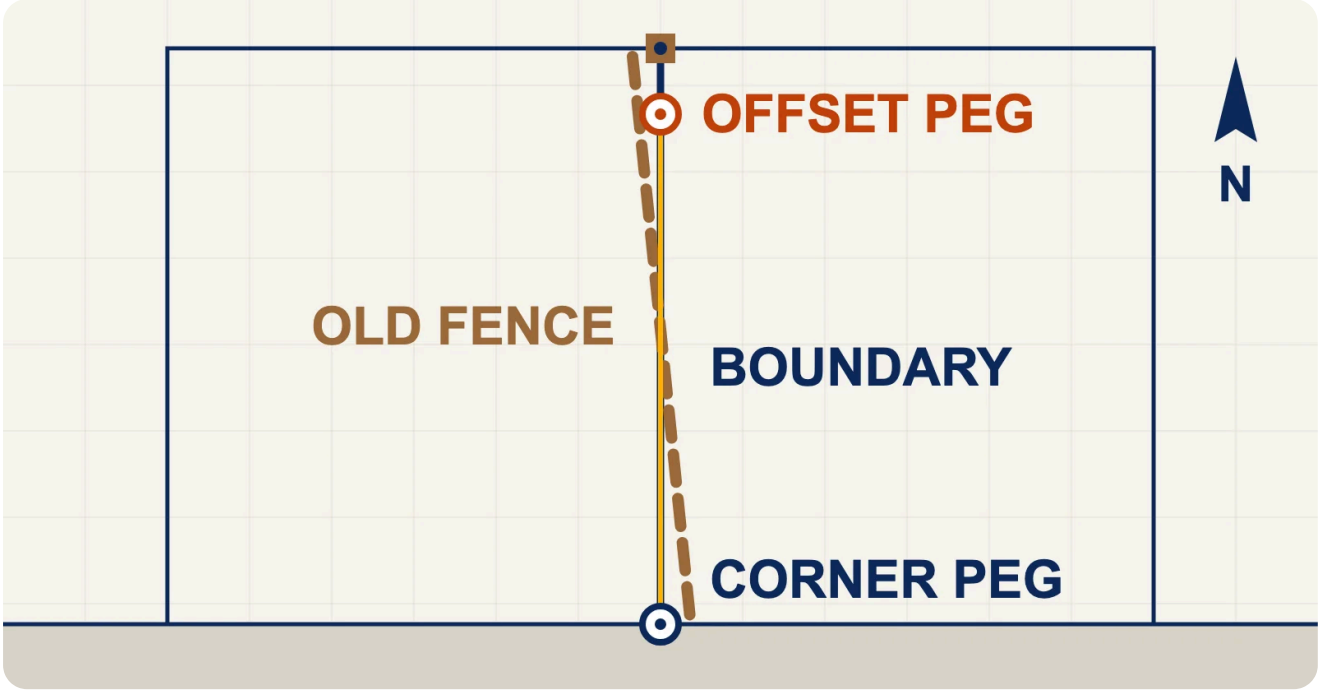
Fence Survey in Brisbane: How the Boundary Gets Marked and Handed to Your Fencer

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Your fencer has asked where the boundary is, and the old fence may not be the answer. A fence survey is a boundary identification survey for the line your new fence will follow. A registered cadastral surveyor works out where that line sits from the title and survey records. Then they mark it on the ground with pegs your fencer can build from.

This guide covers how the job runs, from the survey through to the first post hole. It explains offset pegs and how to keep the marks alive while the old fence comes out. It also covers what Queensland's fencing law says about the survey, and what to hand your fencer.

General information only, not legal advice.

Fence survey: what to do first

The short answer

- Book the survey before the old fence comes down, so the surveyor can see every mark and the fencer starts from fresh pegs.
- Ask for the boundary the fence will follow. A survey can be scoped to one boundary, such as the back fence only.
- If a corner falls where the old fence or a wall stands, expect an offset peg set a stated distance from the true corner.
- Protect and photograph the pegs until the new posts are in. A peg knocked out during demolition is no longer the line.
- If you and your neighbour can't agree where the line is, Queensland law has a set way to have a surveyor define it and share the cost.

What a fence survey is in Queensland

"Fence survey" isn't a separate legal category. It's a boundary identification survey done for a fence, and our guide to boundary surveys in Brisbane explains that survey in general. Under Queensland's Neighbourhood Disputes (Dividing Fences and Trees) Act 2011, a dividing fence is a fence on the common boundary between two properties. A fence on another line can also count, for example where natural physical features make it impracticable to build the fence entirely on the boundary (section 12).

The same Act treats the survey as part of the job. Its definition of fencing work includes surveying or preparing land along or on either side of the common boundary (section 16). That matters when you ask your neighbour to share the cost, which we cover below.

When neighbours need the common boundary defined, Queensland's fencing law turns to a registered cadastral surveyor (section 40). A fencer, a builder or a measurement taken from the kerb can't do that job. If you're still deciding whether your job needs a survey at all, our guide to when you need a land surveyor in Brisbane covers that question.

What the surveyor does on the day

Most of a fence survey happens before anyone arrives on site. The work follows the same steps as our boundary identification survey:

1. **Records.** We search the title, the registered survey plans and older survey records for your lot and the lots around it.
2. **Existing marks.** On site we look for corner marks and old occupation marks on your land and the neighbouring land. We measure them and compare them with the plans.
3. **The line.** We calculate where the boundary should be, using the marks that agree with the records.
4. **New pegs.** We mark the corners in your proposal, with line pegs or reference marks where the job needs them.
5. **What we found.** We tell you what we found and which marks we replaced, and we explain where any offset pegs sit. Where your proposal includes it, you also get a plan of the identified boundary.

Tell us at quote stage which boundary the fence is on and when the fencer starts. Our guide to survey pegs explains what each kind of mark looks like if you want to check what's already there.

Why the pegs aren't always where the fence posts go

A corner often falls where something solid already stands: the old fence post, a brick pier or a retaining wall. A peg can't go in there, so the surveyor places an offset peg instead. It sits a set distance from the true corner, often along the boundary line or square to it.

An offset peg is not the corner. It's a pointer to the corner. To use it, the fencer needs two facts: the distance and the direction. When we place an offset peg, we explain how far it sits from the true corner. Pass that distance, and the direction to measure, to your fencer in writing.

On longer boundaries, you may also see line pegs between the corners. They help a fencer run a straight line without guessing over a long distance.

Keeping the marks alive while the old fence comes out

The riskiest stretch of a fence job is the gap between the survey and the new posts. Demolition, an excavator bucket or a trailer reversing along the line can knock a peg out in seconds. Once a peg has moved, it no longer shows the line.

Queensland's Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003 makes it an offence to interfere with a survey mark you know about, or should know about (section 42). The maximum penalty is 100 penalty units.

There is an exception for this job: a boundary mark may be disturbed in order to put up a fence, wall or other permanent structure along that boundary. That covers the fencer who has to dig where a corner peg sits. Even so, a peg pulled out before the posts are set out takes the line with it.

A few habits keep the marks safe:

- **Book the survey close to the fencing date.** A week or two between the survey and the posts is easier to protect than three months.
- **Photograph every peg** with a tape measure or a known feature in the frame, so you can see later whether it has moved.
- **Flag the pegs** with bright tape, or a tall stake a little away from each one, and point them out to everyone working on site.
- **Take the old fence out by hand near the corners**, not with a machine dragging the posts.
- **Don't push a loose peg back in.** Call the surveyor instead. A peg reset by eye is a guess.

Your neighbour, the notice and who pays for the survey

General information only, not legal advice.

Under the Act, neighbours generally contribute equally to a sufficient dividing fence (sections 7 and 21). Between two residential lots, sufficient generally means a fence

between 0.5 m and 1.8 m high, built substantially of a material listed in the Act (section 13). If one owner wants a better fence than that, they pay the extra.

To ask your neighbour to share the cost, you give them a notice to contribute in the approved form, which is Form 2. It must describe the line the fence will follow, the type of work and its estimated cost, with at least one written quote attached (section 31).

You then have one month to agree. If you don't, either owner can apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) within two months of the notice. Until you agree, neither of you may carry out the fencing work, unless it's urgent.

Because fencing work includes surveying, the survey can go in the notice as part of the work and its estimated cost. If you want your neighbour to share that cost, wait until you've agreed before the survey goes ahead. The exceptions are urgent work, work QCAT allows or orders, and the boundary process below.

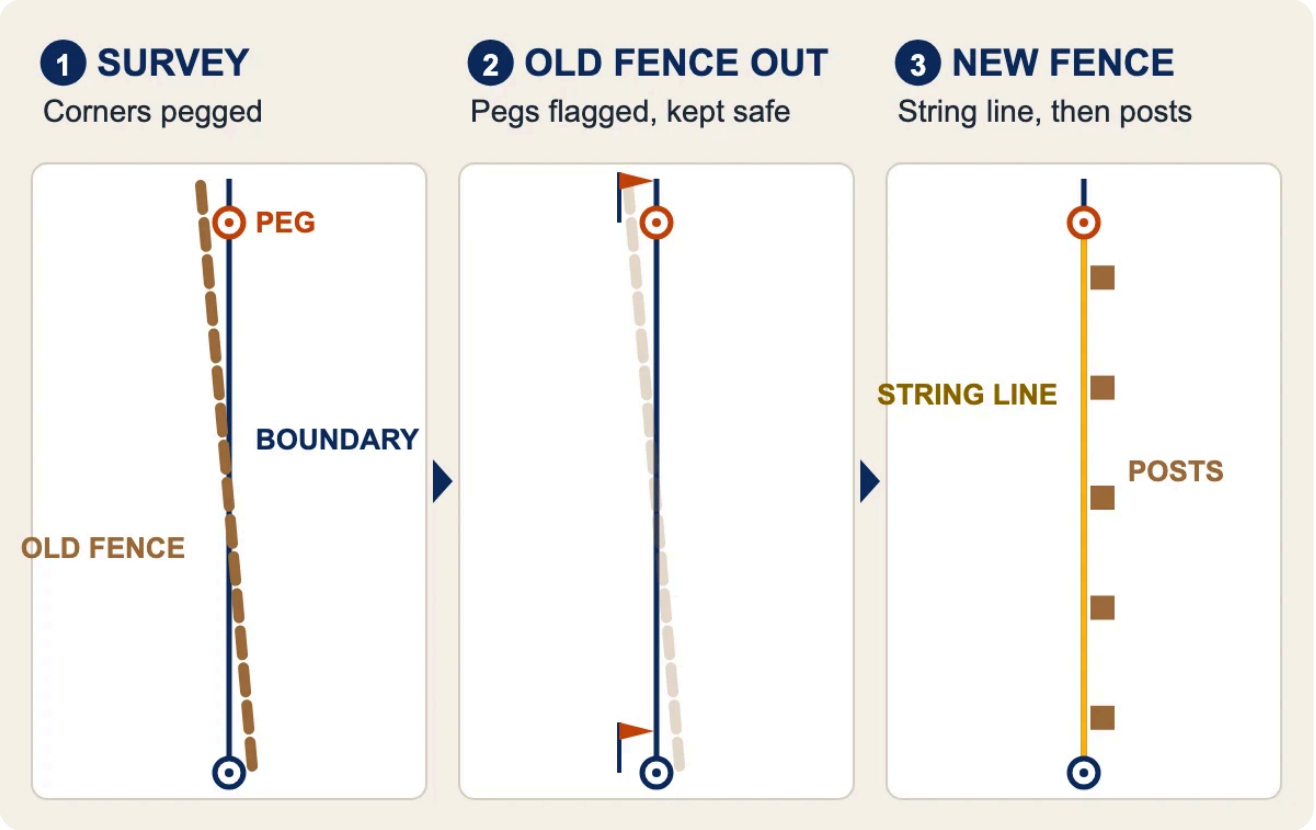
If you can't agree where the boundary is, section 40 sets out a separate process:

1. You give your neighbour written notice that you intend to have a cadastral surveyor define the common boundary.
2. Within one month, your neighbour can either have their own cadastral surveyor define it, or tell you in writing where they believe the line is.
3. Unless they had their own survey done, you can then have your surveyor define the boundary.
4. You each pay half the reasonable cost of the survey. The exception: if your survey puts the line about where your neighbour said in writing, they pay nothing toward it.

A fence put on a different line by agreement does not change who owns the land (section 29). A fence that is also a pool barrier sits outside these cost-sharing rules. It follows Queensland's pool barrier rules for dividing fences, which use their own notice (Form 39) and a 14-day notice period. If the conversation has already turned into a dispute, our guide to resolving boundary disputes in Brisbane covers the next steps.

Handing over to your fencer

The diagram shows the order of work that keeps the line intact from the survey to the new fence.



Before the first post hole, give your fencer these:

Hand over	Why the fencer needs it
A walk along the line, pointing out every peg	Pegs in long grass or under mulch get missed and knocked.
Offset distances and directions, in writing	An offset peg read as the corner puts the whole fence off the line.
The surveyor's plan or notes, if your proposal included one	It shows which marks are corners and which are references.
Your dated photos of each peg	A quick check that nothing moved between the survey and the build.
The agreed fence type and height, and your neighbour's written agreement	The work should match what you both agreed under the notice.
Before You Dig plans for the line	Pipes and cables can run along fence lines and can sit just below the surface.

A string line pulled tight between the marks gives the fencer the boundary for every post in between. How the posts sit against that line depends on the fence type and what you

and your neighbour agreed. Ask your fencer to explain how they'll set out the posts against the pegs before they start.

A Before You Dig enquiry is free through Before You Dig Australia, and members are encouraged to send plans within two business days. Lodge it a few days before the fencer arrives.

Fence survey cost and timing in Brisbane

A fence survey is priced like any boundary identification. The fee depends on how many corners you need, the age and quality of the records, and how hard the old marks are to find. Our guide to land survey costs in Brisbane puts a full boundary identification for a residential lot at around $2,800 to $4,500 or more, including GST. That is the range in the guide as of 18 November 2026.

A survey can be scoped to just the boundary you're fencing, and the proposal sets out the corners and the fee for that scope.

As one example on our boundary survey page, the boundary portion of a May 2026 Brisbane proposal, for part of a front boundary, was $2,970 including GST. That proposal also included a Form 12, and the figure was one price for one scope, not a set fee. One Brisbane surveying firm publishes a basic fee of $3,450 plus GST for an identification survey on a standard 600 to 800 m² lot (checked 18 November 2026).

For timing, our guide on one Brisbane job in September 2026 was that fieldwork could begin about one to two weeks after the proposal was accepted and paid. Availability changes. If your fencer has a start date, put it in your enquiry so the survey lands just before the fence comes down.

Fencer booked? Get the line marked first.

We've been marking Brisbane boundaries for more than 10 years. Tell us which fence line you're replacing and when your fencer starts, and we'll quote the survey for that boundary.

GET A FREE BOUNDARY QUOTE

Or call (07) 3477 9914, Monday to Friday, 7am to 5pm.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of survey is needed for a fence?

A boundary identification survey for the line the fence will follow. A registered cadastral surveyor works out where the boundary sits from the title and survey records and marks it on the ground with pegs. The survey can be scoped to just the boundary you're fencing.

How long before the fencer should the survey be done?

Close to the fencing date and, if your neighbour is sharing the cost, once you've agreed on the work. On one Brisbane job in September 2026, fieldwork could begin about one to two weeks after the proposal was accepted and paid. Put your fencer's start date in your enquiry so the pegs go in shortly before the old fence comes down.

Does my neighbour have to pay half the fence survey?

Not automatically. Fencing work under Queensland's dividing fence law includes surveying, so the survey can go in your notice to contribute. Your neighbour then shares it by agreement, or as QCAT orders if you can't agree. If the dispute is about where the line is, section 40 applies instead. Each owner usually pays half the reasonable survey cost, unless the survey confirms the line your neighbour gave in writing.

How much does a fence survey cost in Brisbane?

Our cost guide puts a full residential boundary identification at around $2,800 to $4,500 or more, including GST. A survey can be scoped to one boundary. As one example, the boundary portion of a May 2026 Brisbane proposal, for part of a front boundary, was $2,970 including GST. The fee depends on the corners needed, the records and how hard the old marks are to find.