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**BOARD OF REGISTRATION OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS
AND LAND SURVEYORS ADVISORY**

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The purpose of this advisory is to clarify tasks that may be performed by Professional Land Surveyors (“PLS”) and Professional Engineers qualified in the Branch of civil engineering (“PE (Civil)”) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This advisory issued by the Board of Registration of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (“Board”) seeks to clarify which common tasks are properly performed by the respective professions. Please note that this list is not exhaustive of tasks that may be performed by either profession. Further, please review all footnotes for any applicable limitations on the performance of any task by Professional Land Surveyors and Professional Engineers (Civil).

Nothing in this advisory shall be construed to waive or modify any applicable provisions of law or regulation or other obligations. It seeks only to provide guidance to licensees and the general public as to different tasks that may be performed by Professional Land Surveyors and Professional Engineers (Civil). The Board may modify this advisory periodically based upon any changes in the professions.

<u>Task</u>	<u>PLS</u>	<u>PE (Civil)</u>
Boundary Line Survey ¹	Yes	No
Topographic Survey	Yes	Yes ²
Survey Control	Yes	No
Hydrographic Survey	Yes	Yes ²
Property Descriptions	Yes	No
Drainage Design	No	Yes



Construction Layout	Yes	Yes ³
Soil Evaluation for Septic System Design	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁴
Septic System Design	No	Yes
Highway Design	No	Yes ⁵
Subdivision Design	Yes ⁶	Yes ⁵
Utility Service Design	No	Yes
Condominium Site and Unit Plan	Yes ⁷	Yes ⁷
As-Built Survey	Yes	Yes ⁸
FEMA Elevation Certificates	Yes	Yes

¹ Per 250 CMR 2.09(3), a Boundary is “a legal demarcation between real property title or rights and includes but is not limited to proposed or existing property lines, Regulatory Lines, lease lines, easement lines, and Jurisdictional Lines.”

² Professional Engineers (Civil) shall not perform a topographic or hydrographic survey if there is mapping which requires survey ground control; there is mapping that must comply with the Land Surveying Procedures and Standards set forth in 250 CMR 6.00 et. seq.; or if there are existing or proposed structures, features or Boundaries shown relative to property lines. All topographic surveys related to or featuring land boundaries or property lines must be performed by a Professional Land Surveyor.

³ Professional Engineers (Civil) performing construction layouts must ensure that their work is in compliance with 250 CMR 5.01(2) and may not perform work that is related to the determination of property lines. “A Professional Engineer qualified in the Branch of civil engineering may also perform land surveying incidental to his or her engineering work relative to locating or relocating any of the Fixed-works embraced within the practice of civil engineering, but excluding the determination of property lines.” 250 CMR 5.01(2)(a). “The delineation of existing or proposed structures, features or Boundaries relative to property lines requires the determination of property lines and therefore must be performed by a Professional Land Surveyor.” 250 CMR 5.01(2)(b). See also M.G.L. c. 112, § 81D.

⁴ Both Professional Land Surveyors and Professional Engineers must meet the criteria outlined in 310 CMR 15.017 to be approved as a Soil Evaluator prior to engaging in Soil Evaluations for Septic System Designs.

⁵ Survey work which includes, but is not limited to, Boundary lines, lot lines, street lines, right of way lines, easement lines, and record plans, must be prepared by a Professional Land Surveyor.

⁶ Grading, utility, and drainage design shall be prepared by a Professional Engineer.

⁷ The condominium site plan must be prepared by a Professional Land Surveyor. Unit plans may be prepared by a Professional Engineer (Civil).

⁸ Professional Engineers (Civil) preparing as-built surveys must ensure that their work is performed in compliance with 250 CMR 5.01(2)(a) and 250 CMR 5.01(2)(b). Pursuant to said regulations, “[a] Professional Engineer qualified in the Branch of civil engineering may also perform land surveying incidental to his or her engineering work relative to locating or relocating any of the Fixed-works embraced within the practice of civil engineering, but excluding the determination of property lines. The delineation of existing or proposed structures, features or Boundaries relative to property lines requires the determination of property lines and therefore must be performed by a Professional Land Surveyor.” For further guidance, please see Board FAQ: [Can a Professional Engineer \(PE\) certify a site plan or an as-built plan which references and/or utilizes a property line determination that was previously completed by a Professional Land Surveyor \(PLS\)?](#)