

WHAT TYPE OF LAND IS IT?

RECORDED (Registry) OR REGISTERED (Land Court) LAND?

There are two categories of land records: **RECORDED (Registry)** and **REGISTERED (Land Court)**. All land is in one category or the other, but it is possible for a single parcel to include land of both types. Each system has its respective advantages and differences.

80% percent of the land in Norfolk County is **RECORDED (Registry)** land, 20% percent is **REGISTERED (Land Court)** land. When searching, it is suggested that you begin your search with the [Search Registry Records](#) link. If you receive the message “*Sorry, no (more) matching names found*”, try your search with the [Search Land Court Records](#) link.

Please note, Recorded (Registry) Land and Registered (Land Court) Land records are separately indexed. One exception is searches by Address; which is a combined index of Recorded (Registry) *and* Registered (Land Court). FYI – The Registry has been including the property address for all applicable documents since 2003. There may be some listings from documents recorded prior to 2003, but it is very limited.

Research in each system is a little different. With **RECORDED (Registry)** land, you enter the person’s name and the index will display all entries. With **REGISTERED (Land Court)** land, you enter the person’s name to find a *certificate of title* number. There you check the encumbrance listings under that certificate of title number to see the entries that affect that property.

The **RECORDED (Registry)** land system is the traditional common law system of land records. Each document filed is entered in order of receipt, and referenced by its sequential book and page number of recording. Registry land constitutes the majority of the properties in Norfolk County.

Under the **REGISTERED (Land Court)** system, there is a numbered current owner's *certificate of title* for each registered land property. When the property is sold or transferred, a new certificate is issued. The registered land system is also referred to as the **Torrens** or **Land Court** system. It was introduced in Australia in the 1850's and is used in a number of countries and American states, including Massachusetts, where it was introduced in 1901. Land Court records are supervised by the Land Court. Each document receives a sequential *document number*, and documents affecting a certificate of title are referenced in an *encumbrance* list for that certificate.

REGISTERED (Land Court) land condominium certificates are maintained in a separate set of volumes, all with numbers that begin with the letter "C."