What can you do to help protect monuments?

Realizing the importance of survey monuments is the first step in helping to preserve them. Any time work is done close to a property corner a surveyor should be consulted to determine the actual location of the property corner.

If you suspect that a survey monument could be destroyed by construction work you should give your provincial Land Surveyors Association a call for more information, or for assistance in finding a local Professional Surveyor.
A Professional Land Surveyor will then come out to find or mark the monuments that could be destroyed.

Once these monuments are identified and their positions established methods can be employed to ensure that the monuments can be protected or replaced if destroyed.

The earlier that a Professional Land Surveyor is called in, the better the chances of reducing monument replacement costs.

If you have any questions or concerns about this topic please call your provincial land surveyors association.

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Preservation of Survey Monuments

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GÉOMÈTRES PROFESSIONNELS DU CANADA

What is a survey monument?

Over a period of more than one hundred years Professional Land Surveyors in Canada have used various means to mark or indicate boundary lines or corners. As a whole the resulting marks are known as monuments.

The most common means of marking a boundary or corner these days is to place an iron pin. These iron pins are driven into the ground and are flush with ground or countersunk. Other types of monuments over the years have included: wooden posts, a set of dug earth pits and earth mounds, stone mounds, blazed trees also known as bearing trees.

Sometimes the monument that indicates a boundary or corner may have an auxiliary marker that is used to show that the actual monument is close by. These auxiliary markers are typically large wooden or steel posts that stick up from the ground and are easily seen by the naked eye. It is important to know that these auxiliary markers do not mark the actual boundary line or corner.

Where are survey monuments typically placed?

Survey monuments are used to mark the position of many things. When monuments are used for marking property boundaries they are placed at property corners and sometimes along the property boundary.

In urban areas monuments are placed at lot and block corners of private and public property. They are placed at the corners of large parcels of land. They may also be used to mark the location of underground utilities.

In rural areas monuments are used to mark section and quarter section corners, river lots, concession lots, townships, etc. Monuments are also used to mark the edges of a road right of way. In this case they mark bends in the road and also where the road intersects private or public land parcels.

Why are survey monuments important?

Monuments are considered to be so important that the removal or destruction of a monument is illegal and is prosecuted in a Court of Law.

Survey monuments give an indication of where property boundaries are. Property boundaries and corners are the basis for identifying the extents of land ownership. Ensuring that boundaries and corners are protected means that ownership and location of land parcels are readily identified. This allows land owners to place improvements on their property without encroaching onto an adjoining property.

Monuments can also be used to indicate the position for things other than property ownership. Underground infrastructure such as gas, power and phone lines are very important to the development of communities. Very often monuments are used to indicate the position of the right of ways for these structures. Costly and dangerous situations could arise if the location of an underground utility is in question due to the loss of a survey monument.

What happens when a monument is destroyed?

Whenever a monument is destroyed the location of land boundaries and as a consequence ownership are brought into question. Any time a monument has to be replaced it incurs significant costs in terms of dollars and time. When a monument has been destroyed more often than not a significant amount of work is required to determine its original position prior to replacement.

According to statutory regulations, monuments can only be placed by a Professional Licensed Land Surveyor.

Unfortunately, non-licensed individuals will sometimes attempt to replace a monument. It is against the Law for any individual who is not a professionally licensed land surveyor to determine property corners or limits. These persons do not have the years of training and expertise to ensure that the monument is replaced in the correct position. Incorrectly placed monuments will complicate the determination of the correct position of a replacement monument.

What are the causes for the destruction of survey monuments?

Typical urban destruction of monuments is caused by land owners placing fences and doing landscape improvements. In some cases placing sidewalks and driveways can cause the destruction of monuments.

In rural areas it is not uncommon for many monuments to be destroyed during a single road construction or maintenance project. Some farming practices can be the cause of monument destruction.