



**British Columbia
Land Surveyors**

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Association of BC Land Surveyors

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Where is My Property Corner?



Protecting Land Survey Monuments in British Columbia

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Protecting Land Survey Monuments

The tradition of occupying and owning land has a long history and has always required some way to mark property corners and boundaries. In British Columbia, legal survey monuments are used to define the extent of your land, and they are therefore important to preserve.

The presence of survey monuments on your property adds value by clearly defining the location of your boundaries for you, your neighbours and potential purchasers.

Since survey monuments are set to mark boundary positions, they must remain undisturbed to be useful and are protected by law under Sections 442 and 443 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

If they are damaged, moved or destroyed, restoring or replacing them can be expensive for you as the land owner.

A British Columbia land surveyor (BCLS) is the only person with the authority to set or replace a survey monument.

In addition to defining the extent of your ownership, survey monuments are used to ensure Municipal or Regional District zoning setbacks have been met when constructing a building or structure. Survey monuments also help define rights of ways or easements on your property.

Survey monuments are sometimes referenced by bearing trees, stone mounds, cairns, earth mounds, pits, or metal or wooden posts. These must also be protected.

If Survey Evidence is in the Way....

When building a fence, retaining wall or doing landscaping, do not move or remove any survey monuments. It is illegal to remove or tamper with legal survey monuments and this applies to everyone - including landscapers and contractors.

Fence posts and retaining walls should be set a safe distance away from the survey monuments to ensure they are not damaged or disturbed.

When survey monuments are removed or damaged, a BCLS must re-establish their positions using the best evidence available. This can become expensive if such evidence is difficult to find or far away from your property.

When survey monuments are placed in the ground, a BCLS is required to prepare and register a plan in the Land Title Office showing the location of the new monuments. This plan becomes part of the public record.

Land Survey Monuments Set Today

Survey monuments and references come in various shapes and sizes. Here is a selection of survey monuments which may be found in BC today. Some form of them may be marking your property. The combination of survey monuments and references vary according to local conditions. Note them and guard them.



PROFESSIONALISM HISTORY TECHNOLOGY

Galvanized Iron Post



The most frequently used survey monument is the galvanized iron post. It is used to mark the boundaries of city lots, small holdings, mineral claims and rights-of-way.

It is usually set flush with the ground or buried and is referenced with a wooden guard stake.

The iron post measures 1.2 cm square by 76 cm long and has BCLS stamped at one end.

Lead Plug

Lead is firmly set into and flush with the top of a hole that is drilled in rock or concrete and has a brass tack set in the lead that indicates the true position.

These posts are generally found in urban areas in sidewalks and may act as a witness to the true property corner.

Witness Posts

In certain instances it is not possible to place a survey monument at the true corner location. In these situations monuments are placed at a direction and distance chosen by the BCLS.

Capped Post



The capped post is used to mark the corners of district lots or sections. The capped post is also found along highways and other rights of way.

The cap is made of bronze and measures 7.5 cm in diameter. The cap is fixed to a steel reinforcing bar that is not less than 75 cm long.

It is usually referenced by three bearing trees and/or a metal reference post consisting of an angle iron and a plate but can also be referenced by a long wooden guard stake.



Rock Post

The rock post is used to mark the corners of district lots which lie on rock or concrete.

The bronze cap measures 7.6 cm in diameter and has a short shank. A hole is drilled in the rock or concrete and the bronze cap is cemented in place.

Sometimes corners are marked by a rock post set in concrete. The top of the post is not more than 15 cm above the ground.

A rock cairn may reference it.

Control Monument

A different type of bronze post is used in areas designated as “integrated survey areas”.

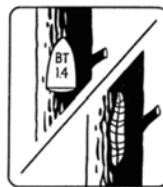
These form part of a network of control points. They are located precisely and are used as the starting points for future surveys.

These posts are generally found in urban areas.

Other ‘control’ survey monuments are found in more remote areas, usually on high ground.

All of these posts are similar to the capped and rock posts but have the word ‘CONTROL’ in place of ‘LEGAL’ inscribed on the post cap.

Bearing Trees



Trees are blazed and the distance to the post measured. This distance is carved in the blaze. These are called ‘bearing trees’.

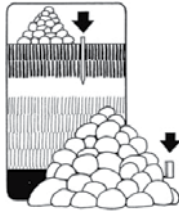
Fresh carvings on bearing trees would appear as shown in the illustration. However, after many years of growth, the blaze may be grown over and only a scar will remain.

These trees may be the only means of restoring a lost survey monument, so do not destroy them.



PROFESSIONALISM HISTORY TECHNOLOGY

Old-Style Survey Monuments



Iron Bar

Between 1884 and 1930, the federal government had jurisdiction over the 'railway belt' and the 'Peace River Block' in which the 'Township' system of survey was used.

This system used two types of survey monuments, the iron bar and the bronze-capped post.

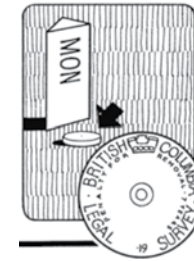


Bronze-capped Post

The iron bar was 2.5 cm in diameter. It was often referenced by a stone mound.

The markings on the bar were in Roman numerals.

The bronze-capped post was 7.6 cm in diameter referenced with pits and a mound.



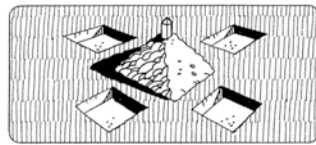
Aluminum-capped Post

In 1968, the aluminum-capped post was introduced and was used until 1986.

This post was used to mark the corners of district lots.

It had an 8.9 cm diameter cap. At the cap's centre is the expanded forged head of a 75 cm long galvanized iron or aluminum bar.

Remember to protect and preserve these important survey monuments!



Wooden Post

Before 1947, the wooden post was used on provincial land. The post was at least 10 cm square. It was often set in an earth or stone mound

