



HELPFUL NOTARY TOOLS WHEN PERFORMING NOTARIAL ACTS



STEPS TO ENSURE A PROPER NOTARIZATION

1. **Appearing in person.** (Most important requirement)
2. **Examining the document.** (Ensure all required elements are present)
3. **Verifying the signer's identity.** (Review approved identification documents)
4. **Keeping and maintaining a record of all notarizations.** (For a minimum of 5 years)
5. **Sign, affix seal, and complete the notarial certificate.**

IDENTIFYING THE SIGNER

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

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

Here are the 4 General methods:

- Personal knowledge, which means that you personally know the signer.
- Identity documents, such as driver's license, passports, and other government issued ID's.
- Credible identifying witness(es), which is someone that can verify the signer's identity.
- Other methods authorized by the Code of Virginia.

APPROVED IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

The code of Virginia lists 9 approved documents to Confirm a signer's identity if unknown by the Notary.

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

1. United States passport
2. United States passport card
3. Certificate of United States citizenship
4. Certificate of naturalization
5. Foreign passport
6. United States Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)
7. State-issued driver's license
8. State-issued identification card
9. 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

1. Date and time of the notarial act
2. Type of notarial act
3. Printed name and address of each person seeking notarization
4. Type of identification used
5. Fee charged (if any)
6. Signer's signature (if required by your journal)

Note: A notary may charge up to \$10 for each notarial act performed.

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.

***When in doubt refer to the Notary Handbook**



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

This example outlines the format a notary should use for various acknowledgements.

A) Certificate of Acknowledgment:

City/County of **Richmond** Commonwealth of Virginia

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 1 day of July 2026.

by John Smith
(Name of person seeking acknowledgment)

Jane Doe

Notary Public's signature

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

NOTARY SEAL



Notary registration number: 123456789

My commission expires: 12/31/2026

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

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