

SLIDE 1 – COVER PAGE

SLIDE 2 – TOPICS

In this section we will cover the following topics:

- I. Purpose of Legal Descriptions
- II. Types of Legal Descriptions
 - A. Metes and bounds
 - B. Government survey system
 - C. Lot and block survey system
- III. Assessor's Parcel Number
- IV. Preparation and Use of Surveys
- V. Basic real estate math – calculating acreage

SLIDE 3 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the purpose for legal descriptions
- Understand the licensee's role and responsibilities as it pertains to legal descriptions
- Explain and distinguish among the three types of legal descriptions
- Describe the process of creating a legal description using the metes-and-bounds method
- Locate a township by township line and range
- Locate a particular section within a township
- Understand how to subdivide a section

SLIDE 4 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES – (continued)

- Calculate the number of acres in a parcel based on the legal description, and convert to square feet
- Explain the use of assessor's parcel numbers
- Apply the measurements associated with checks, townships and sections

SLIDE 5 – KEY TERMS

Here are some key terms we'll encounter in this lesson:

- **base line** – the designated line for identifying townships; base East-West Line in GSS system
- **benchmark** – permanent brass plate in the ground that notates feet above sea level at that location
- **check** – a square 24 miles on each side created by intersecting guide meridians and corrections lines; 16 townships.
- **datum** – a reference point used for legal descriptions of properties located above or below sea level.

SLIDE 6

- **government survey system** – based on intersecting lines to describe property in concise symbols and words. Florida utilizes the Tallahassee principal meridian and base line.
- **legal description** – a way to define or accurately pinpoint a property's location and size
- **lot and block** – used to describe properties in residential, commercial, and industrial subdivisions
- **metes and bounds** – describes property perimeter by landmarks, monuments, distances, angles from point of beginning (POB), describes perimeter and returns to POB; usable within rectangular survey system

SLIDE 7

- **monument** – visible marker utilized to identify each corner of a parcel
- **point of beginning** – metes and bounds starting point; must be accurate
- **principal meridian** – the single designated meridian for identifying townships in the principal meridian's geographical "jurisdiction." There are 36 principal meridians in the national survey.
- **range** – range lines run parallel to the principal meridian every six miles

SLIDE 8

- **section** – township is divided up into 36 sections with each section being one square mile (640 acres)
- **survey** – the act by which the quantity of a piece of land is ascertained; the paper containing a statement of the courses, distances, and quantity of land
- **terminus** – a post or stone marking a boundary
- **township** – grid pattern formed by crossing of range and township lines; six by six mile square is a township
- **township line/tier** – horizontal strip parallel to the base line every six miles

SLIDE 9

There are many common ways of describing properties: address (100 Main Street), name (Buckingham Palace), and general description ("the south forty acres").

Such informal descriptions are not acceptable for use in public recordation or, generally speaking, in a court of law because they lack both permanence and sufficient information for a surveyor to locate the property.

Even if a legal document or public record refers to an address, the reference is always supported by an accepted legal description.

In this lesson we will look at all aspects of a legal description – what it is, the different types and how a legal description is prepared and used in property titles.

SLIDE 10

What is a legal description?

A *legal description* of real property is one which accurately locates and identifies the boundaries of the subject parcel to a degree acceptable by courts of law in the state where the property is located.

The general criterion for a legal description is that it alone provides sufficient data for a surveyor to locate the parcel.

A legal description identifies the property as unique and distinct from all other properties.

SLIDE 11

Systems of legal description, in theory, facilitate transfers of ownership and prevent boundary disputes and problems with chain of title and are required for:

- Public recording
- Creating a valid deed of conveyance or lease
- Completing mortgage documents
- Executing and recording other legal documents

Legal descriptions are pivotal in considering court rulings on encroachments and easements.

SLIDE 12

Established boundary lines

Any *legal description* must include language defined by the survey system being used that accurately identifies the boundaries of the property.

We'll cover three accepted systems in use today for defining property boundaries in the next section.