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Land surveys important to house sale

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Land surveys are often overlooked, but an integral part of the property sales process. They depict the legal description of the property to be transferred. They can affirm that the parties understand the locations of the property's boundaries and any improvements that have been made.

By law, the land survey must be conducted by a licensed surveyor.

Because title companies rely on surveys to detect certain title exceptions, it is imperative that

precautions are taken to ensure their accuracy, says Peter Birnbaum, president and CEO of Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc.

"A real estate attorney can assist the buyer of property with making sure the surveyor accurately depicts the land to be purchased," he affirms.

Among the tasks that an attorney will undertake, the attorney will confirm the follow-

ing:

- The legal description of the property in the title commitment and survey match.

- Any easements, encroachments, and improvements are noted on the survey and have been examined to see if they are acceptable to the client.

- Includes all the information that the parties requested.

While there are universal requirements for surveyors

within every state, the actual prepared surveys can vary in name and description and from community to community, according to Birnbaum.

There are generally two types of surveys: the American Land Title Association survey, or ALTA survey, and the boundary survey. The ALTA survey is the most detailed and most commonly used for commercial real estate transactions.