



A Notary's guide to completing journal entries

By David Thun, Updated June 9, 2025

Most states either require or recommend that you keep a journal record of your notarizations. A detailed Notary journal helps protect you from accusations of negligence and potential lawsuits.

But what information should be included in a journal entry? Here's an essential guide to completing journal entries:

How To Use a Notary Journal



Complete the journal entry first

It's best to complete all parts of the Notary journal entry before finishing the notarization. If you wait until afterward, the signer may depart, leaving you with an incomplete journal entry and no way to finish it. Also, if you wait too long to write down what happened, you may forget essential details you need later. That could cause problems if the notarization is called into question later.

State requirements for Notary journal entries

If your state requires you to keep a journal, make sure to include all mandated information for every entry. For example, **California**, which has some of the most detailed notarization laws in the country, requires the following information be taken down in each journal entry:

1. The date and time the notarization took place
2. The type of notarization performed — such as, “Acknowledgment” or “Jurat”
3. The type of document being notarized — for example, “Deed of Trust” or “Power of Attorney”
4. The signature or mark of each person whose signature or mark is notarized, as well as the signature of any subscribing witness
5. What type of satisfactory evidence was used to identify the signer, such as “U.S. Passport” (California does not allow Notaries to identify signers through personal knowledge), along

with the ID's issuing agency, ID serial number, and issuing or expiration date. If a credible witness is used to identify the signer, the credible witness must sign the journal entry.

6. The fee charged for the notarial act, or, if no fee was charged, "No Fee" or "0"
7. The right thumbprint of the signer if the document is a power of attorney, deed, quitclaim deed, deed of trust or other document affecting real property

Please note: California Notaries are not required to write the signer's address in their journal entry.

For most states with journal requirements, entries generally include some variation of date and type of notarization; type of document; name and address of the signer; and how the signer was identified. But the details of requirements vary from state to state. For example, **Pennsylvania** requires the following information:

1. The date and time of the notarization
2. A description of the document and notarization
3. The full name and address of each person for whom a notarization is performed
4. How the signer was identified, with a description, date of issuance and date of expiration if ID was used. If the signer was identified through personal knowledge, include a statement to that effect.
5. The fee charged

Texas requires traditional pen-and-paper journal entries for notarizations to include the following:

1. The date of each document notarized
2. The date of the notarization
3. The name and mailing address of the signer or subscribing witness who appears before the Notary.
4. The method used to identify the signer and if a credible witness identified the signer, the credible witness' name and mailing address
5. A description of the document
6. If the notarization involved property transactions, the name and address of the person receiving the property

7. If land is conveyed or charged by the document, the name of the original grantee and the county where the land is located
8. For proofs of execution by subscribing witness, the address of the subscribing witness and whether they personally know the Notary or were identified by a credible witness (if identified by a credible witness, the credible witness' name and address must be included).

In addition, Texas Notaries are prohibited from recording the serial or identifying number of a signer's ID. Texas Notaries are prohibited from recording a signer's biometric identification, such as a fingerprint or thumbprint, in their journals.



Where Notary journals aren't required

For Notaries in states that don't require journals or specify what information should be included, the *Notary Public Code of Professional Responsibility* recommends including the following as a standard of practice for each journal entry:

1. The date and time of the notarization
2. The type of notarization performed
3. The date and description of the document or transaction
4. The name, address and signature of each person whose signature is notarized or who serves as a witness
5. A description of how each signer was identified who is not personally known
6. The fee charged for each notarial act

Some states, such as **Florida**, do not require traditional pen-and-paper Notaries to keep a journal, but do require Notaries who perform remote online notarizations (RON) to keep an electronic record of their remote acts.

Additional Notary journal information

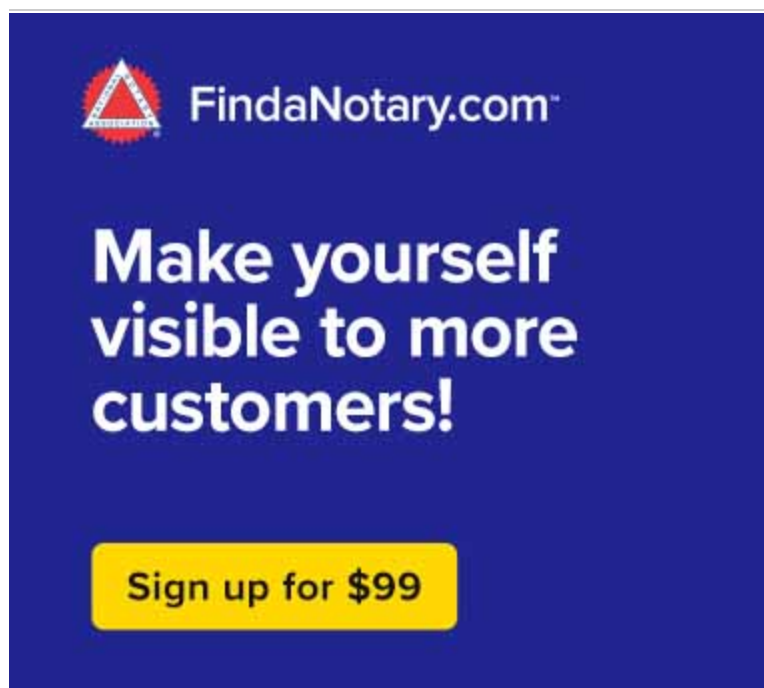
Sometimes, there may be an unusual circumstance connected to a notarization. While it is not required, including information about the circumstances in the entry is generally a good idea. That information can be helpful if you are questioned about the notarization at a later time. For example, you might want to note that a signer was bedridden but appeared alert and aware.

Don't record unnecessary private signer information

You have a responsibility to protect the privacy of your signers and should not ask for sensitive personal information for a journal entry unless required. That could include bank account numbers and Social Security numbers.

[How to handle requests for your Notary journal entries](#)

[10 Steps Notaries can take to avoid being sued](#)



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