



An Introduction to the 2016 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys

Introduction

The ALTA/NSPS Liaison Committee (consisting of both the American Land Title Association and the National Society of Professional Surveyors) has approved modifications to the 2011 version of the Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys. The new version will be referred to as the 2016 Standards.

These standards will be effective on February 23, 2016. Why was this date chosen? In ancient Roman religion, Terminus was the god who protected boundary markers. The name “Terminus” was the Latin word for a boundary marker. On February 23rd, Roman landowners celebrated a festival called the “Terminalia” in honor of Terminus.

This article is intended to provide a broad overview of those changes to the land title survey standards that will be of the most significance to the title insurance industry and real estate practitioners.

**A complete copy of the 2016 Standards
is attached to this article or available online at
<http://www.alta.org/forms/download.cfm?formID=483&type=word>**

It is suggested that you print out a copy and follow along as the sections are discussed below:

Section 5 Fieldwork

Section 5 of the 2016 Standards generally concerns the fieldwork of the surveyor.

Section 5.B.ii. Rights of Way and Access

Section 5.B.ii. of the 2011 Standards imposed a duty on the surveyor to show the “width and location of the traveled way.” Under the 2016 Standards, this amended section now requires the land surveyor to also show “the location of each edge of the traveled way” unless there is no access from the land to said

traveled way. In addition, the 2016 Standards include a reference to divided streets and highways.

The term “traveled way” is a term of art, used in many court decisions. It has been defined as “the portion of the roadway used for movement of through traffic.”

In other words, although a plat of a residential subdivision may indicate that the dedicated roads have a width of 50 feet, the distance from one edge of the surface of the asphalt to the opposite edge of the asphalt may be only 29 feet. The land surveyor will have to show both widths—the width of the dedicated road and also the width of the asphalt—on the plat of survey.

This additional information should be helpful to those trying to determine access to a particular parcel of land, including curb cuts.

Section 5.B.ii. of the 2016 Standards is as follows. The italicized words are new.

The name of any street, highway or other public or private way abutting the surveyed property, together with the width of the traveled way and the location of each edge of the traveled 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 traveled way need not be located.

Section 5.C.ii. - Improvements Located Along the Boundary Line

The land title survey standards have traditionally required the surveyor to show the nature of the improvements on the land within five feet of each side of the boundary line of the property. Section 5.C.ii. of the 2016 Standards now includes a caveat, stating that the surveyor will show these improvements “unless physical access is restricted” by neighbors or physical impediments. Also, the drafters wanted to make it clear that generally speaking, the surveyor did not have to show trees and bushes on the plat of survey unless the vegetation represented evidence of possession, such as a tree line.

Section 5E. - Utilities v. Easements

Section 5.E. of the 2011 Standards imposed a duty on the surveyor to show observable evidence of utility *easements*. Item 11 of the optional Table A of the 2011 Standards, on the other hand, gave the surveyor the option of showing evidence of *utilities* on the plat of survey. This fine-line distinction resulted in at least one court proceeding where the surveyor was held liable for failing to show evidence of a utility on his plat of survey. This surveyor thought that he didn’t

have to show evidence of utilities on his survey because item 11 of Table A was not checked off, but the court felt otherwise. Section 5.E. of the 2011 Standards refers to utility *easements*, and item 11 of Table A of the 2011 Standards refers simply to *utilities*.

This distinction has been eliminated in the 2016 Standards. The surveyor should show all observable evidence of *both easements and utilities* on his plat of survey. Section 5.E. of the 2016 Standards requires this. (Table A of the 2016 Standards is discussed later.)

Section 5.G.i. - Water Features

Previously the Standards provided that the location of springs, ponds, lakes, streams and rivers bordering or running through the property had to be shown.

The surveyor now has the obligation to show those and, in addition, *canals, ditches, marshes and swamps* if any are “running through, **or outside**, but within five feet of the perimeter boundary of the surveyed property” [emphasis added].

Section 6.A. - Notes

Section 6 begins by stating that the plat or map “shall show the following information.” In Section 6.A. of the 2011 Standards, the surveyor merely had to show “the evidence and locations gathered during the field work as outlined in Section 5 above.” This concept is now greatly expanded in the 2016 Standards; Section 6.A. encourages the surveyor to include notes on the plat of survey.

The text of Section 6.A. appears below; the italicized words are new.

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.*

Section 6.B.ii. - A New Legal Description

As property gets combined and re-divided, the customer often thinks it would be easier to get a new perimeter description rather than the historical descriptions. The “Section---except __, except____, except ____” is often the best description because under most state law, if drafted correctly, it cannot cause an overlap. The title company may have difficulty insuring a new description depending upon how it has been monumented to neighboring descriptions, the historical descriptions of surrounding parcels and the state law determining requirements for the use of historical descriptions, not to mention the tax assessors or other subdivision laws.

If the surveyor prepares a new legal description that is not an original description, the surveyor under the 2016 Standards now **must** include a note stating that the new description describes the same real estate as the record description, or if it does not, then the surveyor has to explain how the new description differs from the record description. This section cautions the surveyor that the *“preparation of a new legal description should be avoided unless deemed necessary or appropriate by the surveyor and insurer.”*

Section 6.B.vii. - Gaps and Overlaps

This section has been amended to make it clear that the surveyor is not responsible for determining how to resolve the problem of gaps or overlaps between land parcels. See below; the italicized words are new to the 2016 Standards. The lined out words appeared in the 2011 Standards but have been omitted from the 2016 Standards.

Where gaps or overlaps are identified, the surveyor shall, prior to *or upon delivery* of the final plat or map, disclose this to the insurer and client. ~~for determination of a course of action concerning junior/senior rights.~~

Section 6.B.xi. - Restricted Access

As noted above, Section 5.C.ii. of the 2016 Standards requires the surveyor to show “the character and location of all walls, buildings, fences, and other improvements within five feet of each side of the boundary lines,” *unless physical access is restricted*. This concept is then carried forward to new paragraph 6.B.xi., requiring the surveyor to indicate such restricted lands on the survey.

The text of paragraph 6.B.xi. reads as follows:

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.).

Section 6.C.ii. - A Summary of Rights of Way, Easements, and Servitudes

Section 6 of the 2016 Standards is prefaced by the words, “A plat or map of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey shall show the following information.” Section 6.C.ii. has been substantially amended. Note that the section is now in a list format. See below; the italicized words are new to the 2016 Standards:

A summary of all rights of way, easements and servitudes burdening the property surveyed and identified in the title evidence provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4. Such summary shall include the record information of each such

right of way, easement or servitude, *a statement indicating whether or not it is shown on the plat or map, and a related note if:*

- (a) the location cannot be determined from the record document;
- (b) there was no observed evidence at the time of the *fieldwork*;
- (c) it is a blanket easement;
- (d) it is not on, or does not touch, the surveyed property;
- (e) it limits access to an otherwise abutting right of way;
- (f) *the documents are illegible; or*
- (g) *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.

Section 6.D. - Presentation

Section 6.D. concerns the format of the plat of survey such as size and legibility. The committee added two new items to this section; these new additions encourage the surveyor to add explanatory notes or supplemental diagrams to his plat of survey:

6.D.ii. *The plat or map shall include:...*

(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(c)) that were negotiated between the surveyor and client.*

Table A

Table A is the list of “Optional Survey Responsibilities and Specifications.” This is where the customer indicates what it needs the survey to include to comply with possible title insurance company underwriting for survey based coverages, including zoning. Those readers that deal with HUD or other governmental programs should familiarize themselves with any specific survey requirements of that or any other lender. Of these survey additions, Item 6 of Table A is by far the most important change that affects the title company.

Item 6, Table A - Zoning

Item 6 in the old 2011 Standards referred to the “current zoning classification, as *provided by the insurer.*” These highlighted words proved to be problematic to title companies, who, citing liability concerns, were reluctant to furnish this information.

Item 6, Table A, 2011 Standards

(a) Current zoning classification, as provided by the insurer.

(b) Current zoning classification and building setback requirements, height and floor space area restrictions as set forth in that classification, as provided by the insurer. If none, so state.

Accordingly, paragraph (a) has been rewritten so that the title company does not furnish the zoning information. Furthermore, the surveyor is not responsible for obtaining the information, either. Rather, the client has to furnish the surveyor the zoning information. In addition, the surveyor has the option of *listing* the setback requirements

Title company reluctance and concern was an issue in both paragraph (a) and paragraph (b) of the 2011 Standards. But there was also a bigger issue that concerned paragraph (b) which required the surveyor to show the setback requirements in the zoning classification. Note that when the committee originally wrote paragraph (b), it failed to state *how* the building setback information should be shown on the plat of survey. Should the building setback information be shown on the plat of survey as a written statement, word for word, directly as it is written in the zoning ordinance? Or should the information be shown *graphically* on the plat of survey? The 2011 Standards, regrettably, offered no guidance.

In the last few years, surveyors have been getting increased pressure from lenders to show building setback information *graphically* on their plats of survey. Unfortunately, this information is not always easy to decipher. The information is sometimes subject to interpretation. It is easy when the surveyor only has to recite the setback information, word for word, on the plat of survey. But it can sometimes be difficult for the surveyor to take this information and graphically show it on his plat of survey. What if the surveyor makes a mistake, a mistake due solely to a misinterpretation of an ambiguous setback provision in a zoning ordinance?

The committee was faced with two directives—it had to somehow rewrite paragraph (b) so that the surveyor would be charged with graphically depicting the building setback information on the plat of survey. But it also had to protect the surveyor from the consequences of being instructed to graphically depict ambiguous information.

Paragraph (b) of Item 6 of the 2016 Standards accomplishes both objectives, as shown below. The client has to furnish the surveyor the zoning information. But in addition, Item 6 protects the surveyor. Per paragraph (b), the surveyor must graphically depict the building setback. However, the surveyor must do this, only

if the setback requirements “*do not require an interpretation by the surveyor.*” (See the italicized words below of Item 6 of the 2016 Standards.)

Again, note that in paragraph (a) the surveyor “lists” the zoning setback requirements, but in paragraph (b) the surveyor “graphically depicts” the zoning setback requirements. This is an important distinction for the land surveyor. If the surveyor feels that he cannot graphically *depict* the setback requirements pursuant to paragraph (b), perhaps he can offer to *list* them pursuant to paragraph (a).

Item 6, Table A, 2016 Standards

(a) If set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client, list the current zoning classification, setback requirements, the height and floor space area restrictions, and parking requirements. Identify the date and source of the report or letter.

(b) If the zoning setback requirements are set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client, and if those requirements do not require an interpretation by the surveyor, graphically depict the building setback requirements. Identify the date and source of the report or letter.

Item 9, Table A- Parking Spaces

This item, concerning “parking spaces,” has been clarified. The surveyor now has two duties. One, to set forth the number and type of parking spaces “on surface parking areas, lots and *in parking* structures.”

And two, to set forth the striping of “clearly identifiable” parking spaces on “surface parking areas and lots.”

The complete text of Item 9 of the 2016 Standards reads as follows:

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.

Item 11, Table A - Easements

As noted above, section 5.E. of the 2011 Standards imposed a duty on the surveyor to show observable evidence of utility *easements*. Item 11 of Table A of

the 2011 Standards, on the other hand, required the surveyor to show evidence of *utilities*.

But this issue has now been clarified with the 2016 Standards. Paragraph 5.E.iv. of the 2016 Standards requires the surveyor to show “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.”

Item 11 of Table A now expands this requirement. Under Item 11, the surveyor is required to show not only observed evidence of utilities, “existing on *or serving* the surveyed property,” but also other evidence of utilities, as noted on utility company plans or as noted by utility locating companies that many utility companies use. Note that under Item 11, the surveyor has the obligation to call the utility locating company.

Summary of Section 5.E.iv. and Item 11 of Table A

- Section 5.E.iv. of the 2016 Standards requires the surveyor to disclose observed evidence of utilities on or above the surface of the surveyed property.
- Item 11 of Table A of the 2016 Standards requires the surveyor to disclose observed evidence of utilities on the surveyed property *and also observed evidence of utilities serving the surveyed property*. Under Item 11 of Table A of the 2016 Standards, the surveyor also has to disclose evidence of utilities on or serving the surveyed property, as disclosed by utility company plans and a utility locating company.
- Pursuant to Item 11 of Table A of the 2016 Standards, the surveyor has the duty to call the utility locating company. But the final note of Item 11 points out that if the locating company ignores the surveyor, or performs an incomplete locating job, the surveyor shall indicate on the plat of survey how this inadequate response affected the surveyor’s assessment of the location of the utilities.

Item 13, Table A - Names of Adjoining Owners

Item 13 of the 2011 Standards required the surveyor to show the “names of adjoining owners of platted lands according to current public records.”

But this would require the surveyor to either perform a title search or have a title company perform the search, and so Item 13 has been changed to the “names of adjoining owners according to current *tax* records.” The 2011 Standards referred to the “names of adjoining owners of **platted** lands.” This has been expanded in the 2016 Standards to the “names of adjoining owners” **platted** or otherwise.

Item 18, Table A - Wetlands

The term ‘wetlands’ is a term of art. The wetlands instructions to the surveyor in the 2011 Standards were somewhat vague, and so the committee revised this item to more clearly define the role of the surveyor. For example:

- The client has to hire a qualified specialist.
- The surveyor does not have to look for cattails and bull rushes or other vegetation that he feels is suggestive of a wetland. Rather, the surveyor’s obligation is to merely locate observed “delineation markers.”
- If there are no such markers, the surveyor should state this on his plat of survey.

The text of Item 18 of the 2016 Standards reads as follows:

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.

Item 19, Table A - Off-Site Easements

The 2011 standards introduced what was then Item 20—the request of the surveyor to survey off-site easements benefiting the land.

Example: If the land being sold in 2012 was lot 1, and lot 1 had no direct access, but an access easement was created 15 years earlier over the west 10 feet of lot 2, the surveyor might have been asked in 2012 to survey lot 1 and also the west 10 feet of lot 2. The surveyor might even have been asked in 2012 to place monuments at the major corners of the easement parcel.

This item (now Item 19 in the 2016 Standards) has been refined in the following ways:

- The easement is now further defined as being “appurtenant,” or benefiting, the fee simple land being surveyed.
- The easement is to be surveyed in the same manner as the fee simple land being otherwise surveyed.

- The option to place monuments at the major corners of the easement parcel has been deleted from the 2016 Standards. This was an unfortunate addition to the 2011 Standards. This option was deleted because a surveyor who has not been hired by the fee simple owner of the servient easement parcel should not be placing monuments at the lot corners of the easement parcel.

Item 20, Table A - Liability Insurance

The 2011 Standards introduced a new concept—the option of the surveyor obtaining a professional liability insurance policy. This option has been carried forward as Item 20 of the 2016 Standards, but with an added statement.

Item 20, Table A, of the 2016 Standards appears below. The “added statement” that is referred to above appears in italics.

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.*

Conclusion

There are dozens of other changes and clarifications to the new **Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys**. Those changes described above should be some of the most relevant to parties to the transaction and the title insurance industry. We encourage you to review the new standards before you celebrate *Terminalia* on February 23, 2016!

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**Continue to next page to view
“Minimum Standard Detail Requirements For
ALTA/NSPA Land Title Surveys
(Effective February 23, 2016)”**

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

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 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 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 parks; easements, leases, 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. The client 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



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- A. Effective Date** - The 2016 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys are effective February 23, 2016. As of that date, all previous versions of the Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/ACSM 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 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 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 being surveyed as part of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey 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 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 relative to the monument, or witness, marking any other corner of the surveyed property at the 95 percent confidence level. Relative Positional Precision is estimated by the results of a 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 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 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. If the maximum allowable Relative Positional Precision is exceeded, the surveyor shall note the reason as explained in 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 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:

- (i) 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 adjoiners to the property to be surveyed, except where such adjoiners are lots in platted, recorded subdivisions;
 - (b) Any recorded easements benefitting the property;
 - (c) Any recorded easements, servitudes, or covenants burdening the property;
- (ii) Any unrecorded documents affecting the property being surveyed and containing information to which the survey shall make reference, if desired by the client.

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 required to complete the survey, the surveyor shall be required to conduct only that research which is required pursuant to the statutory or administrative requirements of the jurisdiction where the 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 shall be performed on the ground (except as otherwise negotiated pursuant to Table A, Item 15 below, if selected by the client). The fieldwork shall 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 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:

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. 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 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 the surveyed property (e.g., roads; drives, sidewalks, paths and other ways of access; utility service lines; water courses; ditches; drains; telephone, fiber optic lines, or electric lines; or water, sewer, oil 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).
- 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, manholes, valves, meters, transformers, pedestals, clean-outs, utility poles, overhead lines and guy wires.

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, 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 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. 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 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 shall be provided stating (a) that the new description describes the same real estate as the record description or, if it does not, (b) 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 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 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 shall be identified. Where gaps or overlaps are identified, the surveyor 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 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 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 servitudes burdening the

property surveyed and identified in the title evidence provided to or obtained by the surveyor pursuant to Section 4. Such summary shall include the record information of each such right of way, easement or servitude, a statement indicating whether or not it is shown on the plat or map, and a related note if:

- (a) the location cannot be determined from the record document;
- (b) there was no observed evidence at the time of the fieldwork;
- (c) it is a blanket easement;
- (d) it is not on, or does not touch, the surveyed property;
- (e) it limits access to an otherwise abutting right of way;
- (f) the documents are illegible; or
- (g) 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 a public 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 the survey represents, wholly or in part, with their recording or filing data.
- vi. For non-platted adjoining land, recording data 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.

D. Presentation

- i. The plat or map 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 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 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(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 law, such plat or map

shall be produced in recordable form.

7. **Certification** - The plat or map of an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey 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 2016 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.

TABLE A

OPTIONAL SURVEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

NOTE: The twenty (20) items of Table A may be negotiated between the surveyor and client. Any additional items negotiated between the surveyor and client shall be identified as 21(a), 21(b), etc. 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.

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 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.*

6. _____ *(a) If set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client, list the current zoning classification, setback requirements, the height and floor space area restrictions, and parking requirements. Identify the date and source of the report or letter.*

_____ *(b) If the zoning setback requirements are set forth in a zoning report or letter provided to the surveyor by the client, and if those requirements do not require an interpretation by the surveyor, graphically depict the building setback requirements. 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. _____ *Location of utilities existing on or serving the surveyed property as determined by:*
- *observed evidence collected pursuant to Section 5.E.iv.*
 - *evidence from plans requested by the surveyor and obtained from utility companies, or provided by client (with reference as to the sources of information), and*
 - *markings requested by the surveyor pursuant to an 811 utility locate or similar 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 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).*

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 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 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.*
19. _____ *Include 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).*
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.*
21. _____ _____

*Adopted by the Board of Governors, American Land Title Association, on October 8, 2015.
American Land Title Association, 1800 M St., N.W., Suite 300S, Washington, D.C. 20036-5828.
www.alta.org*

*Adopted by the Board of Directors, National Society of Professional Surveyors, on October 9, 2015.
National Society of Professional Surveyors, Inc., 5119 Pegasus Court, Suite Q, Frederick,
MD 21704.*



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