

responsible charge

Expecting Land Surveyors to be Error Free

Of course, the subject line is ludicrous; no manager expects any employee to be error free, and in fact, for new employees with little experience, errors are expected. This is part of the learning process. We also know that new, inexperienced employees need a much closer and more watchful eye.

Even a land surveyor with several years of experience is not error free, but the difference—if the surveyor is honest—is that they are diligent. The experienced and mindful land surveyor thinks and rethinks before pulling his truck away from the jobsite; he is asking himself, have I met the client's job specifications? Have I surveyed every area of interest? Has the survey extended past the specified distance, for example 25 feet for a topo, 5 feet for an ALTA survey? Was there a locked gate that prevented me from obtaining vital information? Was a part of the building inaccessible? Did I get that roof height? Some states requires all water courses through the property or adjacent the boundary to be located. Did I make an adequate search for the geodetic monument for the regulation tie?

I contend that being error free is not normally an issue, but rather, the issue is always one of omission! And omissions are not about errors, but about the completeness of the survey. Was an encroachment overlooked? If the field surveyor wonders if something is an encroachment, then that is the surveyor's clue to locate the potential encroachment. Of course, the encroachment that you always question

is often the one where the property line is obscured by trees or brush. Or in some cases, you may be in a concrete canyon and feel it necessary to locate every building corner, especially if the boundary has not yet been determined.

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you walk the survey the last time? Was there a reason you left early? Was there pressure from home? Why did you not sit in the truck and review all your field notes and think about the possibility that somewhere on that survey something was missed? Did you do everything within your power to gain access to all parts of the property being surveyed?

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have been greatly reduced. But still, an incorrect boundary determination can be made. At our company, we like for even the junior surveyor as well as the seasoned surveyor to calculate boundaries, and have a licensed surveyor calculate the final boundary. It is surprising how many times the junior surveyors are correct, and when the PS agrees with their determination, it's a great confidence booster.

Given that, except in some states, it's impossible for the signing surveyor to visit every jobsite, diligence by the field surveyor is the absolute difference between a great survey and a survey that you are likely to receive complaints about, or in some cases, be terminated by the client. This remains the most difficult task of every survey. Diligence and elimination of omissions really revolves around pure honesty. Did

To my fellow surveyors, are you being honest with yourself and your company? Are you doing everything you can to provide due diligence to the survey as well as communicating problems? If you are not, you are setting you and your company up for failure with your client. And aside from the possibility of losing a survey license, failure is something we can least afford with those that are responsible for our paycheck. ■

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