 - research**

Surveyors may encounter situations whereby the title company is unable or unwilling to provide the documents otherwise required pursuant to Section 4. Surveyors must perform their research pursuant to their state’s requirements and if their state has no standards in that regard, it is advised that they be familiar with the normal standard of care regarding research.

### **Section 5.B.ii. - sidewalks and trails along the street/road**

It is not unusual that streets and roads are found to have sidewalks or trails running adjacent to them or with a grass strip between the two. Likewise, walking/biking trails are sometimes found adjacent to the street/road - even as part of the paved way. Section 5.B.ii. calls for locating the “travelled way” to be located and, of course, shown on the survey. The question of whether such sidewalks/trails should also be located and shown is answered by Section 5.B.iv. which requires that *“The location and character of vehicular, pedestrian, or other forms of access by other than the apparent occupants of the surveyed property to or across the surveyed property observed in the process of conducting the fieldwork (e.g., driveways, alleys, private roads, railroads, railroad sidings and spurs, sidewalks, footpaths)”* be located and shown.

### **Section 5.E. - utility locate markings**

For those surveyors concerned about locating and showing what may or may not be actual utility locate markings because they do not have any information regarding the locate request or source of the markings, they might consider developing an appropriate note such as *“Paint markings found on the ground and shown hereon as evidence of possible (or probable) underground utilities are consistent with typical utility markings. However, no utility report was provided to authenticate these markings - their source is unknown. The user of this plat/map should rely upon such markings at their own risk.”*

### **Section 6.B.i.a. - record description**

This section requires that on a survey of an existing parcel, the record description of the parcel being surveyed shall appear on the face of the plat/map. The description of the real property being insured (contained in Schedule A of the title commitment) is typically (and ideally) identical to the record description. In cases where the two descriptions differ, the surveyor may wish to inquire of the title company as to the origin of the Schedule A description. In cases where the title company insists that it will be insuring the description in Schedule A even though it does not match the record, the surveyor may consider showing both descriptions on the face of the plat/map. It is most assured that the parties will require the description to be insured appear on the face of the plat/map, and this section requires that the record description be shown. At a minimum, the surveyor should consider providing a note explaining how the two descriptions differ.

### **Section 6.B.vi. - water boundaries and caveat**

This section calls for a caveat to be noted regarding the nature of water boundaries. Surveyors might consider developing their own such note, but it could be formulated on the order of, *“Where the property being surveyed includes a water boundary, the parties relying on the survey should be aware that, (1) laws regarding the delineation between the ownership of the bed of navigable waters and the upland owner differ from state to state, (2) water boundaries are typically subject to change due to natural causes, and (3) as a result, the boundary shown hereon may or may not represent the actual location of the limit of title. The [e.g., bank, edge of water, high-water mark, ordinary high-water mark, low-water mark, ordinary low-water mark, center of stream] shown hereon [was/were] located on [Date].”*

### **Section 6.B.vii. - contiguity, gaps and overlaps**

This section requires that the surveyor disclose any gaps or overlaps with adjoining or between interior parcels where the property being surveyed is comprised of multiple parcels. This can be done not only with notes on the graphic portion of the plat/map, but also with textual notes drawing attention to the condition(s). Such information is critically important to the title company so that such issues can be disclosed to the parties and appropriate exceptions to coverage can be written. Where no gaps or overlaps exist, surveyors might consider assuring that the parties understand this fact by providing an affirmative statement to that effect. Section 6.C.i. - easements

Offsite easements that benefit the surveyed property (i.e., appurtenant easements) are typically identified as insured parcels in Schedule A of the title commitment. Easements that burden the surveyed property are identified as exceptions to title insurance coverage in Schedule B2 of the title commitment. It is also possible that an easement could both benefit and burden a property. Sometimes a title company may inadvertently list a beneficial easement in Schedule B2 as an *exception* to coverage, rather than identifying it in Schedule A as one that *benefits* the surveyed property - or vice versa. Surveyors should communicate with the title company when they believe there is a discrepancy between their opinion as to the effect of an easement and how the title commitment reports it.

#### **Section 6.C.ii. - title commitment**

Often in the course of the surveyor preparing the survey and often even after the plat/map has been completed and delivered, there will be revisions made to the title commitment that the surveyor will need to address. Surveyors should assure that they are appropriately compensated for any work that they believe represents additional services. This could be accomplished by carefully spelling out in the contract how many lender/client/title company comment letters will be addressed, how many client/lender/title company-driven revisions will be made to the survey, and over what period of time.

#### **Section 6.C.viii. - easements found, but not listed in title commitment**

*“If in the process of preparing the survey the surveyor becomes aware of a recorded easement not otherwise listed in the title evidence provided, the surveyor must advise the insurer prior to delivery of the plat or map and, unless the insurer provides evidence of a release of that easement, show or otherwise explain it on the face of the plat or map, with a note that the insurer has been advised.”*

Such a note might be formatted similar to:

*The 20 foot gas-line easement recorded as Instrument number 64-12345 and shown hereon is not listed in the title commitment; however, no evidence of a release, vacation or abandonment has been provided. The title company has been advised.*

#### **Section 7 - certification**

Surveyors are often told they need to certify to multiple parties above and beyond the client, lender and insurer as identified in Section 7 and they need to recognize that more certified parties may equate to more liability. They may wish to consider specifically listing in the contract those parties that they will certify to and that *“additional parties may be certified to for an additional fee.”* If the specific parties are not yet known, they could specify that they will certify to the lender, client and insurer.

Often a request is made or direction given to certify to *“ATIMA”* and/or *“ISAOA.”* These are acronyms that mean *“as their interests may appear”* and *“its successors and/or assigns.”* The loan policy defines *“insured”* in a way that should remove the need for such wording, but if the

lender demands that the title company put those in the policy, the title company will likely want to surveyor to certify to the same. Surveyors should seek guidance from their attorneys on the desirability of certifying in this matter; however, in any event, generally they probably want to avoid certifying to successors and assigns of the client/buyer.

#### **Table A - introductory paragraph and in general**

The introductory paragraph to Table A has been modified to make it clear - as was always intended - that not only is the very selection of a Table A item negotiable, but the exact wording of the item is also negotiable, as is - of course - the fee. It is permissible for the surveyor and client/lender to negotiate a modification to the wording of any item. Any such modification, however, must be explained in a note placed on the face of the plat/map pursuant to Section 6.D.ii.g. Of course, surveyors need to decide for themselves what fee to attach to any given Table A item.

#### **Table A, item 11 - utility locate markings**

For those surveyors concerned about locating and showing what may or may not be actual utility locate markings because they do not have any information regarding the locate request or source of the markings, they might consider developing an appropriate note such as *“Paint markings found on the ground and shown hereon as evidence of possible (or probable) underground utility locations are consistent with typical utility markings. However, no utility report was provided to authenticate these markings. The user of this plat/map should rely upon such markings at their own risk.”*