

# Handbook of Florida Fence and Property Law: Adjoining Landowners<sup>1</sup>

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## Preface

With approximately 19,000 livestock farms in the state, along with horse farms; orange groves; croplands of soybeans, sugarcane, cotton, and peanuts; and many other agricultural and livestock facilities, livestock and farming have a significant impact on Florida's economy. Florida's agricultural economy has been required to co-exist with rapid population and commercial growth in the state over the last twenty-five years. Conflicts between these interests bring to prominence issues such as the rights and responsibilities of adjoining landowners, farmers, and property owners in general. Due to the added importance placed on these areas of real property, the legal aspects of fences in the state of Florida have taken on significant importance.

This handbook is designed to inform property owners of their rights and responsibilities in terms of their duty to fence. Discussed areas include a property owner's responsibility to fence when livestock is kept on the property, the rights of adjoining landowners to

fence, the placement of fences, encroachments, boundary lines, easements, contracts, nuisances, and a landowner's responsibilities towards persons who enter his property.

This handbook is intended to provide a basic overview of the many rights and responsibilities that farmers and farmland owners have under Florida's fencing and property law. Readers may value this handbook because it informs them about these rights and responsibilities. However, the reader should be aware that because the laws, administrative rulings, and court decisions on which this booklet is based are subject to constant revision, portions of this booklet could become outdated at any time. This handbook should not be viewed as a comprehensive guide to fencing and property laws. Additionally, many details of cited laws are left out due to space limitations. This handbook should not be seen as a statement of legal opinion or advice by the authors on any of the legal issues discussed within. This handbook is not a replacement for personal legal advice, but is only a guide to inform the public on issues relating to

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Readers wishing to find further information from the Florida Statutes may access those statutes online at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/STATUTES/>.

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## **Adjoining Landowners**

### ***How does the law define an adjoining landowner?***

Adjoining landowners are legally defined as individuals whose lands are separated by a common boundary line (1 Florida Jurisprudence 2d *Adjoining Landowners* section 1).

### ***As an adjoining landowner, when am I required to raise a fence? If I raise a fence, am I entitled to some contribution from the other landowner?***

Generally, owners of adjoining land are under no legal responsibility to fence their land at the common boundary line. However, an owner who does decide to fence his land has no legal claim of contribution by the adjoining landowner unless there is an agreement to contribute or the adjoining landowner notifies the owner that he will pay his proportionate share. In the case where two adjoining landowners purchase land in which a fence already exists, the adjoining landowners are considered joint owners of the fence and have a joint obligation to repair and maintain the fence (1 Florida Jurisprudence 2d *Adjoining Landowners* section 60).

## **Summary**

Owners of adjoining land are generally not required to raise a fence at a common boundary line. If an owner does decide to raise a fence, he does so at his own cost and is not entitled to any contribution from the adjoining landowner, unless they have an agreement that says otherwise.

## **Further Information**

Circular 1242, Handbook of Florida Fence and Property Law  
[http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC\\_BOOK\\_Florida\\_Fence\\_and\\_Property\\_Law](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_BOOK_Florida_Fence_and_Property_Law)