



Building and Safety Permit Service Center

This guideline is intended to enhance local consistency in application and enforcement of the California Building and Residential Codes. Application of this guideline is project specific and does not authorize any violation of local or state code, ordinance or law in conjunction with the proposed work.

Note: All property lines shall be surveyed by one of the following:

- A California licensed surveyor, or
- A California civil engineer registered prior to January 1, 1982, and in accordance with the requirements of the Professional Engineers Act.

All surveys and survey documentation are to be wet-stamped and signed by the licensed or registered professional.

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Guidelines for SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

Code References

BMC 19.29.030, 19.28.020 and 2016 CBC Section 105.3 Application for Permit:

“To obtain a permit, the applicant shall first file an application therefor in writing on a form furnished by the department of building safety for that purpose. Such application shall ... describe the land on which the proposed work is to be done by legal description, street address or similar description that will readily identify and definitely locate the proposed building or work...”

BMC 19.29.030, 19.28.020 and 2016 CBC Section 107.2.5 Site Plan:

“The construction documents submitted with the application for permit shall be accompanied by a site plan showing to scale the size and location of new construction and existing structures on the site, distances from lot lines, the established street grades and the proposed finished grades; and it shall be drawn in accordance with an accurate boundary line survey.”

Issue: The California Building Code does not provide a clear guidance regarding when a boundary line survey is required.

Guidelines

Guidelines for survey requirements at plan submittal:

1. **All newly constructed buildings or structures.** The survey shall show, at a minimum, existing and proposed topography, existing buildings and structures, all property lines with lengths and bearings, any designated flood plains, creeks, recorded easements, and any other restrictions or site conditions that may impact the proposed development. This may include structures to be reconstructed on the original footprint of an existing building when the property lines require verification.
2. **Any addition, vertical or horizontal.** When the proposed construction is located within 12 inches of a required setback distance for fire resistive protection of exterior walls or openings as set forth in CBC Section 705 and CRC Section R302. Generally, only the affected property lines and their relationship to the existing and new construction will have to be verified. Staking of affected property lines or offset lines may be acceptable as determined by the Building Plans Examiner.
3. **When,** in the opinion of the Building Plans Examiner, unusual conditions exist requiring clarification of property lines, topography, or other site conditions.

Guidelines for survey requirements in the field:

1. **Proximity to the property line.** When a condition is discovered in the field that indicates the proposed construction may be closer to the property line than shown on the approved plans. The Building Inspector (at his or her discretion) may require that a licensed land surveyor provide a survey, or stake the affected property lines, or stake offset lines. Documentation from the licensed surveyor for staked property line(s) or offset line(s) must be submitted to the building inspector.
2. **Site conditions.** Any other site conditions discovered in the field where the building inspector finds that the location of the proposed or existing building or structure may impact the type of construction, location of openings, or other building or zoning code requirements. When necessary, the height of building above finished grade and other finished elevations may also require verification when impacting code requirements.