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## **Tips for Locating Property Pins**

### What are property pins, where are they located, and what do they look like?

Property pins are thin iron bars, two to three feet long, and sometimes capped with plastic, which the original survey crew inserted on the property lines. If your property is a platted lot, there should be property pins located at all corners of your property. The top of the cap should be at ground level; however, over time they may get pushed underground. If this happens, you can locate your pins by digging for them or using a metal detector in the area that you think they are possibly located. Surveyors may also place a metal T-bar post at the property pin location. The City does not provide a service to locate property pins.

### Locating Your Property Pins

#### Obtain a Plat Map of Your Property

Plat Maps can be viewed on the County Assessor websites. The maps will provide the property dimensions and often the Right of Way (ROW) information. If you have questions about searching their sites or reading the maps contact your County Assessor.

- Polk County Assessor - <http://www.assess.co.polk.ia.us/cgi-bin/invenquery/allquery.cgi>  
Search for your address and then click the link to "Bigger Map" to see just the map.

- Dallas County Assessor - <http://lti.gmdsolutions.com/dallas> Search by property owner or by address.

#### Measure from Centerline of Road

Using your plat map as a guide, measure half the distance of the ROW toward your property. The traveled portion of the road along with any shoulders, ditches and sidewalks are all included within the ROW. Your property line should not be measured from the edge of the road; it should be measured from the center of the ROW. This will provide an approximate location of the front property line. Pins are normally located within 12" of the sidewalk in a newer subdivision, on the side closer to the house. In very old subdivisions, the front property line may actually be under the paved road.

#### Check Sidewalks

Examine the lines that are cut in the sidewalk in front of the house. Often the contractor who poured the sidewalk started and stopped on the property lines, so those cut lines may coincide with the edges of your property. As well, the appearance of the concrete on your side of the property may be slightly different from that on your neighbor's side. This may help you locate the side property lines.

## Using a Metal Detector

Contact local hardware stores to see where you can rent a metal detector. Using a metal detector, move the device over the ground beginning about one (1) foot inside the sidewalk toward the house to locate the survey pin. Pins may be buried just under the surface, or up to a foot below.

## A Few Days Before You Dig, Call 811, “Iowa One Call”

The utility company will come out and mark any buried lines so you don't accidentally hit one. There is no charge for this service. If you accidentally damage a buried utility line, you will be financially responsible for its repair.

## Be Aware

Existing fences may have been built without property lines being located, so do not assume they are a correct guide.

## Ask Your Neighbor

It's possible they know where the pins are, or had a survey performed. Your neighbor may be knowledgeable about the property lines that you share. If they know the location of any of their other property lines, you can also use the dimensions from the plat maps to measure the approximate locations of your property lines.

## Beware of Moved Property Pins

Property pins are not foolproof markers. Over the years, previous owners, utility workers, or a neighbor, may have dug up a property pin and reinserted it nearby or tossed it aside. Your property line does not change just because something happened to the pin. For example, if you locate property pins 60 feet apart along the front of your property but the plat says your lot is 50 feet wide, one of those pins may have been moved, and the front of your property is still 50 feet wide.

## Contact a Surveyor

A surveyor can be helpful in determining the location of your property lines. Although a surveyor can be more costly than other methods, they provide you with an accurate location of your property lines, and a survey is sometimes needed to resolve a dispute with a neighbor over the property line location. If you decide to hire a licensed land surveyor, he or she will come out to your land and place markers that mark the boundary lines of your property. You can find a listing of licensed land surveyors in your area by simply consulting your local phone book or the internet. It is often best to call a few such companies, explain what you want them to do, and then hire the one you think best for the job.

**✘ Marks the area to check for pins**

