



# HOW DO I FIND MY PROPERTY LINES?

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You may feel confident that you know your property lines just by looking at your house and yard. The neighbor's fence and where you mow your grass all seem to match the boundaries between other houses on your street. A fence may slightly stray, but for the most part everything seems about right. Now imagine being so wrong about your property lines that you learn your house is built on the completely wrong lot. Even smaller mistakes or discrepancies between documents can lead to costly issues if you and a neighbor disagree over the location of your property line. To steer clear of conflicts, avoid making any changes to the edges of your property that could lead to a problem, monetary or otherwise, down the line.

## Why You Must Know Your Property Lines?

From permits to purchases, being able to identify your property lines accurately makes it much easier to complete a project or move forward with a transaction. In most official cases, having a new survey done is the way to go. "Let's say, for example, you want to build a swimming pool, and you're not 100% sure where that easement is. You could have a new survey done,"

Additionally, when you purchase a home, it's not uncommon for your mortgage lender to require a new survey be conducted on the property. Even when that's not the case, your title insurance company will likely recommend a new survey as well, so you know if the neighbor's garage reaches over onto the property or if the outdoor kitchen encroaches on a sewer easement, which could be costly to remove down the line.

## How Do I Find My Property Lines?

**Check your deed.** Your property lines were established when your neighborhood was developed, whether that's 10 years or a century ago. The property lines are noted in a few different locations, including in the legal description for the lot, which would be on your property deed, and on a plat map, which is typically available through your local assessor's office or planning office.

A property's legal description is most easily found on the deed to the property, and there are a few ways the description can be written. It could simply describe the property's exact location as it exists on the plat map, or it may include specific details with precise measurements that allow you to walk the property lines from a nearby reference point.

**Review a plat map.** A plat map shows property outlines for an entire neighborhood or area. On a standard residential street, you can expect to see rectangles all about the same size lined up on each side of the street, which signify each privately owned property. Every individual property will be labeled with an identifying number, which is the parcel number assigned when the lots were planned for separate sale and follow surrounding parcel numbers in numerical order. Your deed should note the parcel number, but you can typically find the parcel information if you look up your home through your local assessor's office, many of which have online databases.

**Visit the county recorder's office or the assessor's office.** Ask what maps are available for public viewing that include your neighborhood and street. Request a copy of any maps that show clear dimensions of your property lines. Use the maps for reference when measuring your property's total boundary line on each side.

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Contact us with any questions:

At a cost, you can also **hire a surveyor**. A surveyor is a professional who can measure and map the property lines for you.