

RECORDINGS – LEGAL DESCRIPTION GUIDELINES

Statutory Legal Descriptions

Documents pertaining to real estate require the current (s. 59.43(2s)(a)) and full (s. 706.05(2m)(a)) legal description of the property as defined as:

- **Metes & bounds** require at a minimum the Quarter or Quarter-Quarter Section or Government Lot, Section, Township, Range and metes and bounds description associated with the Public Land Survey System or Private Claim s. 236.02(9m)
- **Plat/Subdivisions** require at a minimum Lot, Outlot and Block number (as applies) and the Plat/Subdivision name. s 236.28 including the description reference to “County Plat”, “Town Plat” or “Municipal Plat” s. 236.45(2)(am)
- **Certified Survey Maps** require at a minimum Lot or Outlot number, Map number, Volume and Page, if assigned, AND Document Number where map is recorded and County name. s. 236.34(3)
- **Condominiums** require at a minimum Unit number, Condominium name County name and Document numbers assigned to the Declaration s. 703.12
- **Assessor’s Plats** require at a minimum Lot or Outlot number, Block number (as applies) and Assessor’s Plat name. s.70.27(3)(a)

Statutory exception to complete legal description: s. 706.05(2m)(b) states, “*The requirement of a full legal description under par. (a) does not apply to: ...1. Descriptions of easements for the construction, operation, or maintenance of electric, gas, railroad, water, sewer, telecommunications, or telephone lines or facilities...*”

Best Practice Guide

Examples of “entry ready” (s. 706.05(2)(c)) and Best Practices for Complete Legal:

- **Plat Map** description example:
A parcel of land being part of Lot 1, Block 1, Sunset Point, Town of Palm Trees, Paradise County, Wisconsin, described as follows:...
- **Certified Survey Map** description example:
Lot 1 of Certified Survey Map No. 3000 as recorded in Volume 12 of CSM’s, Page 73 as Document No. 326065; located in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 2, Township 18 North, Range 11 East, Town of Sea Shells, Paradise County, Wisconsin.
- **Metes and Bounds** description example:
A parcel of land located in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 2, Township 18 North, Range 11 East, Town of Sea Turtles, Paradise County, Wisconsin, described as follows:...
- **Government Lot** description example:
Government Lot 1 in Section 14, Township 20 North, Range 11 East, Town of Turquoise Waters, Paradise County, Wisconsin, described as follows:...

NOTE: Government Lots and Quarter (¼) Quarter (¼) of Metes and Bounds descriptions will be best recognized when provided at the beginning or the end of the legal description.

Exceptions in legal descriptions: Volume, Page and Document Numbers referring to exceptions in legal descriptions for lands conveyed to the DOT or a Certified Survey Map are appropriate. All other exceptions should be typed out as a best practice.

Disclaimer: Each county may have some variations with how they index legal descriptions of documents in their recording system, if the above recommendations are followed, there should be fewer issues. Be sure to contact the county’s register of deeds office and real property tax lister directly if you need more county specific information.