

## Why have a survey?

On First Nation Reserve lands, Band members and Chief and Council can determine how to use and allocate the land in particular ways. First Nation lands can be allocated for exclusive use, such as to a family or a business, or can be kept as common Band land used for roads, water treatment plants, community centres, or transmission lines. Agreements can be made between the Band and individual members; between individual Band members; or between the Band and non-Band members, utility companies and corporations. These agreements create rights on particular portions of land to be held by people, communities and businesses for a short time or a long time.

---

**The purpose of a survey for a land transaction is to show where the agreed upon boundaries are located – both on the ground and in the digital world.**

---

In formal ways, First Nations can keep track of who uses what land for what purposes to provide certainty and a shared way of knowing about rights in land. Land transaction documents for allotments, transfers, leases, subleases, and permits can be registered in a [formal on-line filing system – a land registry](#).

Registered land transactions cover an area of land, known as a parcel, with defined limits, known as boundaries. The boundaries of parcels are created by agreements between people. The purpose of a survey by a [Canada Lands Surveyor](#) for a land transaction is to show where the agreed upon boundaries are located – both on the ground and in the digital world. This is done in two ways:

1. Boundaries are marked in their actual location with survey monuments such as iron posts in the ground and visible markers to see the boundaries. They can also be marked on the ground by clearing trees on the boundary, and by reference to existing buildings and features such as roads or rivers.
2. Boundaries are shown on a Plan of Survey that is created to fit into the digital online world and can be printed on paper. A Plan of Survey shows the parcel, the portion of lands covered by the agreement. It shows what is near the boundaries, and how the surveyed boundaries fit in to the rest of the community.

Surveys are connected to the rest of the community and the rest of the world with mapping coordinate systems. Connections are made using coordinates, for example latitude and longitude, satellites using global positioning system (GPS) technology, and geographic information systems that provide online information and mapping.

A Plan of Survey by a Canada Lands Surveyor is used to give a description of land, for example “Lot 1, Plan 4567”, that is related on the ground to adjacent properties, other parcels in the community, and the rest of the world, the digital world through the [Canada Lands Survey Records](#). A description forms part of the land transaction document that provides a knowable way to be certain that the agreements made between people are recognized. Rights in land are registered in an on-line land registry so they can be transferred, inherited, renewed, or returned to the First Nation. A registered interest in land provides certainty to people as evidence of entitlement and provides assurance to financial lenders. A survey for a land transaction can prevent future boundary disputes or encroachments of other people’s interests onto parcels of land. A survey gives people certainty because it matches what is on the land with the agreements people make between themselves.