



## LAND PATENT FAQs

- **What is a patent?**
  - A patent is a form of land title by which land is transferred from a sovereign government to an individual grantee. Patents in Texas were first issued by the Republic of Texas from 1836 to 1845 and issued by the State of Texas after 1845.
- **Why do lands conveyed by sovereign governments before 1836 not have patents?**
  - Texas lands granted by the Spanish and Mexican governments were conveyed by an instrument called a *title*. Perfected Spanish and Mexican titles remain valid legal instruments in Texas. Lands conveyed by title cannot be patented.
- **What is the difference between a patent and a deed?**
  - Patents provide evidence of the conveyance of land from a sovereign to a private individual, while deeds record conveyances between individual parties. Deeds can be thought of as links on the “chain of title” extending from the original (or “primordial”) land grant to present-day ownership.
- **What does it mean to certify a patent?**
  - A *certified copy* is a duplicate of an original document that is endorsed by a governmental agency to guarantee its authenticity. All patent copies sent out by our office are certified copies.
- **I ordered a patent copy from the GLO and the copy I received is not certified.**
  - It is unlikely that a patent was sent out uncertified. Certification includes a paragraph on the back of the copy that states the reverse is a true and correct copy of the original instrument on file at the GLO. Certification includes the date the copy was made, the GLO Commissioner’s signature, and an embossed (raised) seal over the Commissioner’s signature. If you believe your copy was not certified, please email us a photo of the copy you received. If we determine it was indeed uncertified, we will send replacements.
- **Can I patent the land that my house is on currently?**
  - Most of the land in the State of Texas has been previously patented by the State of Texas or the Republic of Texas or conveyed by the Spanish or Mexican government via title. There is a high probability your land falls into one of these categories. The GLO does not have the authority to issue patents on previously patented land.
- **Can I “bring a patent forward” and have it issued in my name?**
  - No. In the event your land has been previously patented or conveyed as described above, there is no process to “bring a patent forward” and the GLO is not authorized to issue another patent on said land.
- **If I obtain a patent to the land upon which my house sits, can I be exempt from paying county taxes?**
  - Patenting land does not exempt the patent holder from local, state, or federal jurisdiction. It simply confirms the transfer of the land from public to private ownership.
  - Property taxes in Texas are levied at the county level, and any questions about property taxes should be addressed to your county's appraisal district or tax office.