

Instructor's Introduction

Florida's Standards of Practice for Surveyors & Mappers

There is a great deal of interest among Florida Surveyors regarding the latest versions of Florida's Standards of Practice for Surveyors and Mappers found in Chapter 5J-17 of Florida Administrative Code. The increased interest is primarily due to change made in the past few years. The changes began in 2015. Then significant rewording occurred in 2017 and 2018. The previous course manual for this course was based on the rules as of November 2017. In my opinion, there has been time enough for the dust to settle regarding the changes, and this course needs a bit of refreshing. The bulk of this course manual remains as previously written, but I have included some important information and comments regarding changes and events since 2017.

Standards for land surveyors are not new to Florida. In 1981 the State issued rules called "Minimum Technical Standards under the authority given by law in Chapter 472 of Florida Statutes. In more recent times, the title has become "Standards of Practice." There have been other changes as well. The changes made in standards have been in response to technological advances and presentation methods for surveying products. The earlier versions of the rules took what I like to refer to as a "cookbook" approach to regulating the making of land surveys. A cookbook approach means to regulate by giving particular and specific rules on how to do a proper survey. Previous versions of the standards were weighed more toward regulations addressing how land surveys were to be represented and shown, with not much attention given to selecting and applying appropriate principles and methodologies in doing surveys.

Florida's recently revised standards tend to be going away from the cook-bookish approach in regulation to a method where the rules outline broad surveying concepts and principles to use in doing surveys. These standards attempt to define the surveyor's professional responsibility more than in the past. Surveyors must select and apply appropriate surveying concepts and principles in performing surveying and mapping services. To be compliant with Florida's codified standards, surveyors must know how to do the surveys they take on, and they must also know how to defend and explain their surveys.

Codified rules, such as these, all suffer from similar problems. One of the issues is interpretation. The meaning of certain words and phrases create issues. In the case of these rules, the problem is particularly acute because of the drastic differences with previous standards and the lack of history in interpreting various new phrases within the rules. Written words make up the rules, and the words must be construed to give the rule its effectiveness. The surveyor, responsible for doing surveys, must formulate an interpretation of the rules which can be followed to comply with the regulations. The State, responsible for enforcing compliance by licensed surveyors, must also develop an understanding of the rules to make effective prosecutions against offending licensees.

Sections 5J-17.051, 5J-17.052, and 5J-17.053 of Florida Administrative Code have the distinction of being called the Standards of Practice for Surveyors and Mappers. This course addresses each of the rules in those sections. The issue of interpretation is problematic, as stated previously. The course text presents the instructor's analysis and opinions regarding the

practices. The instructor's arguments and conclusions may be different from those of others and are intended to provoke thought. The instructor's interpretations are, of course, not binding. Each licensee must make their interpretations of the rules in their pursuit of compliance with the regulations in doing surveys. It is the goal of this course to facilitate the licensee in making those interpretations. The text of the course is explicitly formatted in a way to illustrate the instructor's opinions, understanding, and instructional guidance regarding the various rules. The instructor's information is presented as regular text, Times New Roman font, and standards margins. The verbatim version of the actual rule is displayed in text boxes with a shaded background using Courier New font. The instructor's comments are usually positioned after the printed rule on the page. The comments made by the instructor are intended to assist surveyors in understanding the rule. Some may be disappointed that this course does not go into specific ways to do surveys. In-depth instruction for doing surveys is beyond the scope of this course.

Florida surveyors and mappers seeking more specific instruction concerning surveying and mapping may look to Land Pro Seminars for help. Help is available to assist you in acquiring land surveying knowledge. The strategy for surveyors to follow in achieving compliance with surveying standards is and has always been knowledge and ability. Knowledgeable in that the licensee must know how to perform the surveying services offered and have the ability to defend the survey.

Instructional Guidance:

Instructional sections of this course (**Pages 3 through 36**) contain the S.O.P. rules with annotations by the instructor. After reading this introductory section (**Pages 1 -2**) and before the beginning study of the instructional sections (**Pages 3 through 36**) of the course manual, I recommend reading the materials concerning sections 5J-17.050, 5J-17.051, 5J-17.052, and 5J-17.053 Florida Administrative Code found in the appendix section (**Pages 40 through 51**). The course examination with 20 questions and a separate answer sheet is provided at the end of this PDF file or a printed booklet. If you have any questions after studying the course material, you may email questions to the instructor, David Melvin, at dmelvin@landproseminars.com, or call 888-537-0006. After taking the examination and completing the answer sheet, keep a copy of the answer sheet for your records and send a copy of the completed answer sheet to Land Pro Seminars (Send answer sheet only please do not send exam questionnaire).

Send answer sheet

By mail to:

Land Pro Seminars
P.O. Box 770711
Ocala, FL 34477

Or

By (scan copy) email attachment to dmelvin@landproseminar.com (please place your name, LS number, if applicable, and the words, "Returning Exam" in the subject line of the email message.)