



Boundary Line Information

Maine Forest Service, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333

Robert Frost's observation "**good fences make good neighbors**" is as true today as when he wrote it. As land and timber values increase, good boundaries are even more important today than they were in the past. The following information will help landowners avoid boundary problems:

Establishing boundaries:

1. An "established property line" means a line demarcated by monuments, signs, markings, pins, reference points or other markers that denotes a change in ownership between abutting properties. These established property line markers must have been placed upon mutual agreement of the abutting landowners, based on historical physical evidence of a preexisting boundary line or by a licensed professional land surveyor.

Only a licensed surveyor can establish a property line if there are no existing blazes or monuments. Surveyors are licensed in the state of Maine under 32 M.R.S. §18201 *et seq.* A roster of land surveyors licensed to practice in Maine is available online at:

<https://www.pfr.maine.gov/ALMSOnline/ALMSQuery/SearchIndividual.aspx>

2. A landowner or licensed forester may maintain a line where some monuments or blazes still exist. If you cannot sight from one blaze to another, you should get the line surveyed by a licensed surveyor. Previously marked lines may be incorrect and will be relocated after an accurate survey.

3. Monuments are relatively permanent features like stone posts, iron bars, etc., that are established by a surveyor. Tree blazes are not monuments, they are an approximate location of where the line lies. A cap listing the surveyor's license number must be placed on the lot's corner posts.

4. Line trees are trees where the actual boundary intersects any part of the tree, such that part of the tree is on either side of the boundary (17 M.R.S. §2511(1)(D). (See Tree A on the back of this sheet.) Because they may be evidence of a line, blazed trees on a property line serve as witness trees and should not be cut. They generally have little timber value as the blaze provides an avenue for bacteria and fungi to

invade the tree and cause rot. Line trees may also have fencing tacked to them, which will cause them to be rejected at a sawmill. **Line trees may only be cut with the permission of the abutting landowner** (17 M.R.S. §2511(2)(B).

5. Before permanently marking a boundary by blazing or painting, the line should be walked with the adjoining landowner to ensure its location is mutually agreeable. If there is disagreement about a line, it should be surveyed. Landowners may agree to share the costs; however, this should be agreed to or otherwise determined before proceeding with the survey.

Maintaining boundaries:

1. Boundaries should be painted with high grade, durable paint. Colors such as red, yellow, orange or blue are easily seen and visible for long distances. Paints specifically formulated for marking boundaries are available from forestry supply companies. Paint trees only when the bark is warm and dry.

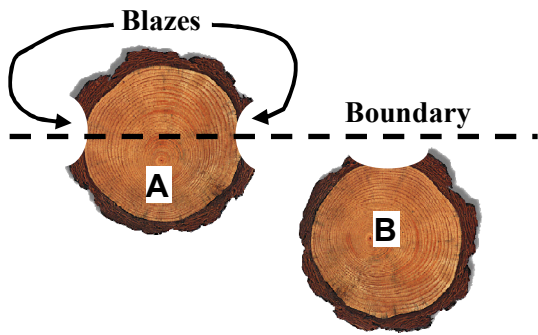
2. In blazing and painting trees along the boundary line, the following rule is used:

A. If the boundary line passes through the middle of a tree, blaze and paint on both sides of that tree where the line passes through it (Tree A).

B. Where the line passes adjacent to the tree, blaze and paint one point only, immediately adjacent to the line (Tree B).

C. Be sure to paint generously so that lines can be seen from either side. This will help prevent accidental trespass.

3. Avoid blazing well-formed, large, or valuable trees as blazing may degrade their value. Blazes should be over six inches long and located about five feet above the ground. Blaze often enough so that it is possible to see the next blaze easily. When re-blazing a line, blaze above or below the original blaze so that historical evidence is not lost.



4. Boundary lines should be brushed out for easy traveling and visibility. Prune limbs to head height and cut small trees along the line. Permission is required to cut vegetation on another's property. Check with the adjoining landowner before proceeding.

5. Missing corners should only be placed by a surveyor and be of permanent material, with the adjoining trees (witnesses) marked for easy locating. Deteriorating corner posts may be replaced with cedar or spruce posts, as other species it will quickly decay. Iron pipe is long lasting, easily transported, inexpensive, and easily driven into the ground. Where available, pile small stones around corner posts. Paint the stones and the corner post. Leave existing old posts as evidence.

6. High quality paint, properly applied, should last at least ten years in the woods; axe blazes should last longer. Lines should be checked and maintained annually or periodically. Lines and corners should be shown to family members so they can locate them in the future.

Timber Harvesting and Boundaries:

Maine law protects adjoining landowners from timber trespass and damages that occur during logging or wood harvesting operations. If you are considering harvesting timber, you should know and observe state and local timber harvesting regulations near property lines, trespass, and slash disposal laws.

1. Anyone who authorizes timber harvesting, or harvests timber shall **clearly mark with flagging or other temporary and visible means any established property lines within 200 feet of an area to be harvested.** Property lines must be marked prior to commencing a harvest. Parcels less than five acres are exempt. (17 M.R.S. §2511). Failure to clearly mark property lines may also make the person who authorized the cutting liable for forfeiture damages to an abutter if a timber trespass occurs (17 M.R.S. §2510(2)).

2. Slash left from any cutting operations of forest growth must be disposed of according to the following regulations: (12 M.R.S. §9331-9336).

A. Along highways, slash must not be left in the right-of-way or within 50 feet of a public highway.

B. Along railroads and utility lines (pipeline, electric, telephone, telegraph, or cable) slash must be removed from in the right-of-way or within 25 feet of the nearer side of the right-of-way.

C. Slash that might constitute a fire hazard shall not be allowed to remain on the ground within 25 feet of the property line of land belonging to another.

No Trespassing Marking:

A landowner may mark their property with OSHA Safety Purple paint to indicate that access is by permission only. Paint should be a single stripe at least one inch wide and eight inches long and located between three and five feet off the ground (17-A M.R.S. §402). Stripes should be no further than 100 feet apart along the property line and at vehicular entries. This should be in addition to a properly marked and blazed boundary line.

For more information, please contact:

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