



Steps to Ensure a Proper Notarization

1. Appearing in person (**Most important requirement**)
2. Examining the document (**Make sure all of the elements are there***)
3. Verifying the signer's identification (**Check 9 approved documents**)
4. Keeping and maintaining a record of your notarizations (**Notary Journals encouraged**)
5. Signing, sealing, and completing the notarization (**Follow Code of Virginia requirements***)

*Refer to Notary Handbook

Identifying the Signer

Properly verifying your signer's identity is the essential duty of every Notary.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides direction as to how to identify your signer.

Here are the 3 general methods:

- Personal knowledge, which means that you personally know the signer.
- Identity documents, such as driver's licenses, passports, and other government-issued IDs.
- Credible identifying witnesses, which is someone can verify the signer's identity.

9 Approved Documents

The code of Virginia lists **9** approved documents to confirm a signers identity if unknown by the Notary.

The examination of one or more of the following unexpired documents are acceptable:

1. A United States passport
2. A United States passport card
3. A certificate of United States citizenship
4. A certificate of naturalization
5. A foreign passport
6. A United States green card with photograph
7. A state issued driver's license
8. A state issued identification card
9. A United States military identification card

If you have any doubts whatsoever, respectfully decline to complete the notary certificate until the signer provides additional information to prove his or her identity.

Record Your Journal Entry

A proper notary journal entry contains details of the notarization that are helpful in case a document or notarization is called into question.

1. **Date and time of the notarial act**
2. **Type of notarial act**
3. **Printed name and address of each person seeking a notarization**
4. **Type of identification used to establish the identity of each person**
5. **Fee, if any, charged for the notarial act**

**Reminder:
\$10 max per document**

It's generally a good idea to complete your journal entry before the notarization so you can make sure to collect all the necessary elements of the record, including your signer's signature.



How to Complete the Notarial Certificate

Every notarial certificate must contain the following 7 items:

1. The notarial statement
2. The date of the notarial act
3. The county or city and state in which the notarial act was performed
4. The expiration date of the notary's commission
5. The Notary's signature
6. The Notary's registration number
7. A photographically reproducible notary seal/stamp

SAMPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(§ 55-118.1, § 55-118.2, § 55-118.3, § 55-118.4, § 55-118.5, § 55-118.6)

The Uniform Recognition of Acknowledgments Act (Section 55-118.1 through 55-121 of the *Code of Virginia*) outlines the format a notary should use for various acknowledgments. Please find those and other examples below.

A) Certificate of Acknowledgment:

City/County of Richmond Commonwealth of Virginia

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 17 day of June 20 25.

by John Smith
(Name of person seeking acknowledgment)

Notary Seal

Jane Doe
Notary Public's signature

Notary registration number: 12345678910

My commission expires: 12/30/2028

Please note that your signature must match the name on your notary commission!



Important Reminders

- Never give legal advice - that is the unauthorized practice of law, and you could be held liable
- Make sure there are no blank spaces to prevent your signers from potentially committing fraud
- You can decline to notarize a document for any reason at any time

Contact Information

Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
P.O. Box 1795 Richmond, Virginia 23218-1795
Phone: (804) 692-2536 | Fax: (804) 371-0017
Email: notary@governor.virginia.gov

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