



tips *for* fence builders



Alberta
Land Surveyors'
Association

The Importance of a Boundary Fence

Fences serve many functions. They can be constructed for security reasons, pet or child confinement, hazard control, by-law requirements and agricultural uses. Or, fences can be simply an architectural or aesthetic improvement to your property. Fences are most often used to mark the boundaries of a property. Whenever fences are located on property boundaries they must be located properly to minimize the chance of causing legal issues that may be expensive to resolve.

Before you get started

Include your Neighbours

Discuss the construction of the fence with your neighbours—remember they have to look at it too. They may share in the cost, helping with the location and even the construction. Ideally you and your neighbour should jointly own the fence—with this arrangement encroachment and access for maintenance is seldom a problem.

Sole Ownership

If you don't get along with your neighbour, locate the fence entirely on your property. Design and locate your fence so maintenance can be done from your side of the property line. Install a fence that is finished on both sides, or place the finished side facing the neighbour's property.



New Neighbours

Consider future problems that may arise should the neighbouring property be sold. Remember that your verbal agreements with your old neighbour are not binding for the new neighbour. Make sure any access arrangements are disclosed to the new neighbour and if there is a problem create a formal agreement with the old neighbour before their property is transferred.

Tips for locating property boundaries

1. The easiest way to determine boundary locations is to hire an Alberta Land Surveyor (ALS).
2. If you know where your property boundary markers are you can mark the property line—there are often monuments (survey markers) for other purposes, such as roadways, etc. Be absolutely certain that you are using the right survey markers (steel pins).
3. Remember it is illegal to disturb or remove any survey marker. Fines for tampering with boundary markers can be up to \$10,000 or jail time. (For more information, see the brochure *“I just built a fence!”* at www.alsa.ab.ca)
4. Call Alberta One-Call and have underground facilities marked. You do not want to hit a gas or electrical line.
5. Ask your neighbour to help in the fence building process.

Permits, By-laws and Restrictions

Most municipalities have regulations about fences. Check with your local Building Department to see what permits, by-laws or other restrictions may affect your construction. Make the proper permit applications, pay the necessary fees and provide construction drawings and site plans if required. Be prepared to provide full information about your proposed fence—

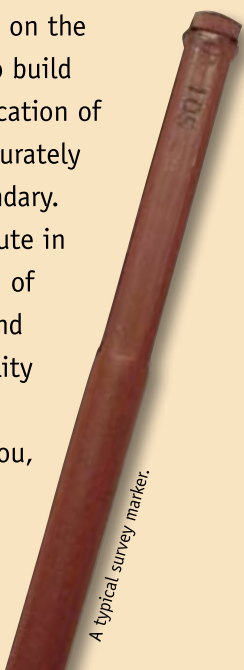
location, material (wood, chain link, etc.), length, height, etc.

Protect Yourself—Do It Right

Fencing is considered an important residential design element and regulations are in place to protect property values from construction that could damage the character of a neighbourhood. If you hire a contractor, be sure you are protected from shoddy workmanship. If there is any doubt about the fence location, insist that the fence line be surveyed properly.

Hire an Alberta Land Surveyor

Retain the services of an Alberta Land Surveyor to have your property line accurately located. This type of survey is often called a fence line survey and an Alberta Land Surveyor will locate your boundary and physically mark the boundary on the ground so you know where to build your fence. Remember the location of a previous fence may not accurately represent the property's boundary. If there is a question or dispute in the future about the location of the boundary, the Alberta Land Surveyor will take responsibility for the work done. To find an Alberta Land Surveyor near you, visit www.alsa.ab.ca



A typical survey marker.

Current Costs—Future Savings

The cost of hiring an Alberta Land Surveyor to conduct a fence line survey is well-justified if there is ever a boundary dispute. The surveying cost may be minor compared to potential costs of legal actions. A boundary determination by an Alberta Land Surveyor will thus reduce future costs, lessen the likelihood of legal action and will stand up in court.

Protect Survey Markers

Survey markers are very important and must be protected. It is illegal to remove or tamper with them. The law applies to everyone including landowners, contractors and landscapers.

An easy way to protect survey markers is to cantilever the fence at the corners. Set your last fencepost two feet back from the corner and cantilever the remainder. Never set the fence post directly over or beside a survey marker as it could result in some disturbance or difficulty in accessing the marker. The cost of replacing a lost or damaged marker can often exceed the cost of the fence so be careful. Your goal should be to ensure the survey markers are easily accessible for your neighbours and others.

For more information about surveying-related issues, contact:

Alberta Land Surveyors' Association

780-429-8805

1-800-665-2572

 www.alsa.ab.ca

Note: Thanks to the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors Public Awareness Committee.