

Certified Federal Surveyor Program Standards of Practice Handbook

(Modified February 19, 2013 and
November 18, 2014)

"Trained to Make a Difference"

Introduction

This handbook is designed to document the Certified Federal Surveyor (CFedS) Program requirements, standards and performance expectations. Information contained in this document can be found in the training material, Department of the Interior Administrative Manual 303 DM 7, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Administrative Manual 9687, BLM Administrative Handbook H-9687-1, and records of the CFedS Program Certification Panel (Panel). This Handbook is issued for the guidance of all Certified Federal Surveyors and will not supersede 303 DM 7, Manual 9687, Handbook H-9687-1, and Panel instructions, directives, or decisions on the technical subjects contained therein.

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Chapter I Program Administration

A. Program Oversight.

1. The CFedS Program Certification Panel Chairperson (Chairperson) is appointed by the BLM Washington Office Chief Cadastral Surveyor (Chief) and may be the CFedS Program Manager (Manager). The Chairperson is responsible for the day to day management of the CFedS Program. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter II, C*)
2. The CFedS Program Certification Panel (Panel), headed by the Chairperson, is the representative body authorized by the Chief for the purpose of training, testing, administration, hearing, considering, and determining matters of the CFedS Program under the jurisdiction of the Cadastral Survey Program. The Panel's authority has been delegated from the Chief. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter II, A*)
3. Panel decisions may be appealed to the Chief. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter III, D-3 (a)*)

B. CFedS Program Certification Panel

1. The Panel shall consist of a minimum of seven members appointed by the Chief. At least one member from each of the following organizations: Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST), Tribal or Alaska Native representative, and Private Survey Sector shall be represented on the Panel. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter II, B*)
2. There shall be no set term for Panel membership. The Panel members serve at the pleasure of the Chief. The Chief may appoint additional representatives to serve other interested parties. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter II, B*)
3. Contact information for Panel members can be found on the CFedS website: <http://www.cfed.org/panel.asp>

C. Annual Financial Report

The Chairperson will submit a financial report to the Panel at the end of each calendar year. The report will account for all tuition and fees collected during the calendar year as well as all expenditure. Appropriated funds are tracked by BLM, but may be shown on the report at the discretion of the Chairperson. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter II, F*)

Chapter II Administration of the CFedS Roster

A. CFedS Roster

1. The CFedS Roster is comprised of those surveyors who have passed the Certification Examination. It will list state registrations, contact information, continuing education courses completed and status. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter 3, 0-1*)

2. The CFedS Roster will be maintained by the Chairperson. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter 2, C*)
3. It is the responsibility of the individual CFedS to ensure that all information on their Profile is current. The CFedS roster will show information exactly as shown on the Profile.

B. CFedS Renewal Requirements

1. An e-mail renewal notification will be sent 90 days, 60 days, and 30 days prior to the renewal date.
2. Six credits of CFedS continuing education must be completed per two year renewal cycle. (*CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 07-17-2008*)
3. Only CFedS approved material will be accepted for the CFedS continuing education requirement. (*CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 07-17-2008*)
 - a. Non-CFedS courses may be approved for CFedS credit on a very limited basis where;
 - i. The course has been pre-approved by the Chairperson;
 - ii. The course covers advanced material related to boundary surveys or land title;
 - iii. The course covers material not covered by CFedS initial training courses or CFedS continuing education courses;
 - iv. The course is available to the majority of CFedS throughout the country; and
 - v. An examination is offered at the completion of the course.
 - b. Training presented by Cadastral State Offices, which is designed specifically for CFedS practicing within the state will be given credit.
 - c. Credits will be assigned based on the length of the course:
4-8 hours = 1 credit, 8-16 hours = 2 credits, and 16-24 hours = 3 credits.
4. Continuing education credits in excess of the minimum may be carried over to subsequent years. (*CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 08-21-2007 and 07-17-2008*)
5. Certification must be renewed biannually. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Handbook, H9687-1, Chapter III D-4*)
6. A current signed declaration of state registration(s) must be submitted by the individual CFedS. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter III, D-4*)
7. Renewal fees must be paid in full. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter III, D-4*)
8. Failure to renew will result in temporary suspension ("Expired status") for non-renewal: (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter III, D-4*)

- a. There is a two week grace period, after which the CFedS name will be removed from the active roster. *(CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 02-20-2009)*
- b. Where the renewal has not been completed within an additional 45 days a \$100.00 late fee will be assessed. *(CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 12/04/2023)*
- c. To renew a Certification within four years of expiration: *(CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 02-04-2013)*
 - i. 6 continuing education credits must be completed;
 - ii. the renewal fee must be paid;
 - iii. the late fee must be paid; and
 - iv. the next renewal date will be two years after the Certification has been renewed.
- d. Where a Certification has been “Expired” for a period of four years the CFedS will be removed from the program (“Withdrawn” status), effective June 5, 2015. *(CFedS Program Certification Panel decision 02-04-2013)*

Chapter III Performance Standards

A. Standard of Conduct

1. As a CFedS you must recognize your responsibility toward the protection of tribal, individual Indian, Alaska Native Corporations, and Alaska Natives interests, the protection of the public trust, and the advancement of the integrity, honor, and dignity of the CFedS program. The success of this program depends on your commitment to:
 - a. Hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of Indian, Alaska Native and the public in the performance of your professional duties;
 - b. Act in professional matters for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees, and avoid conflicts of interest;
 - c. Refrain from improper solicitation of professional employment;
 - d. Be honest and impartial, and serve with fidelity, the public, your employer, and your clients; and
 - e. Increase the competence and prestige of the CFedS program.
2. The Panel is authorized to address allegations of incompetency or poor work. *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter III, Sec. D-2)*

B. Authority

1. The delivery of cadastral services to Indians and Alaska Natives is under the direction and control of the BLM. CFedS may perform many of these services and will be utilized whenever possible to accomplish the Secretary of the Interior's trust responsibilities in the timeliest, cost effective, and efficient manner. In addition, CFedS may be utilized to deliver cadastral services under the direction and control of BLM on any Federal interest land. *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Manual 9687.06)*

2. The primary purpose of the CFedS Program is to provide American Indian and Alaska Native landowners, tribes and corporations, BIA, and Federal agencies administering lands adjoining Indian or Alaska Native lands with a roster of qualified surveyors, specifically trained to provide boundary services in Indian country. The initial goal of the CFedS Program is to assure that all cadastral services executed in Indian country are performed in accordance with BLM standards. The long term goal is for all boundary surveys to be accomplished under the direction and control of the appropriate BLM State Office Chief Cadastral Surveyor (Cadastral Chief). The CFedS Program will provide an additional method for accomplishing cadastral services involving Indian trust assets. The object of the certification program is to satisfy the Secretary's trust responsibilities involving Indian trust assets as identified in the Fiduciary Trust Model, dated December 30, 2004. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter I, A*)
3. A CFedS may only provide surveying services within the state(s) he/she is registered/licensed to practice land surveying. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV*)
4. A CFedS can perform a wide range of cadastral services. These services may include the execution of Federal Authority Surveys, State Authority Surveys and Administrative Surveys; Land Description Reviews (LDR), Chain of Surveys (COS), Certificate of Inspection and Possessions (CIP), and Boundary Assurance Certificates (SAC); and Development/Maintenance of the Cadastral Geographic Information System. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV*)

C. Responsible Charge with Frequently Asked Questions

In order to ensure services performed as a CFedS will protect the rights and interests of Indians, Alaska Natives, Federal agencies, and adjacent land owners the following standards of conduct have been adopted by the Panel. (*CFedS Program Certification Panel decision, 11-06-2007*)

The degree of control required to be maintained over all professional survey products and services produced as a CFedS: (*CFedS Program Certification Panel decision, 09-30-2014*)

- (i) Judges the validity and applicability of recommendations prior to their incorporation into the work, including the qualifications of those making the recommendations. This includes: consideration as to field observations, field evidence and record data evaluation, results of survey documentation, and all professional surveying decisions relating to the survey.
- (ii) Direct personal supervision over the collection and analysis of all record documents; and
- (iii) Personal, physical presence, at the location of the field survey prior to all corner evidence decisions. There may be exceptions to the general rule where the monument, accessories and acceptance in previous surveys make the corner position indisputable.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Is it necessary for the CFedS to visit every corner of the survey?
No, but remember there are very few situations in the land surveying profession that do not have the possibility for complicating factors which would require the CFedS presence, including unwritten rights, unrecorded monuments, improvements, multiple monuments, etc.
2. I supervise 7 field crews in various parts of the state; my practice is to thoroughly review the records, all decisions and the calculation prior to stamping the survey. Does this meet the CFedS standard?
No. A review of the survey is not sufficient. The CFedS must be involved in the review and decision making as the survey progresses.
3. Is the CFedS required to be present when testimony is taken relative to a corner point?
Yes. The party chief may perform the initial interviews with those having knowledge of the position of corners or lines but the CFedS must be present when the official testimony is taken.
4. In (C)(i) above, does "field observations" mean I am required to be present when all measurements are made?
No. The CFedS must approve the methods and review data.
5. Does the CFedS have to be physically present at the court house or other records source?
No. The CFedS does have to review records prior to their incorporation into the work. To ensure that all pertinent records have been located, it will generally be necessary to conduct a thorough review prior to initiating the field survey.
6. Must the CFedS be present during the setting of monuments and/or accessories?
Not necessarily. Where all corner evidence has previously been evaluated by the CFedS it will not be necessary for the CFedS to be present when the monument is set.
7. If my crew has found the original monument and accessories which verify the location, do I need to visit this location?
Probably not, but remember there may be circumstances where some type of unwritten rights have attached to some other point, land descriptions are written to another monumented point, or there are multiple monuments near the corner point, etc. The CFedS should always be alert to situations that require his/her direct involvement.
8. In (C)(i) above, what do you mean by "qualifications of those making the recommendations"?
It is the responsibility of the CFedS that all persons working under his/her direct charge on a CFedS project is well trained and able to perform the work to a professional level.
9. I have a rebar cited as a section corner monument in three previous records of survey; do I need to visit this site?
Yes. This is not original evidence, and the fact that it has been used by others previously is not conclusive as to its veracity.
10. I have a technician who I have trained to do records search; do I need to review his/her work?
Yes. You must review the thoroughness of his/her work to ensure subsequent boundary determinations are made with all pertinent information available.

11. The corner point is obviously lost as my crew cannot find anything. Do I need to visit this location?
Yes. The declaration of a corner as lost is a professional decision and requires CFedS presence during the search that resulted in no evidence.
12. In (C)(ii) above, what do you mean by "analysis of all record documents"?
The CFedS is responsible for the analysis and conclusions drawn based on the record data, including possible multiple corner points, trespass, junior/senior rights, and poorly written land descriptions.
13. I am not physically able to visit most corner locations, but have trained my crew to do this work. Is this acceptable to the CFedS standard?
No. The CFedS is required to be present as discussed above. We strongly suggest you have your other crew chiefs certified as CFedS.
14. Can I perform a CFedS survey in those states where I'm not licensed?
No. You must be licensed as a surveyor in any state where you perform CFedS work.
15. Our company has surveyors licensed in several states including some states where I am not licensed. If the survey is stamped by a surveyor licensed in a state that I am not licensed in, can I provide the CFedS authority?
No. Again, the CFedS must be licensed as a surveyor in any state where work is performed.
16. Does the degree of control (as listed in (C) i, ii, and iii above) apply to all Standards for Boundary Evidence Certificates?
Yes. The CFedS is required to have direct supervision of the formulation of all recommendations and over the collection and analysis of all record documents.
17. Does the CFedS responsible charge standard apply to all my survey work?
No.
18. When does it apply?
Any time you are surveying as a CFedS you must adhere to the responsible charge standard. This will include: (*CFedS Program Certification Panel decision, 09-30-2014*)
 - All surveys for Federal agencies of Federal interest lands;
 - All surveys for Indians and Alaska Natives;
 - All surveys of trust land, restricted land or land within a reservation executed for an individual Indian, Tribes, or BIA;
 - Any survey where you have agreed to provide a survey to CFedS Standards;
 - Any survey where you reference your CFedS certification on the plat or corner records; and
 - When preparing Standards for Boundary Evidence Certificates for Indians, and Alaska natives or Federal agencies.

D. Standards for State Authority Surveys

Land boundary surveys executed as a CFedS (see *Responsible Charge, FAQ No. 18 above*) under state authority must meet state standards for boundary surveys as well as the basic BLM standards defined below. The State Office Chief Cadastral Surveyor is available to provide advice on suitable survey procedures when unusual circumstances are encountered. This is also applicable prior to reestablishing a lost corner, accepting a corner established in a local survey, subdivision of a section or survey of land described by metes-and-bounds (*3-136 and 7-61, 2009 Manual*). These standards apply to all federally funded CFedS surveys. Where the cost of the survey is not paid from Federal funds, only a-e of the following standards apply,

however where the parcel being surveyed is trust or restricted land, the addition of the standards in f-h is highly recommended, but not required: *(CFedS Program Certification Panel decision, 09-30-2014)*

- a. The Manual of Surveying Instructions, its amendments and supplements will be followed for all surveys of Federal interest lands; *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Manual 9687.05)*
- b. A full description of recovered evidence is contained in the record; *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, B)*
- c. Procedures for accepting, rejecting, and reestablishing corners; subdivision of sections; establishing corners; etc. are clearly documented in the record; *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, B)*
- d. The record contains a complete description of new monuments and accessories; *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, B)*
- e. Where Indian or Alaska Native land is involved, surveys will be filed/recorded, as appropriate, in the BIA Land Title Record Office (LTRO) as well as state, county, township, parish, borough or Tribal office; *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, B)*
- f. The record will contain the geodetic position of at least one corner of the survey; *(Page 57, Course 7 Study Guide)*
- g. Bearings are determined with reference to the true meridian as defined by the axis of the earth's rotation and bearings are stated in terms of angular measure referred to the true north (Grid Bearings are acceptable); *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, B)* and
- h. Corners are monumented with magnetically detectable metal monuments with metal cap marked to uniquely identify the corner. *(Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, B)*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Am I required to follow all the CFedS Standards for State Authority Surveys when surveying an Indian allotment where the cost of the survey is paid by the allottee?
No. When surveying Indian land you should be surveying as a CFedS, but because the cost of the survey is paid by the allottee only a-e will apply. You are, however, encouraged to follow all the standards.
2. If I reference my CFedS Certification on the plat or corner record and I'm working for a private individual, but the parcel boundary is also a boundary of federal interest land; am I required to follow all the CFedS Standards for State Authority Surveys?
No. Only a-e will apply because the cost of the survey is not paid from federal funds.
3. If I am surveying the boundary of federal interest land and the cost of the survey is paid from federal funds must I follow the CFedS Standards for State Authority Surveys?
Yes.
4. If I make no reference to my CFedS Certification on the plat or corner record and the cost of the survey is not paid from federal funds; am I required to follow all the CFedS standards for State Authority Surveys?
No. None of the standards will apply to your survey.

E. Proper use of the CFedS Seal

1. The use of this seal is a means to identify that the document it is affixed to has been prepared by someone that has completed the CFedS Program training, has passed the examination and is current with their continuing education and renewal fee and has executed a survey as a CFedS (see Responsible Charge FAQ No. 18 above). The CFedS seal should be used in accordance with the following guidelines: (*CFedS website, CFedS News Archives, December 18, 2008*)
 - a. The seal is only to be applied to documents which have been produced in accordance with standards found in the CFedS training, CFedS Program materials, and this Handbook;
 - b. The CFedS seal may be used when signing standards for boundary evidence worksheets, drawings or other CFedS documents, if allowed by state law and only if “a” above is satisfied;
 - c. If the state you are practicing in requires the use of a state license seal (or similar words), then the CFedS seal may be used in addition to the state stamp or seal, if allowed by state law and only if “a” above is satisfied;
 - d. Use of the seal does not imply any Federal endorsement to the product it is applied to;
 - e. The seal shall be reproduced so that it is 1½ to 2 inches in diameter; and
 - f. Each CFedS shall modify the DWG/DXF file so that their name and CFedS number are within the seal.
2. The seal should not be used:
 - a. By anyone who is not on the current CFedS Program roster;
 - b. In any advertising which implies Federal Authority or Federal endorsement; and
 - c. If prohibited by state law.
3. The CFedS Program has no blanket survey authority attached to it. Survey projects, conducted by a CFedS, will either be done under state survey authority or Federal survey authority, i.e., assigned special instructions by the BLM.

F. Financial Responsibility

The CFedS is responsible for the collection of fees for all Cadastral Services rendered. The Requestor of any Cadastral Service performed by a CFedS is required, in all cases, to make satisfactory arrangements with the CFedS for the payment of his/her services and those of his/her assistants in providing such services; as the BLM will not be held responsible for the same. The Cadastral Chief has no jurisdiction to settle differences relative to the payment of charges for the work between CFedS and Requestors. These are matters between the parties and must be enforced in the ordinary manner. (*Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook, H-9687-1, Chapter IV, C-1(b)*)

Chapter IV Standards for Boundary Evidence

A. Authority

Standards for Boundary Evidence Certificates may be prepared under the authority of a Cadastral Chief by a CFedS. (*Department of the Interior Manual, 303 DM 7 and Appendix 2, Chapter 1-1*)

B. General Guidelines

General guidelines for preparation of Standards for Boundary Evidence Certificates can be found in Department of the Interior Manual, 303 DM 7, Appendix 2, Chapters 1-E through Chapter 4-D.

Appendix:

Department of the Interior Manual, 303 DM 7:
http://www.cfed.org/docs/boundary_standards.pdf

Bureau of Land Management Certified Federal Surveyor Program Manual 9687:
http://www.cfed.org/docs/9687_Manual.pdf

Bureau of Land Management Certified Federal Surveyor Program Handbook H-9687-1:
<http://www.cfed.org/docs/h9687-1.pdf>

Accepted by the CFedS Certification Panel:

April 19, 2012

Date

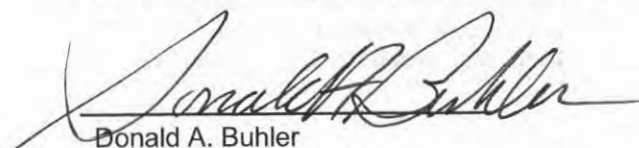
/S/ Donald A. Buhler
Bureau of Land Management
Washington Office, Chief Cadastral Surveyor

April 26, 2012

Date

Chapter II, B (8) of this Handbook has been modified as approved by the CFedS Program Certification Panel on February 4, 2013, and by the Chief on February 19, 2013.

Chapter III, C, D, and E of this Handbook has been modified as approved by the CFedS Program Certification Panel on September 30, 2014.


Donald A. Buhler
Bureau of Land Management
Washington Office, Chief Cadastral Surveyor

November 18, 2014
Date