



BOARD OF ARCHITECTURE ▪ ENGINEERING
LAND SURVEYING ▪ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
GEOSCIENCE ▪ INTERIOR DESIGN

MINNESOTA LAND SURVEYOR

EXAM CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

(REVISED 2025)



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INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design is responsible for developing the Minnesota Land Surveyor Examination (MNLS) for candidates seeking licensure as professional land surveyors. The Board devotes substantial time and effort developing a state-specific examination that is a valid measure of competency related to the practice of the profession.

The MNLS Examination is a 70 question, open-book, multiple-choice exam. The examination is given at least twice each year and is the result of careful preparation by a committee comprised of professional land surveyors. These land surveyors supply the content expertise essential in developing a fair and impartial examination for measuring entry-level competency in the profession.

The Board requires that candidates pass the Fundamentals of Land Surveying (FS) and the Principles and Practice of Land Surveying (PS) Examinations prepared by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES). Candidates may purchase study materials from NCEES for use in preparing for the FLS and PLS Examinations:

National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying

ATTN: Publications Dept.

P.O. Box 1686

Clemson, SC 29633-1686

Telephone: (800) 250-3196, (864) 654-6824

Fax: (864) 654-6966

www.ncees.org

DESCRIPTION OF EXAMINATION

Examination Schedule and Timetable

The MNLS Examination is given at least twice each year. The MNLS Examination is a 70 question, open-book, multiple-choice exam. The examination is administered in a 2-hour session.

Examination Validity

Testing standards require that the questions on a licensing examination represent the important tasks needed for competent practice in the profession. The relation between the examination questions and the important tasks of a profession is established by conducting a task analysis of the profession. The task analysis is used to determine those tasks performed by the profession related to public protection and the underlying knowledge and skills needed to perform those tasks. This information is then used to develop test blueprints (content outlines) that guide the development of job-related questions that reflect the critical aspects of the profession.

The content of the MNLS Examination has been determined by a review of statutes, rules and regulations that impact the practice of professional land surveying in Minnesota. The MNLS Examination complements the knowledge and skills measured on the NCEES Examinations. This ensures the examination reflects those competencies related to public protection.

MNLS Test Blueprint

The MNLS Test Blueprint (page 9) specifies the content areas/domains for the examination. Each question on the examination is designed to test for knowledge of subject matter within one or more of these content domains. More weight is assigned to content domains that are most directly related to public protection issues.

The content and format of the questions have been carefully reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the questions. Sample questions for the MNLS Examination are presented on page 10. The sample questions do not make up a complete examination. However, they do illustrate the general content areas and format and should be helpful in your preparation for the examination.

Scoring Procedures

Scores are calculated based on the number of correct responses within an examination. Credit is given for correct responses while no points are received for incorrect responses.

Consequently, candidates should answer each question because there is no penalty for guessing. Note that only one response should be marked for each question because questions that contain two or more marked responses or with blank responses (i.e., omitted questions) are scored as incorrect responses.

TAKING THE EXAMINATION

Distribution of Test Booklets

Proctors will distribute test booklets and answer sheets. Read all instructions carefully. Special attention should be given to the information on the front of the booklet.

Copying, reproduction, or any action taken to reveal the contents of examination in whole or in part is unlawful. Copying questions or removing test booklets from the examination room is prohibited.

Answer Sheets

To ensure proper scoring of your examination, it is imperative that you listen to the proctor's instructions and read the instructions printed on the examination booklets and answer sheets. Use only #2 pencils or mechanical pencils with HB lead. Marks in ink or felt-tip pens will not be scanned properly. For proper scoring, the answer spaces must be blackened completely.

Select the best answer from the four choices. No credit is given for multiple answers. If you decide to change an answer, erase the first answer completely. Incomplete erasures and stray marks may be read as intended answers. NOTE: Your sketches, notes and calculations are NOT considered to be part of your answer and are not inspected or graded. All work, however, must be turned in with your test booklet.

Starting and Completing the Exam

Do not open the examination booklet until instructed to do so by your proctor. You are responsible for returning the numbered examination booklet assigned to you.

References

The MNLS Examination is open-book. References are permitted. You may also use non-alpha numeric hand-held calculators. A general surveying text, which includes surveying formulas, may be helpful. However, remember that you have 70 multiple-choice questions to complete within 2 hours. Familiarity with the reference material (see MNLS Test Blueprint, page 9) should allow sufficient time to complete the examination.

The exam questions are primarily developed from one or more of the references listed below. It is to your advantage to spend time learning and reviewing the relevant material.

1. **Manual of Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands of the United States 2009** available at the following web site: www.blmsurveymanual.org

2. Statutes and Rules of the Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design: See the website of the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes:

- [Minnesota Rules, Chapter 1800](#)
- [Minnesota Rules, Chapter 1805](#)
- [Minnesota Statutes, §§ 326.02-326.15](#)

3. Minnesota State Statutes Relating to Minnesota Surveyors. Minnesota Statutes are available from the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes (www.revisor.mn.gov). An unofficial compilation of statutes relating to Minnesota Surveyors is available from:

Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors
1000 Westgate Drive, Suite 252
St. Paul, MN 55114
1-800-890-LAND (5263)
www.mnsurveyor.com

- 4. Report 4 - Metes and Bounds Descriptions**, by Fant, Freeman and Madson,
published by and available from:
Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors
1000 Westgate Drive, Suite 252
St. Paul, MN 55114
1-800-890-LAND (5263)
www.mnsurveyor.com
- 5. Definitions of Surveying and Associated Terms**, by American Congress on Surveying
and Mapping and American Society of Civil Engineers, available from:
National Society of Professional Surveyors
6 Montgomery Village Avenue, Suite #403
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
1-240-632-9716
- 6. Durability of Bearing Trees:**
www.ntc.blm.gov/krc/uploads/538/Durability_of_Bearing_Tree.pdf
- 7. Case Law**
Minnesota Supreme Court:
- Chan v. Brandt, 45, Minn. 93, 47 N.W. 461 (1890)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/45/93/>
 - Beardsley v. Crane, 52 Minn. 537, 54 N.W. 740 (1893)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/52/537/>
 - White v. Jefferson, 110 Minn. 276, 124 N.W. 373 (1910)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/110/276/>
 - Barrett v. Perkins, 113 Minn. 480, 130 N.W. 67 (1911)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/113/480/>
 - Wojahn v. Johnson, 297 N.W. 2d 298 (Minn., 1980)
<https://cite.case.law/nw2d/297/298/>
 - Cogan v. Cook, 22 Minn. 137 (1875)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/22/137/>
 - Schurmeier v. St. Paul & P.R. Co., 10 Minn. 82 (Gil. 59) (1865)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/10/82/>
 - Colter v. Mann, 18 Minn. 96 (1871)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/18/96/>

- Barfnecht v. Hollywood Township, 304 Minn. 505, 232 N.W. 2d 420 (1975)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/304/505/>
- State of Minnesota v. Slotness, 289 Minn. 485, 185 N.W. 2d 530 (1971)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/289/485/>
- City of North Mankato vs Carlstrom, 212 Minn. 32, 2 NW 2d 130 (1942)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/212/32/>
- Diettrich vs. Ubl, 216 Minn. 396, 13 N. W. 2d 384
<https://cite.case.law/minn/216/396/>
- Lavis v Wilcox, 116 Minn. 187, 133 N.W. 563 (1911)
<https://cite.case.law/minn/116/187/>
- Hanson v. Rice, 88 Minn. 273; 92 N.W. 982; (1903)
<https://case.law/caselaw/88/273/>
- In re Application of Moratzka, 988 N.W.2d 42 (Minn. 2023)
<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/mn/988nw42>

US Supreme Court Cases

- US vs Holt State Bank, Et al. 270 US 49 (1926) (US Supreme Court)
<https://cite.case.law/us/270/49/>

MNLS TEST BLUEPRINT (2024)

Content Areas	
1. Public Lands	10. Boundary Surveys
2. Platting (505)	11. Ethics
3. Torrens (508)	12. Miscellaneous Areas
4. Condominiums/CICs (515B)	a. Cemeteries
5. Roads (160-164)	b. Adverse Possession
6. Land Descriptions	c. Trespass Law
7. Case Law (Supreme Court)	d. Boundary Commission (465)
8. Water Boundaries	e. Conveyance/Recording (507)
9. Practice Act (326)	f. Alignment & Grades of Streets

MNLS SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Closing corners of the public land survey are set along the north line of:
 - A) section corners of every township.
 - B) section corners of township along guide meridians.
 - C) section corners of township along a standard parallel.
 - D) as needed in unusual circumstances.
2. Who may vacate a subdivision plat?
 - A) district court
 - B) city council
 - C) county board
 - D) state supreme court
3. Registered Land Surveys:
 - A) are plats.
 - B) are signed by landowners.
 - C) may dedicate public rights.
 - D) identify Torrens lands.
4. Which statute requires road authorities to place and maintain marking devices to clearly indicate boundary lines?
 - A) 160.04
 - B) 160.085
 - C) 160.14
 - D) 161.00
5. A "unit" in 515B is intended for:
 - A) separate ownership.
 - B) common interest.
 - C) limited common ownership.
 - D) common ownership.

KEY FOR MNLS SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. C
5. A