

Survey Policy

Where determined by the Building Official to be of concern, the following conditions may require that surveys be performed to establish property lines or points of reference:

Condition Requiring Survey	Scope of Survey Requirement ^{1,2,3}	
Side yard, front yard, and/or rear yard setback from proposed structure to property line(s) is within 1 foot of minimum setback zoning restrictions (as measured by City GIS)	New construction on vacant land	All property corners and property lines and the building footprint, including any detached structure(s).
	New construction, or additions on developed land	Property corners/lines and the building footprint of existing and new construction, addition(s), and detached structure(s).
Setback from proposed structure to fire resistance critical lines or other limits within 1 foot of minimum established criteria (as measured by City GIS)	Property corners/lines and the building, building addition, or detached structure footprint in vicinity of fire resistance critical line(s) or other limit(s).	
Single-family, duplex, new construction or addition – Height within 5 feet of zoning limits (as determined by City GIS topography)	Topographical survey to establish the elevations of the existing ground level at the four corners of the smallest rectangle surrounding the building at the foundation. Other points of reference may include elevation of the critical points of height of the roof of the building or the critical points of a structure at the completion of the building or structure framing.	
Excavated or filled single-family, duplex, new construction, or addition – Height within 5 feet of zoning limits (as determined by City GIS topography)	<p>1. Where the site has been or will be excavated more than 5 feet around the entire foundation, a survey is required to establish the new ground surface elevations.</p> <p>2. Where the site has been or will be filled, ground surface elevations for establishing the height of the building may be taken from original ground surface if a licensed soils engineer can verify the depth to undisturbed grades at the four corners of a building.</p>	
Single-family or duplex detached garage within 2 feet of zoning limits (as measured by City GIS)	Topographical survey to establish the elevations of the existing ground level at the four corners of the smallest rectangle surrounding the building at the foundation. Other points of reference may include elevation of the critical points of height of the roof or the building or the critical points of a structure at the completion of the building or structure framing.	
Property under a property line dispute	Disputed setbacks or heights as determined by the Building Official.	

Notes:

1. The survey is at the cost of the applicant.
2. Surveys must be signed and stamped by a surveyor licensed in the state of Washington.
3. The Building Official may waive some or all survey requirements if a detailed review of the site conditions indicates setback and height requirements are in compliance. The applicant may be required to submit plans, photos, and other documentation for this review.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org (253) 591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.