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Mississippi Standards of Practice for Professional Land Surveyors

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Chapter 1

Overview of the Mississippi Professional Land Surveying Standards

Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors

The Mississippi Legislature created the Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors (Board) in 1928 with the charge of protecting life, health, and property and to promote the public welfare. The Board originally governed only professional engineers; the enabling legislation was expanded in 1962 to include the licensure of land surveyors. The Board has the power to adopt rules, set standards for licensure, and investigate and discipline unauthorized, negligent, or incompetent practice. The Board reviews applications, administers examinations, licenses qualified applicants, and regulates the professional practice of licensees throughout the state. The Board consists of nine members appointed by the Governor of Mississippi for a term of four years: six licensed professional engineers, appointed from nominees recommended by the Mississippi Engineering Society, and three licensed professional surveyors who are not also licensed as professional engineers, appointed from nominees recommended by the Mississippi Association of Professional Surveyors.

Mississippi Statutory Laws

The Mississippi statutory laws are a collection of state laws organized by subject area into a code made up of titles and chapters. The Mississippi Code of 1972, Title 73, Chapter 13 (Sections 73-13-1 through 73-13-105) was enacted by the Mississippi Legislature in the interest of public health and safety to regulate the practice of engineering and surveying in the State of Mississippi. It is continuously updated by laws that create, amend, or repeal statutory material. The Mississippi statutory laws state the law followed by the history of the law, which indicates when it was originally filed and subsequent effective dates of enactment.

Mississippi Board Rules

The Mississippi Administrative Code is a compilation of the rules and regulations of Mississippi's regulatory agencies. It is organized by titles and parts, with each part representing a department, board, or other agency. Title 30, Part 901 of the Mississippi Administrative Code, commonly referred to as the Rules and Regulations of the Board, was made under the authority of Title 73, Chapter 13 of the Mississippi Code and states the Board's functions with respect to the practice of engineering and surveying. They are continuously updated by the Board. The Board Rules record the rule followed by the history of the rule, which indicates when the rule was originally filed and its effective date, as well as the date on which any amendment or repeal was filed and its effective date.

Selected provisions of the Mississippi Standards of Practice for Surveying, contained in Part 901, Chapter 7 of the Board Rules, are presented in Chapter 2 below.

Mississippi Board Disciplinary Authority

The Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors is charged with the duty of issuing licenses to those professional surveyors it has determined to be qualified. Under Section 73-13-37 of the Mississippi Code, it has the authority and responsibility to reprimand, place on probation, suspend, or revoke a license when charges such as gross incompetence, negligence, or unethical conduct are proven against a licensee. The Board is not authorized to settle boundary line disputes, establish costs for services, correct miscalculations or errors in a survey of real property, or settle contractual disputes. These types of problems are civil matters and are usually settled between the parties involved either in or out of the courts. If wrongdoing by a licensee is proven in court, the Board would like to have certified copies of any orders issued to prevent the wrongdoing from happening again and to take other action as considered appropriate. Likewise, the Board has no powers of restitution, as these are reserved for the courts.

Chapter 2

Mississippi Standards of Practice for Professional Land Surveyors

Mississippi Standards of Practice for Land Surveying, Part 901, Chapter 7: Standards of Practice for Surveying

The following are excerpts from Part 901, Chapter 7 of the Rules and Regulations of the Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors, governing the practice of professional surveying in Mississippi. If you wish to review the complete Mississippi Administrative Code and Standards of Practice for Surveying, respectively, please visit the websites at:

<https://www.pepls.ms.gov/surveying-standards>

<https://www.pepls.ms.gov/sites/pepls/files/PEPLS%202020/Surveying%20Standards/Standards%20of%20Practice%20for%20Surveying%20-%20November%2021%2C%202025.pdf>

§Part 901, Chapter 7, Rule 7.1: Types of Surveys

Whenever a survey is performed, it shall comply with Statute, and the Standards of Practice for Surveying in Mississippi as described below. Types of surveys shall include, but not be limited to the following as described:

1. Boundary survey, route survey, easement survey, and lease survey shall mean a survey, the primary purpose of which includes, but is not limited to, determining the perimeter of a parcel or tract of land by establishing or re-establishing corners, and monuments, for the purposes of describing, platting, or dividing the parcel and preparing a description(s) of the parcel of land.
 - a. If an easement survey is performed in conjunction with a boundary survey, route survey, or lease survey, and the easement is adjacent to and parallel with the boundary lines(s) created or re-established, then monumentation of the easement is not required.
 - b. If an easement survey is performed in conjunction with a boundary survey, route survey, or lease survey, and the easement is temporary in nature, then monumentation is not required.
2. "Topographic Survey" shall mean a survey of the natural and select man-made features of a part of the earth's surface by ground measurements or remote sensing to determine horizontal and vertical spatial relations of the features.
3. "Hydrographic Survey" shall mean a survey having for its principle purpose the determination of data relating to bodies of water and which may consist of the determination of one or several of the following classes of data: depth of water and configuration of bottom, directions and force of current, water stages, and location of

fixed objects for survey and navigation purposes.

4. "Control Survey" shall mean a survey which provides horizontal or vertical position data for the support or control of subordinate surveying, mapping, or construction layout purposes.

§Part 901, Chapter 7, Rule 7.2: Attesting to Quality and Responsibility for Surveys

To provide the client with the assurance that the work was performed under the direct Supervision of a licensee, and was performed in accordance with these Standards of Practice, documentation shall be sealed, signed, and dated by the licensee in responsible charge, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. When a boundary, route, easement, or lease survey is performed, a plat shall be prepared, and the plat shall bear the seal and signature of the Professional Surveyor in responsible charge as well as the date the seal was affixed to the plat.
2. When a topographic survey, hydrographic survey, or control survey is performed at the request of a client, any plat, map or report that is the final product of that licensee for that project shall bear the seal and signature of the Professional Surveyor or the Professional Engineer in responsible charge as well as the date the seal was affixed to the plat. If a topographic survey, hydrographic survey, or control survey is performed by a licensee to obtain data to be used by that licensee to perform calculations or to be incorporated into a final product of that project, then the final product of that project shall bear the seal and signature of the Professional Surveyor or the Professional Engineer in responsible charge as well as the date the seal was 36 affixed to the plat.

§Part 901, Chapter 7, Rule 7.3: Requirements

The boundary, route, easement, and lease survey plat shall conform to the following requirements and shall include the following information:

1. The plat shall be displayed on any reasonably stable and durable drawing paper, vellum, linen, or film of reproducible quality. No plat or map shall have dimensions of less than 8-1/2 x 11 inches.
2. The plat shall show the scale, area, and classification of the survey (A, B, or C). These classifications are based upon both the purposes for which the property is being used at the time the survey is performed and any proposed developments which are disclosed by the client. This classification must be based on the criteria set forth in Rule 7.4, and the survey must meet the minimum specifications set forth in Rule 7.5. The scale shall be sufficient to show detail for the appropriate classification.

3. The survey must be referenced to either true north, grid north, or the record bearing of a well-defined and monumented line found in (a) existing subdivisions; (b) city or town plats; or, (c) a previous survey when the current survey is a division of said previous survey and enough monumentation is available to establish the original orientation.
 - a. A definitive north arrow shall be shown on the plat.
 - b. The reference meridian used must be clearly stated on the plat along with the method used to obtain it.
 - c. If a reference line is used as the reference meridian, the monuments used to determine the meridian shall be clearly shown and described on the plat and the reference line noted as such. The recording information of the source material used as the reference meridian shall also be stated.
4. All monuments, natural and artificial, found or set shall be shown and described on the survey plat. The monuments shall be noted as found or set. All monuments set shall be ferrous metal, or contain ferrous metal, not less than one-half (1/2) inch in diameter, and not less than eighteen (18) inches in length. All monuments set shall display the license number of the Professional Surveyor, the COA number of the Firm, or the name of the responsible government agency. Alternate monument types may be used in asphalt, concrete, rock, or other like materials where appropriate (e.g. nail with washer, cotton picker spindle, etc.). Use of alternate monument types does not relieve the surveyor from the obligation to display the license number, COA number, or name of the government agency. When a monument is found with a cap that contains the license number of the Professional Surveyor or the COA number of the Firm, the license or COA number shall be stated on the plat.
5. All corners shall be monumented, either by a found monument clearly described on the survey plat, or by a monument set as described above, except however:
 - a. a corner which falls in a creek, stream or ditch, or in a gravel or asphalt road. Courses that intersect a creek, stream, ditch, or road that is to be used as a boundary of the parcel being surveyed should have witness corners set on the line intersecting same and be clearly shown on the plat.
 - b. a corner which falls upon solid rock, concrete or other like materials which prevents displaying the license number of the Professional Surveyor, the COA number of the Firm, or the name of the responsible government agency. Such corners shall be marked in a permanent manner (chiseled mark, drilled hole, etc.) and clearly identified on the plat or witnessed by Witness Corners.
6. Witness Corners shall be set whenever a corner monument cannot be set (e.g. lake or pond) or is likely to be disturbed.

7. Any time witness corners are set, they shall be set as close as practical to the true corner and shall meet the same physical standards that would be required for the true corner. If only one (1) witness corner is set, it must be set on the actual boundary line or prolongation thereof. Otherwise, at least two (2) witness corners shall be set and so noted on the plat of the survey. The bearing and distance referencing the witness corners from the true corner shall be shown on the plat. If the witness corner is set on the boundary line, only the distance from the true corner is required to be shown.
8. The plat of a metes and bounds survey must clearly describe and show the monument marking the commencing point and the point of beginning for the survey. Commencing Point is a welldefined, monumented point referenced to the U.S. Public Land (GLO) Survey system or other recorded subdivision plat, recorded and monumented City or County plat or map, compatible with Mississippi Statutes for filing and recording of land ownership that is used in a metes and bounds description. Point of Beginning is a well-defined monumented point referenced to the U.S. Public Land (GLO) Survey system or recorded subdivision plat, recorded and monumented City or County plat or map, compatible with Mississippi Statutes for recording land ownership that is used as the beginning and ending point in a metes and bounds land description.
9. All discrepancies between the survey and the recorded description(s), and the source of all information used in making the survey shall be indicated. When an inconsistency is found, including a gap or overlap, excess or deficiency, erroneously located boundary lines or monuments, or when any doubt as to the location on the ground of the true boundary or property rights exists, the nature of the inconsistency shall be clearly shown on the drawing.
10. A description and location of any physical evidence of occupation found along a boundary line, including but not limited to fences, walls, buildings, or monuments.
11. The horizontal length (distance) and direction (bearing or azimuth) of each line as specified in the legal description and as determined in the actual survey process.
12. Four (4) elements of all circular curves shall be shown (radius, arc length, chord bearing and chord length).
13. When a property description is required by the client, the description prepared by the Professional Surveyor should list all pertinent information that is shown on the survey plat to include, but not limited to: commencing point, point of beginning, course bearing and distances, description of all corner monuments, description and offset of witness corners and basis of bearings. If state plane coordinates are referenced as a part of the description, the items in Rule 7.3.18 shall also be included.

14. The lot and block or tract numbers or other designations, including those of adjoining lots and tracts if the survey is within a recorded subdivision.
15. Visible encroachments onto or from adjoining property or abutting streets with the extent of such encroachment. No sub-surface encroachments are required to be located unless their existence and location is furnished to the surveyor by the client.
16. All public and private rights-of-way or easements which are observed, adjoining, or crossing the land surveyed and pertinent to the survey. If streets or street rights-of-way abutting the land surveyed are not physically open, a note to this effect shall be shown upon the drawing.
17. Location of all permanent improvements which are relevant to the purpose of the survey being performed with reference to the boundaries.
18. Any time State Plane Coordinates are used in the process of conducting a survey, the following information shall be shown on the plat:
 - a. the State Plane Coordinates System Zone,
 - b. the horizontal or vertical datum used,
 - c. the method used to derive information such as Global Positioning System or conventional survey, including any published horizontal and vertical control points used (if any),
 - d. a combined or correctional factor,
 - e. the convergence angle,
 - f. the coordinates of a minimum of two (2) reference points relevant to the survey.
19. Regardless of the type of survey, a plat or survey shall bear the name, address, date of field survey, signature, and seal of the licensee in responsible charge. This signature and seal are certification that the survey meets the requirements of the Standards of Practice for Surveying in Mississippi as adopted by the Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors. Other regulations including the Manual of Instructions for the Survey of U.S. Public Lands and all subdivision Laws and regulations of the State of Mississippi Statutes shall be followed.

§Part 901, Chapter 7, Rule 7.4: Classification of Surveys

Class A Surveys - Surveys of extensively developed and expensive properties which require maximum surveying accuracy. This includes, but is not limited to, surveys of urban business district properties and highly developed commercial properties.

Class B Surveys - Surveys of properties which are subject to costly improvements and justify a high degree of surveying accuracy. This includes, but is not limited to, surveys of commercial properties and higher priced residential properties located outside urban business districts and highly developed commercial areas.

Class C Surveys - Surveys of all remaining properties which cannot be classified as Class A or B surveys.

§Part 901, Chapter 7, Rule 7.5: Minimum Accuracy§ 201 KAR 18:150, Section 5: Record Research

1. Any time the survey utilizes a conventional traverse loop or traverse between known control monuments, the following parameters shall be satisfied.

PARAMETER	Survey Classification			Remarks and Formula
	A	B	C	
Unadjusted Closure (Minimum)	1:10,000	1:7,500	1:5,000	Loop or Between Control Monuments
Angular Closure (Minimum)	$15'' \sqrt{N}$	$25'' \sqrt{N}$	$30'' \sqrt{N}$	N=Number of Angles in Traverse
Accuracy of Bearing	± 1 Min.	± 2 Min.	± 3 Min.	Relative to Source
Accuracy of Distances	0.03 ft. + 50ppm	0.05 ft. + 100ppm	0.07 ft. + 150ppm	100 ppm = 1:10,000
Elevations for Boundaries Controlled by Tides, Contours, Rivers, etc. Accurate to:	± 0.05 ft.	± 0.10 ft.	± 0.20 ft.	Based on NGVD/NAVD
Location of Improvements Structures, Paving, etc. (Tie Measurement)	± 0.1 ft.	± 0.2 ft.	± 1.0 ft.	

2. If radial survey methods such as global positioning systems (GPS) or other acceptable technologies or procedures are used to locate or establish points on the boundary survey, the Professional Surveyor shall apply acceptable surveying procedures and perform adequate quality control measures to ensure that the allowable positional accuracy and/or positional tolerance of such points are not exceeded.

§Part 901, Chapter 7, Rule 7.6: Enforcement

Licensees failing to meet these standards of practice will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the Board.

Chapter 4

Review of Disciplinary Cases

The following disciplinary cases were extracted from official Board meeting minutes and newsletters published by the Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors. The selected cases involve professional land surveyors and illustrate different violations arising from the practice of land surveying in Mississippi.

CASE 1: Case # 0820/04

Case Review: The Board's investigation resulted in a finding of a Surveying Standards violation against the licensee.

Board Decision: Proposed Consent Order: a \$500.00 fine, a requirement that the licensee's next three surveys be submitted to the Board for review and approval prior to release, and a requirement to attend and complete a face-to-face Mississippi Standards of Practice class with proof of completion submitted to the Board.

CASE 2: Case # 0820/03

Case Review: The Board's investigation concerned a Surveying Standards matter with a possible aiding-and-abetting component. i.e., a licensee potentially facilitating a standards violation by another party rather than committing the underlying survey error personally.

Board Decision: Reported as "in process" as of the October 2020 meeting; final disposition not stated in the minutes reviewed.

CASE 3: Case # 0721/22

Case Review: The Board's investigation resulted in a finding of a Surveying Standards violation against the licensee.

Board Decision: A proposed Consent Order was mailed to the licensee.

CASE 4: Case # 1022/31

Case Review: The licensee was found to have set monuments ("pins") improperly in connection with a survey, a violation of the monumentation requirements of the Standards of Practice for Surveying.

Board Decision: A fine was assessed and the case closed; separately, the same reporting period noted that a licensee was required to voluntarily surrender their license and remove improperly set pins, with a compliance deadline of December 31, 2022, on pain of license revocation for noncompliance.

Appendix A

References

State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Standards of Practice for Professional Land Surveyors.

<https://www.pepls.ms.gov/surveying-standards>

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