

What is “pin finding” and is it legal¹?

Simple answer, No it is definitely not legal unless the survey is performed under the direction of a licensed professional land surveyor.

According to discussions posted on the ACSM² message board (on the NSPS³ website), there are many frustrated professional land surveyors with regards to **pin finders**. The public needs to be aware that there is no such thing as “pin finding.” Boundary corners can only be located or “found” by a firm with a licensed land surveyor on staff, overseeing the surveyor in the field. If anyone mentions anything about the location of your boundary corner or shows you your boundary corner, that is by definition a boundary survey, which must be performed by a surveyor, not an unlicensed individual calling themselves a “pin finder.”

The posting also mentions that a Civil Engineer is not authorized to practice land surveying, that if he/she were to go do his/her own topographic survey and ties (or checks) into any existing monuments/boundaries, this is practicing land surveying without a license!

The fact is that anyone who indicates that a monument is a property corner, whether they are a Civil Engineer, a realtor, a property owner, etc. is practicing land surveying.

“Boundary surveying is NOT an exact mathematical science. It is a profession that takes years of experience and specialized training to master. It is the discovering of evidence, the analysis of the evidence in the fact of the record and reconciling it all to discover the likely location of the boundary. Sometimes it is quite easy and others it is very difficult.”

So please be careful when ordering a survey. Ask the firm if there is a licensed professional land surveyor who is licensed in the State of Hawaii. Also, to help you do your research you can click on the following link <http://pvl.ehawaii.gov/pvlsearch/app> to check online to see if the potential surveyor working for the firm you are hiring is in fact licensed or if they are one of those “pin finders”.

EXAMPLE OF A SEARCH:

One of our licensed professional land surveyors on staff is Chrystal Thomas Yamasaki, LPLS.

To search by **License Number**, use the drop down menu and click on LS for Land Surveyor, then enter in the License number. (i.e. LS-4331) Once you have entered in this information it will take you to the results page, click on the details icon to check if their license is still active and if they are in good standing. If the surveyor does not show up in the results, chances are they may not be licensed in the State of Hawaii or they may not be licensed period!

To search by **Individual**, type in their last name and a part of the first name (i.e. yamasaki chrys), this will bring up the same information as the search by license number.

The firm Wes Thomas Associates is not licensed since each individual in the land surveying professional must take an exam, pass it and therefore become a LPLS. Wes Thomas Associates is proud to have on-staff four individuals which are licensed in the State of Hawaii.

¹This information is not a formal legal opinion, please seek legal counsel as may be appropriate.

²American Congress on Surveying and Mapping

³National Society of Professional Surveying

ACSM Message Board - Re: Pinfinding vs Surveying, <http://boards.acsm.net> 06/15/2007