

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why now?

With this change in policy on the management of land boundaries, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will resolve and implement Recommendation 6 of the Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Inspector General Final Audit Report (OIG Report), “Department of the Interior’s Management of Land Boundaries.”

### Who will benefit?

The BLM, public, and commercial entities will benefit. The policy will minimize delays, conflicts, litigation, and other costs caused by ancient, antiquated, or obliterated land boundaries. The policy will enable a savings to the BLM, public, and commercial entities by timely documentation of the condition of the boundaries that could affect the project.

### Will every project have to go through this policy process?

No. Projects less than \$10,000 in value or more than 1/4 mile from a boundary, except those in a protraction diagram or against a body of water, do not have to go through this policy process.

### Why is the threshold for a significant commercial project \$10,000?

Although this number is somewhat arbitrary, a \$10,000 threshold for determining exactly which projects are significant will generate the appropriate number of cases with potential high revenue/value for the BLM to handle. Given limited resources, the BLM cannot examine all projects, so a threshold must exist so that the BLM can analyze high revenue/value cases and manage the workload.

### How is it known that a \$10,000 threshold will generate a manageable number of cases?

Evidence from the OIG Report suggests that \$10,000 is an appropriate threshold amount for a significant project. While this value is low, relative to the value of most parcels and their respective resources and to commercial project investments, the BLM will handle a large portion of cases without the need of an Official Survey or Boundary Evidence Certificate. The OIG reports that 50 percent of all boundaries have fair to high reliability, meaning that they were last surveyed since 1910. The BLM will handle cases involving these boundaries using only *records* of these particular boundaries, without direct evidence of an obliterated or confused boundary. It is likely that only 50 percent or less of cases may require field verification.

### How is/are the value determined?

The Field Manager/Authorized Officer (FM/AO) will estimate the project value of projects. The market rate will determine the value of resources and land. Investment and income from commercial projects will be estimated. In addition to the market rate for land, non-resource factors, such as aesthetic value, wildlife, etc., will also be analyzed in determining the value for any given project.

### What is provided?

The Chief Cadastral Surveyor will provide the FM/AO with a Boundary Evidence Certificate. The certificate addresses the type of risk associated with the project caused by ancient, antiquated, or obliterated boundaries, excluding those matters which can only be determined by survey. The boundary assessment is conducted by a cadastral surveyor or Certified Federal Surveyor (CFedS).

### What is new?

The type of work is not new, but the systematization of the business processes is new. Many programs and offices have been informally operating under this policy and using cadastral services for boundary and/or land description evaluation prior to land and resource transactions, and commercial projects of any value. This Instruction Memorandum standardizes work processes and formalizes the documentation of the work product.

### Who is responsible for a safe and efficient project?

The FM/AO is in charge and ultimately responsible for the outcome. The policy provides efficient and cost-effective tools to accomplish the project.

### How will the Policy benefit Field Offices, Land and Resource Program Managers, and Commercial Project Managers?

The policy provides a standardized process and documentation for the exchange of information between the offices and managers (those who deal with the project's "what" and "who") and the boundary experts (those who deal with the "where" of the project).

### Why should I have a Surveyor conduct a Certificate of Inspection and Possession (CIP)?

A surveyor brings the unique knowledge combination of title records, survey records, and physical Boundary Evidence. A surveyor is trained to distinguish between ownership corner markers and spurious boundary markers. In most cases, but not in every case, the surveyor can tell by inspection, with records research, whether a fence or other use or occupancy line is the true boundary or is close enough to protect the public's land and resources, and the commercial entity's investment.

### What is a Boundary Evidence Certificate?

A Boundary Evidence Certificate is a management tool for BLM project managers. A Boundary Evidence Certificate is not a land survey. A Boundary Evidence Certificate is a non-survey alternative which can be used by BLM and commercial entities for the purpose of assuring that the boundary evidence is adequate for the intended project.

### Is Boundary Evidence Certificate a survey?

No. While it is true that the Standards for Boundary Evidence process cannot furnish the accuracy and kind of detail that would be available through an Official Survey, it is sufficiently

specific and detailed to satisfy, in those instances where the Boundary Evidence has been modernized, the FM/AO's management of land boundary requirements for a project.

Will the Commercial Entities and the Public be misled?

Ongoing field office discussions with commercial entities and the public must emphasize that a Boundary Evidence Certificate is not an Official Survey and does not satisfy the needs that can only be fulfilled by an Official Survey. A Boundary Evidence Certificate can be sufficient to quantify the risk associated with projects related to boundary location. Certificates are permanently filed for future reference.

What do I do if I am uncertain of the condition of the project boundaries and description?

Consult with your Chief Cadastral Surveyor.