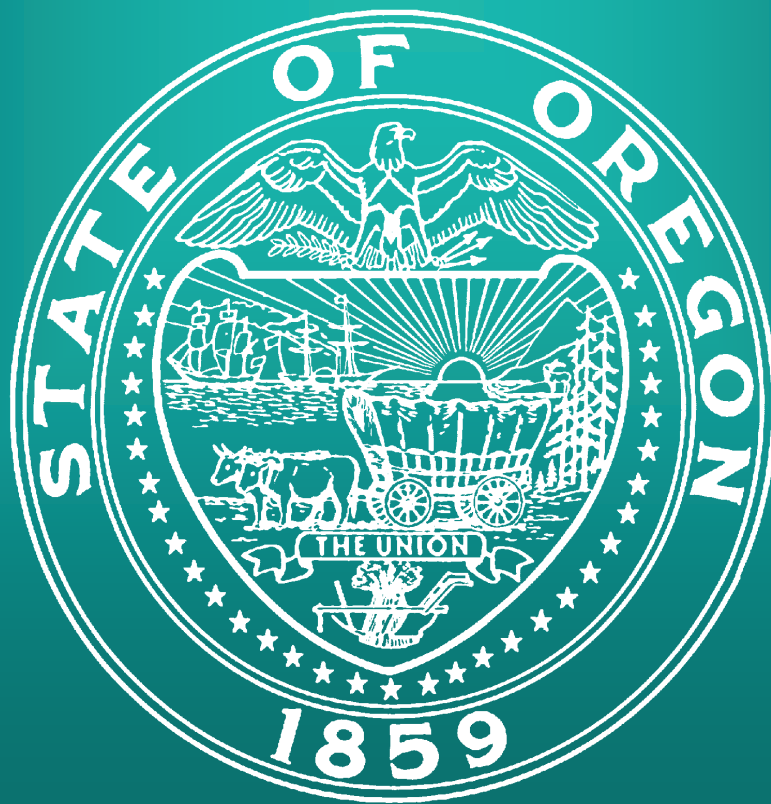


Oregon

Notary Public

Guide



Corporation Division – Secretary of State

FilingInOregon.com

Introduction

Thank you for becoming an Oregon notary public, and welcome to the State of Oregon Notary Public Guide. This publication describes the duties and responsibilities involved in carrying out your notarial commission. It covers laws and rules, Attorney General's opinions, state policy, and common sense guidelines based on broad experience and familiarity with case law. Notaries may be held liable for their misconduct in performing notarizations and could be subject to penalties for any misconduct. Penalties can be administrative, criminal, or civil. In addition, a person injured by a violation of any provision of House Bill 2834 may bring an individual action in an appropriate court to recover actual damages. It is important that the duties of a notary public be taken seriously. Remember to use care when applying your official stamp or signature to documents presented before you. One of the fastest growing areas of litigation in the country is actions against notaries for losses caused by improper notarizations. It is your responsibility as a notary public to understand and carry out the laws and administrative rules of the State of Oregon as they relate to notaries. Failure to follow these laws could leave you liable to damages and subject to fines and other penalties. Familiarity with the Notary Public Guide will reduce that risk.

No matter how much this guide covers, it will always miss some situation or special need you and your client may encounter. When these situations arise, contact the Corporation Division, Notary section.

We recommend that you subscribe to [NotaryNews](#) to receive important changes that impact Oregon notaries. Subscribing to [NotaryNews](#), our free email subscription service, enables you to receive updates on Oregon notary laws, rules and procedures.

**Secretary of State
Corporation Division
255 Capitol St. NE, Ste. 151
Salem, OR 97310-1327
(503) 986-2200**

www.FilingInOregon.com

Email: Corporation.Division@state.or.us

Subscribe to [NotaryNews](#):

This is a free email subscription service to receive updates
on Oregon notary law, rules and procedures.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - The Notary Public	4
Notaries in History.....	4
Three Components of a Notary Public	4
Qualifications to Become an Oregon Notary Public.....	5
Become a Notary or Reapply for a New Commission.....	6
Stamping Devices and Journals	7
Re-Commissioned.....	7
Not reapplying for a Commission?.....	7
Lost, Misplaced, Broken or Stolen Stamping Device	7
Lost, Misplaced, Destroyed or Unusable Journal	7
Notary Information Change	8
We're Here to Help.....	8
Chapter 2 - Responsibilities of Notaries and Employers	10
Employer Notarization Policies	10
Employers and Notaries.....	11
Chapter 3 - Misconduct, Liability & Protecting Yourself	13
Misconduct	13
Liability.....	13
Protecting Yourself.....	14
Chapter 4 - Notary Fees	16
Maximum Amount of Notary Fees Permitted to be Charged	16
Waiver of Fees.....	16
Travel Fee	16
Notary Fees and Your Employer.....	16
Chapter 5 - The Notary Journal	18
Importance of the Journal.....	18
Format of the Journal.....	18
Disposition of Records.....	18
Public Record	19
Notary Journal Requirements	19
Abbreviate Multiple Entry in Notarial Journal.....	20
Notarial Acts Required to be Recorded in Notarial Journal	21
Additional Notarial Acts that May Be Recorded in Notarial Journal	21
Chapter 6 - How to Notarize.....	23
Review the Document	23
Identify the Signer	23
Determine the Signer's Willingness and Ability to Understand What Is Being Signed.....	25

Table of Contents

Complete the Notarial Journal.....	25
Complete the Notarial Certificate	25
Chapter 7 - Notarial Certificates.....	27
Notarizing a Commercial Protest.....	27
Components of a Notarial Certificate.....	27
Selecting the Certificate.....	28
Steps to Complete the Notarial Certificate.....	29
Protect Loose Certificates	30
Making Corrections.....	30
Chapter 8 - Oregon Notarial Certificates.....	33
Acknowledgment Certificate.....	34
Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity.....	34
Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity	36
Verification Upon Oath or Affirmation Certificate.....	38
Witnessing or Attesting a Signature Certificate.....	40
Copy Certification Certificate	42
Attorney-In-Fact Acknowledgment Certificate.....	44
Signature by Third Party.....	46
Signature Stamp Notarization.....	48
Sample Certificates	50-51
Chapter 9 - Secretary of State Certificates	52
Authentication Certificates.....	52
Certificate of Good Standing.....	52
Notary Public Notarial Commission Certificate	52
Certificate of Authorization	52
Chapter 10 - Foreign Language Documents	53
Foreign Language Certificates.....	53
Chapter 11- Electronic Notarizations	54
Notarizations by Remote Presence	54
Glossary of Notarial Terms	55-56
Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 194	57
Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 160.....	57
Index.....	59
Review	60

Chapter 1 – The Notary Public

A notary is “a person of proven integrity appointed by the state to act as an impartial witness” (National Notary Association Home Study Course). The main function of the notary is to witness a legal proceeding so that the courts and other interested parties can be certain that the person signing a document knows what is being signed, is able to understand the action taken, and is in fact the person whose signature is on the document.

Notaries in History

In the old Roman Republic, *notarii* were public secretaries who were shorthand writers. As scribes became more and more common, they developed a service in the public marketplace to draw up legal documents and other written instruments. Wax seals were used as signatures on documents. Later, ribbons tied together multi-page documents, and wax seals on the knots showed that no one had tampered with the knots. Thus, we came to have notary seals.

Eventually, the state came to regulate and commission these scribes. Witnesses to the drafting of their documents came to be required. Notaries, still in the public marketplace, evolved into both drafters and witnesses to these writings. As *notarii* became essential to commerce and law, royalty found the need to commission and employ them for drawing up and countersigning documents. By the Middle Ages, notaries had to undergo formal training and examinations. Gradually, the government took over sole appointment of notaries, giving them public officer status.

In Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin American countries, notaries retain many of their attorney-like powers. In the United States, however, notaries are most important for merely witnessing documents drafted by someone else. This disparity in notary authority is the reason Oregon has a law against advertising as a “Notario Publico”, which conveys to Spanish-speaking individuals vastly different powers than notaries have in this state. “A notary public, other than an attorney licensed to practice law, may not use the term “notario” or “notario publico.” ORS 194.350(3). A notary that is not an attorney, who advertises their notarial services in a language other than English, must include the statement, “I am not an attorney licensed to practice law. I am not allowed to draft legal records, give advice on legal matters, including immigration, or charge a fee for those activities.” or similar import. ORS 194.350(4)(A).

Even within the United States, the duties and responsibilities of a notary public vary greatly from state to state. It is essential, therefore, to become familiar with **Oregon’s** notary laws and rules even if you have previously served as a notary in another state.

Three Components of a Notary Public

There are three components to the notary public. He or she must be of **proven integrity**, an **officer of the state**, and an **impartial witness** to a particular transaction.

Proven Integrity

Because a notary’s whole purpose is to detect and deter fraud, Oregon statutes require notary applicants to undergo a criminal background check. If a person has been convicted of embezzlement or fraud, he or she will be disqualified to receive a notarial commission. A traffic violation such as a speeding ticket, however, isn’t relevant to notarial functions and wouldn’t disqualify one from obtaining a notarial commission. “Not have been convicted of a felony or any crime involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit during the 10-year period preceding the date of the application.” ORS 194.315(2)(d).

Ministerial Officer of the State

A notary public is commissioned by the state and acts as an officer of the state. Because the office is ministerial rather than regulatory or judicial, the duties of the office are narrowly defined to certain prescribed acts of limited scope. A notary must follow written rules that allow only limited discretion in performing these acts. A notary needs to remember that they have become a State of Oregon Notary, not their employer’s notary.

Impartial Witness

The main function of the notary is to witness a legal proceeding. As a witness, the notary must ensure the willingness, competence, and identity of the signer. The notary does not validate or legalize the document or guarantee its truth. It is important to the validity of the witnessed act that the notary be impartial.

Impartial means:

- **The notary has no financial interest or any other beneficial interest in the transaction.** The notary has nothing to gain by notarizing. Otherwise, suspicion of fraud is thrown upon the whole proceeding.
- **The notary must not be related to the signer.** Oregon's law states that a notary may not notarize for their spouse and although Oregon law does not prohibit notarizing for other relatives, it is prudent not to do so. It is easy for a court to construe that a notary may gain from a transaction with relatives, particularly in the case of close relatives.
- **The notary or their spouse may not be named in the document.** A party to a legal document is not disinterested in the transaction and therefore is not a satisfactory witness. A notary may not notarize their own signature or the signature of their spouse.

Qualifications to Become an Oregon Notary Public

To be a notary public in Oregon, you must meet the following qualifications, at the time of application: (A background check is conducted on all applications for a notary public commission).

- **Be 18 years of age or older**
- **Be a resident of this state or have a place of employment or practice in this state**
- **Be able to read and write English**
- **Not have had a commission as a notary public revoked during the 10 year period preceding the date of application**
- **Complete a Notary training course** (not required for current Oregon Notaries with an active commission at the time the new application is received in our office.)
- **Not have been convicted of a felony or of any crime involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit during the 10-year period preceding the date of application**
- **Pass the Secretary of State's Notary Public examination**

The term for a Notary Commission is 4 years and starts with a notary training course and exam. The exam is completed online and is an open-book, true or false and multiple-choice test, based on materials found in the Notary Public Guide, live seminars and online tutorials. The Notary Public Guide is meant to be educational: to help you read through the statutes and rules, and understand what you have read. The guide also includes best practice and Attorney General's opinions. It is very important that you take the time to read through the materials and complete the exam properly. If you fail the exam, the application process cannot be completed. You can however, retake the exam at your convenience.

The education may be provided by the state or by a certified provider. The Secretary of State only recognizes that the education program of the provider is similar to the state's curriculum and does not endorse the other services or products the vendor may or may not provide. OAR 160-100-1130(5).

Check online for information regarding free [state-run seminars](#). For information regarding the state's free [online tutorial](#), please check our website.

Oregon Notaries with an active commission are exempt from the training requirement if they complete and pass the exam, and submit their application before their commission expiration date. However, we encourage notaries to take the tutorial or attend a class, to make sure their knowledge is up to date and they are aware of new laws and administrative rules.

Become a Notary or Reapply for a New Commission

1. **Complete a training course.** (If you are a reapplying notary with a current commission, the steps are the same but you do not need the educational training.)
 - a. To meet the training requirement you can take an in-person seminar **or** complete an online training course.
 - i. Courses are offered by the Secretary of State at no charge. Courses are also offered by certified education providers for a fee.
 - ii. For more information on these [approved courses](#), please visit our website.
2. **Meet the qualifications to be a Notary Public for the State of Oregon**
 - a. To become a notary public in Oregon you must meet certain qualifications.
 - i. See the previous page for qualifications.
 - ii. A background check and revocation search is conducted on all applicants.
3. **Submit your application.**
 - a. The quickest way to submit your application is online. There is also a paper application and test that can be completed, printed, and mailed in.
 - b. Enter the required information and submit your application.
4. **Pass the required online exam.**
 - a. The exam is a yes/no, true/false and multiple-choice question test. It is based on the information received through the training course and from the Oregon Notary Public Guide.
 - b. Please be sure to read the material in the guide carefully before you proceed with the exam. You may want to have a copy of the guide available while taking the exam.
5. **Oath of Office.**
 - a. Once the background check and revocation search is complete, you will receive an email which will contain a PDF attachment of the Oath of Office. Print out the Oath of Office. (If you do not pass the background check or revocation search, you will receive a different email notification.)
 - b. The Oath of Office must be signed in front of a notary and submitted to our office with the \$40.00 processing fee. The Oath needs to be returned **within 30 days of being issued** or you will need to re-apply and submit the application fee again.
6. **What comes next.**
 - a. After the Oath has been processed you will receive an email from us which includes PDF copies of your Commission Certificate and the Certificate of Authorization.
 - b. If you choose, you can print out your Commission Certificate and frame it.
 - c. Print the Certificate of Authorization and take it to a vendor who makes rubber stamps. If you use an online vendor, it is permissible to email the PDF certificate. This certificate will contain the details of your commission, including your commission name, number and expiration date. The same certificate is used for electronic notarization technology.
 - d. Once you have your stamp and have purchased your notary journal you are ready to notarize. Congratulations! (Please remember; if you have a current commission when you apply, you should wait until the effective date of your new commission to begin using the new stamp.)

Stamping Devices and Journals

We do not provide these; you must purchase them yourself. Most office supply stores and rubber stamp stores can make notary stamps. Most office supply stores either carry journals in stock or through a store catalog. An embosser is no longer used to notarize but may be used in an unofficial capacity as a protection device and should never be used in place of the official notary stamp.

Re-Commissioned

A notary public commission is not automatically renewed. Notaries are responsible for tracking and reapplying for a new commission on their own. You can submit a new application 2 ½ months before the expiration of your current commission. Each notarial commission is unique, and a new notarial commission number and expiration date will be issued when the new application is accepted. The [application](#) is submitted online. ORS 194.325(1).

If the notary public is reapplying, the same notarial journal may be used with the new notarial commission, as long as the information required in the front of the notarial journal is updated. The notary public should indicate where the new notarial commission begins on the next notarial journal entry line.

The official notary stamp from the expiring notarial commission must be disabled by destroying, defacing, damaging, erasing or securing the device against use as soon as the notarial commission expires. It will be invalid with the new notarial commission. ORS 194.295(2).

The notary public will purchase a new notary stamp. **The new notary stamp will not be valid until the effective date of the new notarial commission.**

The process to reapply may take up to two weeks.

Not reapplying for a Commission?

If the notary public decides not to reapply for a new notarial commission, the notary stamp from the expiring notarial commission should be disabled by destroying, defacing, damaging, erasing or securing the device against use as soon as the notarial commission expires. The notary will retain the notary journal for 10 years after the last notarial act recorded in the journal. ORS 194.295(2).

Lost, Misplaced, Broken or Stolen Stamping Device

If the notary stamping device is lost, misplaced, broken or stolen, download the [Missing Stamp, Certificate or Journal](#) form from our website; fill it out and mail it to our office **WITHIN TEN (10) DAYS**. Take the Certificate of Authorization to a vendor to have a new stamp made. If you find the original stamping device, you must send us a written statement of explanation within ten (10) days and destroy the stamp.

This affidavit form is used to obtain a Certificate of Authorization to replace a stamping device that has been lost, stolen, misplaced or broken.

Lost, Misplaced, Destroyed or Unusable Journal

If your journal is lost, misplaced, destroyed, stolen, or otherwise unusable you can download the [Missing Stamp, Certificate or Journal](#) form from our website; fill it out and mail it to our office **WITHIN TEN (10) DAYS**.

You will need to purchase another journal to continue with your notarial duties.

Notary Information Change

When a notary public has a legal change of name, he or she is required by law to notify the Corporation Division within thirty (30) days. OAR 160-100-0170(1)(a).

Changing the notarial commission name involves the cost of a new notary stamping device. Download the [Notary Information Change](#) form, have it notarized, and send it to our office within 30 days. Changing the official signature on file with the Secretary of State's office requires filling out the [Notary Information Change](#) form and returning it to our office within 30 days.

When a notary public has a change of their public contact address, he or she is required by law to notify the Corporation Division within thirty (30) days. Download the [Notary Information Change](#) form, fill it out and return the form to our office within 30 days. OAR 160-100-0170(3). The public record address is available to the public in an online data base. The public record address can be a postal address or a street address.

We're Here to Help

If you don't know the answer to a notarial question, ask the Corporation Division. Our focus is to educate, not regulate. Although we are obligated to respond to complaints and to screen applicants, most of our public contact is educational.

Our aim is to have well-trained, competent, and confident notaries in this state. The better you are, the less regulation we do, and the less chance you have of incurring penalties - through us, or through the courts.

When in doubt, ask—before you make a mistake. But remember, we are not attorneys. We cannot tell you which certificate to use, or advise you on a course of action in a particular situation. The best we can do is to tell you how to uphold the letter of the law. Where the law does not specifically tell you what to do, neither can we.

Subscribe to [NotaryNews](#)

Stay informed on important changes that impact Oregon notaries! Oregon notaries should subscribe to [NotaryNews](#), our free email subscription service, to get updates on Oregon notary laws, rules, and procedures. It's easy to register; simply go to our website and follow the steps.

Notary Education

Our office has raised notary education to a new level. We have free notary seminars scheduled throughout the state to give every notary an opportunity to become properly trained and educated about Oregon laws and good notary procedure. Brush up your notary knowledge and get the answers to your questions by attending a live seminar. The seminars are a comprehensive and thorough examination of notary basics; what a notary is, responsibilities and liabilities, how to notarize, notary certificates and the notary journal. This is your chance to talk to the state agency that regulates notaries, and participate in lively discussions about procedures, practices and notary laws. Go online to view the [notary seminar schedule](#) and register for a class.

We also have a free [web tutorial](#) that meets the educational requirements for notaries.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. *My current commission has expired and I have reapplied. May I use my old stamp until my new stamp is made?*

No. The stamp with the expired date should be destroyed as soon as possible. ORS 194.295(2). A notary public may only use the notary stamp for the notarial commission they are currently in. Any other stamp would have the wrong expiration date and wrong notarial commission number.

2. *What should I do if my notary stamping device is stolen?*

Report the incident to the police, then report the fact to the Secretary of State, Corporation Division using the [Missing Stamp, Certificate or Journal](#) form. The Secretary of State, Corporation Division will email a Certificate of Authorization with a new commission number, so the notary public can begin the process of replacing the notary stamping device. If the notarial journal was not stolen, indicate on the next available line in your journal the date and circumstance of the notary stamping device's loss.

3. *May I advertise my services as a notary public in the phone book or newspaper?*

A notary public may advertise as long as they are careful about how they describe their qualifications and services. "A notary public, other than an attorney licensed to practice law, may not use the term "notario" or "notario publico." ORS 194.350(3).

4. *How old do I need to be to become a Notary Public?*

You must be at least 18 years of age at the time of appointment.

5. *Do I need to be a resident of this state?*

You can be a resident of this state, or be a resident of another state and have a place of employment or practice within this state. If you live in another state and are an Oregon notary, you must perform all notarizations in the state of Oregon.

6. *Must I be able to read and write the English language?*

Yes.

7. *How long is a commission good for?*

The term of office for Oregon Notaries Public is 4 years. They must retake the test and submit their application online or send in a paper application, not more than 2 ½ months before the commission expires.

8. *How long does it take to get my application processed?*

It can take from less than a day to several days to fully process a notary application depending on how quickly the applicant can get the oath notarized and turned in. If the applicant does not pass the test, the applicant may retake the test immediately. When sending in a paper application you will need to take into account mail time, the paper application process can take up to 10 days or more.

Chapter 2-Responsibilities of Notaries and Employers

A notary has an ethical obligation to serve as a notary public. Notaries exist, not for the convenience of a business, but to serve the common good. The public needs access to the services of notaries, just as business does.

At the same time, under Oregon law, an employer may limit access to employee notaries public during work hours. For example, a bank may only allow its employees to notarize documents involving bank business or documents for people with accounts at that bank. Such a policy should be carefully reviewed by legal staff, however, to protect the employer from lawsuits based on protected class considerations.

Employers may not prohibit notaries from notarizing on their own time and off work premises. However, if a notary has signed the fee waiver and does not charge for notarizations at work, the fee waiver still applies when notarizing after hours.

If your employer insists that you notarize a document in a manner inconsistent with Oregon laws and rules, you and the employer should be aware of laws regarding notaries who are forced to break the law, or “commit misconduct.” For example, if your employer asks you to notarize an acknowledgment without the signing party present, that action would be intentional misconduct and subject to penalty of the notary.

According to ORS 194.405(3), if a notary was coerced by threat of the employer into misconduct, the employer can be liable to the notary for damages recovered from the notary. This means that if a notary is successfully sued, he or she has the right to sue the employer, if it can be proved that the employer forced the employee to do the wrongful act.

Also, ORS 194.990(1)(d), states that any person who knowingly solicits, coerces or in any way influences a notary to commit misconduct, commits a Class B misdemeanor. On top of the civil penalty stated above, it is also a criminal offense to force improper notarizations.

Employer Notarization Policies

Companies that employ notaries should have a policy on notarizations. Such a policy should address at least the following issues:

- What times a notary will be available.
- What types of documents will be permitted. For example, a hospital might allow notarization of only healthcare documents. Although an Attorney General’s opinion (DOJ 165-300-0093) states, “...the notary public may, under the notaries public laws, either serve the entire public which desires notary services, a portion of the public (such as customers of a business or fellow employees) or no one at all,” notaries may be seen as having an obligation to respond to any reasonable request for a notarization, and employers may wish to uphold that duty. Restriction of notary services must be carefully crafted, so that the possibility of lawsuits based on perceived discrimination is minimized.
- A statement to the effect that the “Notary has the sole responsibility to refuse a notarization,” as that is Oregon law.
- What the fees will be, if any, and where they are posted. OAR 160-100-0400.
- The responsibility of the notary for updating commission information and to reapply for a new commission, along with the procedure for doing so.
- Notarization for colleagues on work premises.
- The disposition of notary journals upon termination or resignation of employment. (The stamping device should always be retained by the notary).
- Education requirements for notary employees.
- Other items of concern or policy, such as the extent and conditions of liability coverage under the employer’s insurance.

Employers and Notaries

It is important to discuss notary requirements and other issues with your employer ahead of time. It is unlikely that an employer will listen calmly and rationally to your concerns when your biggest client is off to the airport without signing your journal and you won't complete the notarization! Employers need to know that you are an officer of the state as well as their employee and that cooperation is the best way of getting what everyone wants: valid notarizations done efficiently.

Should your employer purchase the journal and stamping device for you to perform notarial acts, they do so as a convenience for the office. The journal and stamping device are the tools a notary uses to perform notarial acts and should be kept in a secure location accessible only to the notary. An embosser is an optional device used only in conjunction with the official stamp and should likewise be kept in a secure location. It is important that the notary and employer understand that the journal, stamping device and embosser (if used) is the exclusive property of the notary.

Upon termination of employment, the stamping device is the exclusive property of the notary. The notary journal should also be retained by the notary unless the notary and employer have entered into a journal agreement. If a journal agreement has been entered into, the notary shall hand the journal over to the employer and the notary shall retain a copy of the journal agreement, which may be examined by the Secretary of State upon request (160-100-0360). A copy of the journal agreement may be sent to the Secretary of State's office.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. If my employer pays for my commission and my stamping device, am I only a notary for the business in which I am employed?

No. The notarial commission and its related tools belong to the notary public and not the employer. A notary public is commissioned by the State of Oregon to provide a service to the public. The law does not state that notaries **MUST** serve the public, but if service is refused without just cause, the notary public and their employer could face a civil law suit. ORS 194.990(1)(a).

2. My former employer paid for my notarial commission and kept my stamping device. Can they do that and can I still be a notary?

An individual, not an employer, is commissioned as a notary public. It does not matter who paid for the notarial commission, stamping device, and notarial journal—**they belong to the notary public**. During a notarial commission term, a notary public may change employers several times, and the notarial commission, stamping device, and notarial journal move with the notary public. ORS 194.990(1)(c).

The only exception would be if there is a signed journal agreement with the employer. The notary public would then purchase a new notarial journal for use with the new employer. OAR 160-100-0360.

3. My employer wanted me to notarize a document signed by a client who came in while I was at lunch. I told him that I couldn't notarize unless the client appeared before me. Was I correct?

Yes. All notarizations require the signer to be present at the time of the notarization. The notary public needs the signer to sign the notarial journal and give appropriate identification information.

An employer who threatens or coerces a notary public into an act of misconduct can be liable to the notary public for damages resulting from that misconduct, ORS 194.405(3), and is guilty of a crime. ORS 194.990(1)(d).

Chapter 3-Misconduct, Liability & Protecting Yourself

A notary public is responsible for knowing and understanding Oregon laws and administrative rules relating to notaries. These are found in Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 194 and Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 160-100. These have recently been amended, effective September 1, 2013. The application examination is based on those laws and rules, and a full copy of them can be found through the links in the back of this guide or [on our website](#).

Because many people find it difficult to read laws, the Secretary of State's office is available for questions by phone at 503-986-2200, or [by email](#). Our office presents notary seminars, maintains a web site, has an online tutorial, and publishes this guide. It is up to the notary to make use of these resources, and to make sure he or she understands what is required.

Misconduct

Negligent or purposeful improper notarization is called "misconduct." Misconduct can be either **intentional** or **unintentional**.

Intentional misconduct is deliberate disobedience of notarial statute, rule, or good practice that seeks to benefit the notary in some way, often to defraud the signer of the document.

Unintentional misconduct is negligent behavior that causes a notary to make an error in a notarization or to accidentally forget to do what is required. For example, failure to supply the name of the county in the venue portion of a notarial certificate could be an omission that is deemed unintentional misconduct.

Most misconduct is the result of disobeying the law, whether the notary gives help beyond what the law allows, or fails to do everything the law requires.

Non-attorney notaries public must not give legal advice. Do not tell people which legal procedure to do, how to do it, or what they need to do to get a legal action accomplished. You may think you know what to do, but you open yourself to a lawsuit even if you are right. The Oregon State Bar takes a dim view of unlicensed individuals giving out legal advice. This also applies to notarial certificates. As you'll see, a notary may not suggest or select notarial certificates for people. Rather, he or she performs a particular notarization at the direction of the requesting individual.

Notaries public must not prepare documents. Don't fill out documents or finish drafting them, even as a favor. It takes an attorney to know what is legally appropriate for a document.

Common examples of misconduct include: not requiring personal appearance of the signer; not securing the notary journal and stamping device; not keeping a journal; and just "stamping and signing" on a document.

Liability

Because so many documents and judgments based on those documents rely on the validity of the notarization, breaches of notarial law are taken very seriously. There are three kinds of penalties notaries can incur through their misconduct: administrative, criminal, and civil penalties.

Administrative penalties are levied by the Secretary of State, and can range from an advice letter to revocation of the commission and a fine. It is important to avoid such penalties because they may have other consequences. For example, many licensing agencies will not issue a license if a notary commission has been revoked or suspended.

Criminal penalties are given in cases of fraud, coercion, or other criminal action. In these cases, the notary has intentionally committed misconduct and is prosecuted in the same way as for any crime.

Civil penalties are the penalties notaries public are most often afraid of incurring. If a notary, through carelessness or inaction, unintentionally or intentionally damages the complainant, he or she is liable for monetary damages without limit. For example, if an improperly notarized grant deed causes the deal to fall through, and that deal costs the signer thousands of dollars, the notary can be sued so the signer recovers those losses.

Protecting Yourself

It is not possible to be protected from a lawsuit, but you can reduce its effects. There are two ways to deal with lawsuits against notaries: have insurance to reduce what it costs if you lose, or win the suit altogether by avoiding misconduct.

Avoiding Misconduct - Reasonable Care

Although Oregon statutes do not specifically state this, the standard notaries public must adhere to is **Reasonable Care**. Reasonable care is “that degree of care which a person of ordinary prudence would exercise in the same or similar circumstances,” according to *Black’s Law Dictionary*. If a notary acts with reasonable care when performing a notarization, the courts have always held that the notary acted with sufficient diligence and is not subject to damages. **The Notary’s best defense against liability is to take Reasonable Care when notarizing.**

Obey all Laws and Regulations

The most important thing to remember about Reasonable Care is that you are required to know and understand what the law requires of you. In other words: *Do what the law says you should do and don’t do what it says you shouldn’t.*

Good Judgment and Common Sense

Many situations the notary public encounters are not precisely spelled out in law. The law gives general guidelines but relies on the notary’s common sense to properly evaluate each situation. For example, notaries may use a driver license to identify a signer, but if the ID looks false (a tampered photo, obviously incorrect birth date, sex, or height, etc.), then the notary has a duty to act appropriately. Although many of the instructions in this guide have no direct counterpart in statute, they are good sense practices that will help the notary avoid any appearance of wrongdoing or insufficient care.

Errors and Omissions Insurance

Errors and omissions insurance cover a notary if he or she is sued over the performance of a notarization. If a notary is sued, the insurance company will handle the litigation, bringing in expertise that the average person is hard-pressed to match. The company will negotiate a settlement if it finds a compelling reason to do so. Of course, it will pay the amount against the defendant up to the limit of the policy. However, there are two overriding factors that reduce the usefulness of this insurance.

First is the payoff ceiling. By its very nature, insurance will only pay assessed damages up to a certain amount. Most policies don’t go over \$50,000. Yet the liability has no limit. Notaries can be and have been sued for millions of dollars. Obviously, a notary cannot rely on insurance as an adequate safety net.

The second limitation is that errors and omission insurance covers only what the insurance company believes is accidental or negligent misconduct. If a court determines that the misconduct was intentional, even if not done with criminal intent, the notary may not be covered.

Insurance vs. Bonding

Oregon does not require notaries to post a bond. If you have filed a bond and are required to pay damages, the bondsman pays for you out of the bond amount, but you still have to pay the bondsman back. Insurance pays for you and only collects periodic premiums.

Therefore, errors and omissions insurance protect the notary, and bonding protects the public from the notary.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. May a notary prepare legal documents?

Only if the notary public is an attorney. Even then, a notary public should be completely removed from the document in order to be an impartial witness.

2. May a notary public in Oregon perform a marriage ceremony?

Only Florida, Maine, Nevada, and South Carolina notaries public may perform a marriage ceremony.

3. Am I required to be bonded or have liability (errors and omissions) insurance?

Oregon does not require its notaries public to be bonded or to have liability insurance. This is left to the discretion of the notary public.

4. What should I do about issues that are not covered specifically in the law?

Use reasonable care and caution. If something does not seem right, do not proceed. Use the notarial journal to make notes as to why the notarization was refused for possible future reference.

5. May I notarize in another state, such as Washington, as an Oregon Notary Public?

An Oregon notary public is appointed to notarize only within the jurisdiction of the state of Oregon. Oregon's jurisdiction does not extend beyond the Oregon border. A Washington notary public will need to notarize documents executed in Washington.

Chapter 4 - Notary Fees

The notary public keeps track in the notarial journal of the amounts charged for notarizations, whether the notary receives the fee as **personal** income or if the notary collects a fee while on the job and turns the fee over to the employer. The notary should record any fees collected in the journal. Whether the employer or the notary public keeps the fees is an issue to be settled by those two parties. Be sure to mark clearly in your journal which fees are collected as personal income vs. fees collected for the office. Notarial fees are subject to income tax.

Maximum Amount of Notary Fees Permitted to be Charged

A notary may charge up to \$10 per notarial act. Notaries who charge for their service may charge less than the \$10 fee, but must not charge more. Notaries who do charge a fee should do so in a consistent and non-biased manner.

A schedule of fees must be prominently displayed or handed to customers prior to notarization; they have the right of refusal if they do not wish to pay.

Waiver of Fees

A notary public may file with the Secretary of State a statement waiving the right to charge a notary fee. A waiver of fees is recommended for public officials who are also notaries, so that they may avoid violating a provision of the Oregon Constitution, and be exempted from the need to post a fee schedule. If a waiver is filed the notary shall not charge, attempt to charge, or receive any notary fee for a notarial act performed after the date the notary filed the statement of waiver. OAR 160-100-0420.

To begin charging, the notary public must send the Secretary of State, Corporation Division a letter to rescind the waiver of fees or they may download the [Notary Information Change](#) form from our website. If the notary public is unsure if a waiver has been signed, the notary public may contact the Notary Section of the Corporation Division at (503) 986-2200. Not signing a waiver of fees does not require the notary public to charge. It is an option, not a requirement.

Some elected and public officials may not charge for their notarial services. Check with legal counsel if in doubt.

Travel Fee

When a notary public is asked to travel to perform a notarial act, the notary public may charge a travel fee, separate from the notarial fee. The travel fee amount must be agreed upon prior to meeting with the customer. ORS 194.400(2)(a-b), OAR 160-100-0610(57).

Notary Fees and Your Employer

Oregon statutes and rules do not address the collection of notary fees by employers, but a written agreement about notary fees is advisable. The statute gives only the notary public the right to charge notary fees, but an employer often includes a notary charge to the customer when notarization takes place. A notary public who is employed may enter into an agreement with their employer whereby the notary performs their notarial duties and the fee is retained by the employer. The fees must not be more than established by Oregon law, ORS 194.400(1), and the agreement should make it clear that the notary gives the employer the right to collect and retain the appropriate revenue. The notary public, however, should be allowed to keep fees collected when notarizations are not connected to his/her employment. An agreement should be reviewed by legal counsel, if available, to ensure compliance with notary law and rule.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. If I submit a waiver of fees, may I sometimes charge for my notarial services?

No, if the notary public submits a waiver of fees, the notary has stated that he or she will not charge for **any** notarial services performed. The notary public may rescind the waiver by notifying the Secretary of State, Corporation Division, in writing. OAR 160-100-0420(1)(2).

2. Am I required to display a list of the notary fees that I may charge?

If the notary public is going to charge for services, the fees must either be prominently displayed or handed to the customer, prior to the notarization, so that the customer can refuse notarial services if the customer does not wish to pay. OAR 160-100-0400; OAR 160-100-0410.

3. If two people sign the same document, do I charge \$10 or \$20?

The fee would be \$20. The fee is per notarial act. Even if the notary public is using one notarial certificate, the notary public in this case is identifying and witnessing two separate executions on the document. OAR 160-100-0400.

Chapter 5 - The Notarial Journal

All notaries public must keep and maintain one or more journals, even if the notarizations normally performed fall under the exempt status. OAR 160-100-0230. A notary public may be asked to notarize non-exempt documents at any time. The Secretary of State recommends that all acts be recorded in the journal. A notarial journal may not be shared; each notary public must keep and maintain his/her own notarial journal, sharing an “office” journal is not allowed. The notary shall retain the journal for 10 years after the performance of the last notarial act recorded in the journal.

The information contained in the front of the notarial journal must be kept current. This includes the notary public's name, commission number, expiration date, address and what should be done with the journal in the event of the death of the notary. If a notary reapplies for a new commission the law requires this information to be updated. OAR 160-100-0200(4).

The notary public may wish to create abbreviations of terms used when recording entries in the notarial journal. If abbreviations or symbols are created, put a glossary of abbreviations and what the symbols stand for in the front of the notarial journal. (For example: Ack. for Acknowledgment).

Importance of the Journal

The notarial journal is a vital component of exercising reasonable care. It is prudent to diligently keep a record of your notarial transactions. The journal entry must be recorded at the same time of the notarization. Best practice is to completely fill out the journal, along with the customer's signature, before completing the notarization. If anyone wishes to make inquiries about a notarization, few people can trust their memory to perfectly recall the incident, and fewer still would accept something that wasn't written down.

The journal reminds a notary to ask for necessary information and provides a reason to get that information if the client is reluctant. It serves as evidence that your side of the story is true. Most of the time the journal can prevent a notary from being named in a lawsuit. The Secretary of State relies on journal entries when a complaint has been lodged against a notary.

If it is necessary to alter a notarial certificate, the journal can help to verify the point in question. It is also the place of record that the correction was made.

In the final analysis, you need to keep a journal properly because it is the law. Statutes require a notarial journal, and administrative rule states what must be kept in the journal. The notary needs to make sure that their journal and stamping device are secure at all times.

Format of the Journal

Starting September 1, 2013, the notarial journal may be in electronic or paper format. If the notary has more than one journal, they can have them in either format or both. See OAR 160-100-0200 and 160-100-0210 for more information about the journal requirements. Although an electronic journal may be more convenient for electronic notarizations, there is no requirement to use one. It is just as permissible and as easy to use a paper journal for electronic notarizations. Similarly, notarizations using paper may be noted in an electronic journal. If a notary does only an occasional electronic notarization, then it might make more sense to keep all notarizations in the same journal, regardless of media.

Disposition of Records

The notary public shall retain the journal for 10 years after the last act noted in the journal. However, because it is the only record of the notarization and because the statute of limitations is uncertain, the Secretary of State encourages permanent storage. ORS 194.300(1).

If there is a journal agreement, as provided in Oregon Administrative Rule 160-100-0360, the journal stays with the employer upon termination of the employee. The employer must follow the same rules as the notary would.

Upon revocation of the commission the notarial journal and stamp are filed with the Secretary of State's office within 30 days after the date of revocation. Upon the death of a notary public the notarial journal must be sent to the Secretary of State's office unless the notary public entered into a written agreement with his/her employer. The notary public's official stamping device must be made unusable by destroying, defacing, damaging, erasing the device or securing it against use. Upon incompetency of a notary public the journal must be sent to the Secretary of State's office and the stamping device must be made unusable by destroying, defacing, damaging, erasing the device or securing it against use. If the notary is suspended, they will retain the journal and stamping device until suspension is no longer in place.

Should the notary decide to resign their commission they will need to fill out the [Termination of Notary Public Commission](#) form and return the form to the Secretary of State. The notary must disable the stamping device by destroying, defacing, damaging, erasing or securing the device against use.

Public Record

Because the notary public is an officer of the state and is responsible to the public, the notarial journal falls under disclosure laws if the journal resides with the Secretary of State, or if the notary is a public official or employee. If the Secretary of State deems that it is in the public interest not to disclose such information, then the journal is kept private.

Every other notary is exempt from being required to disclose the journal contents, unless requested by the Secretary of State or under subpoena. Normally, it will be in the notary's interest to cooperate with an investigation to avoid being named in a suit. Notaries should not allow "fishing expeditions," or malicious attempts to view private information, such as addresses or signatures. There is no reason to allow someone to browse through your journal.

Notary Journal requirements

Record the details of the notarization in your journal. ORS 194.300(3)

- Date and time the notarial act was performed;
- Type of notarial act performed;
- Date of the document notarized;
- Type of document notarized. Name the type of document; grant deed, affidavit, contract, foreign invitation, student transcript, etc.;
- Printed full name and contact address of the signer;
- Signature of the signer;
- Description of how the notary public identified signer; If identification documents were used to identify the signer, the description shall consist of the name of the organization that issued the document; the type of document and the document's expiration date (e.g. ODL, exp. 8-8-2017). **Do not record personal numbers such as a driver license, SSN or passport numbers in your journal.**
- Any other pertinent information; Unusual circumstances, such as power of attorney, reason for refusal to notarize; corrections made to notarial certificate; representative authority (example: President of ABC Company); etc.
- Fees collected, if any.

Example Notary Journal

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	If necessary	If any

Abbreviated Multiple Entry in Notarial Journal

Duplicate Original ORS 194.300(4)(a)

If a notary public notarizes duplicate originals of a single statement or document for the same person on the same date, the notary public may fill out one journal entry indicating how many originals notarized.

James L. Howe needs to have 25 copies of his Bill of Sale notarized. Instead of filling out 25 different journal entries, the notary may fill out one journal entry, indicating how many copies were notarized.

Example

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
3/2/13 1:30 pm	Ack.	3/2/13	Bill of Sale	James L. Howe James address	<i>James L. Howe</i>	ODL exp. 12/1/17	25 copies notarized	

Multiple Acts I ORS 194.300(4)(b)

If a notary notarizes different statements or documents for the same person on the same date, the notary public may fill out one journal entry, indicating the different notarial acts, document dates, and document types.

Debra Smith needs to have an Affidavit and a Deed notarized, instead of filling out two different journal entries; the notary can indicate both types of act, document dates, and document types in one journal entry.

Example

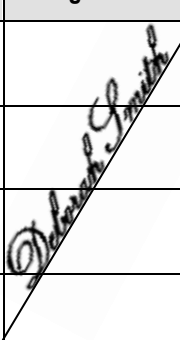
Date/Time of act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
8/23/13 3:00 pm	Swear Witness	3/1/13 3/2/13	Affidavit Deed	Deborah Smith Deborah's address	<i>Deborah Smith</i>	ODL exp. 6/2/17	Two separate documents notarized	\$20.00

Multiple Acts II ORS 194.300(4)(b)

If a notary notarizes different statements or documents for the same person on the same date, the notary public may fill out separate journal entries and, where the information is the same, may use ditto marks to indicate the same information that is carried over. The signer does not need to sign separate journal entries. The notary may draw a diagonal line across the signature area and have the signer sign on the line.

Deborah Smith needs to have several different documents notarized. The notary lists all items to be notarized as separate journal entries and has Deborah sign on the diagonal line.

Example

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
3/4/13 11:15 am	Ack.	3/4/13	Contract	Deborah Smith Deborah's address		ODL exp. 10/8/2015		\$10.00
" "	Aff.	" "	Declaration	" "		" "		\$10.00
" "	Sign.	" "	Order	" "		" "		\$10.00
" "	Copy	" "	Corp. Resolution	" "		" "		\$10.00

Previous Cite ORS 194.300(4)(c)

If a notary public notarizes more than one statement, signature, or document for the same person but not on the same date, the notary public may refer to previous journal entries in regards to the signer's address and how the notary identified the signer.

In the example below, the notary has previously notarized for Deborah Smith. The notary has indicated previous journal information for the address and how Deborah was identified.

Example

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
3/4/13 11:15 am	Ack.	3/4/13	Contract	See page 2 Line 3	<i>Deborah Smith</i>	See page 2 Line 3		\$10.00

Notarial Acts Required to Be Recorded in Notarial Journal

The only notarial acts that are required to be recorded in the notarial journal are when a notary witnesses a signature or when a notary performs an acknowledgment notarization. However, best practice and procedure, as well as the Secretary of State's recommendation, is that **all notarizations should be recorded in the journal**. The journal is an accurate log of the notarizations performed; it serves to protect the notary and may be used as evidence in a court of law.

Additional Notarial Acts That May Be Recorded in Notarial Journal (OAR 160-100-0230)

A notary public may, but is not required, to record in a notarial journal any information about the following notarial acts performed or documents notarized by the notary public. However, please remember, the Secretary of State **recommends all notarial acts be recorded in the journal**. Most of the time the journal can prevent a notary from being named in a law suit and the Secretary of State relies on journal entries when a complaint has been lodged against a notary.

- Administering an oath or affirmation;
- Affidavits;
- Billing statements for media advertising;
- Certifying or attesting a copy of a document;
- Protests of commercial paper (to be recorded as provided in ORS 194.380 and 73.0505).
- Verifications upon oath or affirmation.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. May I make my own journal?

As long as the regulations set out in the laws and rules are adhered to in creating the notarial journal. OAR 160-100-0200 through 160-100-0210.

2. May I choose not to keep the notarial journal?

The law states that all notaries shall maintain one or more journals in which the notary public chronicles all notarial acts that the notary public performs. Penalties can and will be incurred if this is not done. ORS 194.300(1).

3. What if I have multiple entries for my journal?

Duplicate originals with the same name and date may be recorded as a single entry in the notarial journal. ORS 194.300(4)(a).

4. Must I record every notarization in my journal?

There are some exceptions to the notarial journal entries which are stated in the Oregon Administrative Rules. Exemptions are per Administrative Rule, not by a notary public's preference. OAR 160-100-0230.

5. May a notary public have more than one journal?

A notary public may maintain one or more journals at a time. ORS 194.300(1) and ORS 194.305(1).

6. Is my notarial journal a public record that anyone may look at? ORS 194.300(9)

Most notaries public are exempt from disclosing the notarial journal contents unless requested by the Secretary of State, Corporation Division, or when required by subpoena. OAR 160-100-0430(2).

If the notarial journal is in the possession of the Secretary of State's office, or if the notary public is a public official or public employee, then the notarial journal falls under public record laws. Should the Secretary of State, Corporation Division, deem that it is in the public interest not to disclose such information, the notarial journal would not be made public.

If a customer needs to see their own entry record in the notarial journal, this is reasonable, but the entries above and below should be covered to protect the privacy of those individuals.

7. Should I keep copies of every document that I notarize?

No, a notary should not keep copies of the documents that they notarize. Your journal entry is sufficient evidence for the purpose of recording a notarial act. If a notary should keep an original record provided by the person for notarization, the notary may not withhold access to the original record. However, the Secretary of State strongly recommends that notaries do not keep such records.

8. Should I keep copies of identification that I use to identify the signer?

No, a notary should not keep copies of identification that they use to identify the signer. Your journal entry is sufficient evidence for the purpose of recording how you identified the signer.

9. May I use an electronic journal and perform electronic notarizations?

The notarial journal may be in electronic or paper format. While Oregon notaries public are allowed, under certain conditions, to perform electronic notarizations, Oregon law still requires a person to appear personally before a notary public. Before you purchase any electronic notarization means, make sure the vendor meets the NENS (National Electronic Notarization Standards) and doesn't just refer only to E-SIGN and UETA.

10. There are several notaries public in my office, can we all just use one journal to record our notarial acts?

No, each Oregon Notary Public is required to keep and maintain their own notarial journal. ORS 194.300(1) and 194.305(1).

Chapter 6 – How to Notarize

Don't allow yourself to be rushed. You may have a client impatiently waiting to get through the “red tape” of notarizing a document. It is important to remain calm and make sure you notarize correctly or you may later wish you had been more careful.

Sometimes a client or employer may insist that you do something contrary to notary law. It's important to stand your ground the first time, because chances are it won't happen again once they've seen you mean business. Remind your boss (in a less stressful moment) that it's important to *both* of you that the notarization is properly done. A few extra minutes taken now can save days later.

We suggest the following steps to correctly notarize a document. They help to ensure that you get the information you need before the notarization process is complete and the client has left.

A valid notarization must have an official notarial stamp, an official notarial signature, and a complete notarial certificate.

1. Review the Document

Check the document for blank spaces. Blank spaces that can be filled in later have a potential for fraudulent use. If blanks are intended to be left blank, the customer should indicate that in some manner, (e.g., N/A to indicate not applicable).

The non-attorney notary public can point out the blanks to the customer, but may not tell the customer how to fill them in. If the customer chooses not to fill in the blanks, the notary public can, using his or her best judgment:

- Ask the customer to initial next to the blanks to indicate his or her knowledge of the deficiency and the notary notes it in the journal.
- Complete the notarization (noting in the notarial journal that there were blanks in the document and that the customer was aware of the blanks, but chose not to fill them in).
- Refuse to notarize (note in the notarial journal why the notarization was refused).

Review the document for information required for the journal. (i.e. document date and type), as well as information that may implicate the notary in misconduct, such as being named in the document.

Check the date on the document. The date on the document may be different than the date notarized. If the document does not have a date, indicate the date of notarization in your journal where you would indicate the document date. The document may be an older document that needs to be notarized so the document date could be a past date. The document could have a future effective date such as “This document shall come into effect on July 31, 2099.” In short, the document that is being notarized can have a past date, a current date or a future effective date. However, the **notarization date** is never in the past or future, the notarization date must always be the date that you are notarizing.

Staple the document together. If the document to be notarized consists of more than one page, staple the entire document together, making it a whole and complete organic document.

2. Identify the Signer

Require the personal appearance of the signer. The person signing the document must physically be in your presence for the notarization to be valid.

Make a careful identification of the signer. There are three possible ways for a notary to verify the identity of a signer: personal knowledge, credible witness, or ID documents. Only one of these is necessary before performing the notarization; however a notarial officer may require an individual to provide additional information or identification credentials necessary to confirm the identity of the individual. A notary should accept a statutorily valid means of identification, unless there is a question of fraud or forgery. The criteria for valid identification are:

Personal Knowledge—In order to claim that a notary personally knows the signer, there should be:

- A long-term relationship. You cannot use personal knowledge as identification for someone the boss introduced you to this morning.

- Sufficient breadth of knowledge. You should know more about the individual than what a nodding acquaintanceship would bring.
- Reasonable certainty. You must have no reasonable doubt in your mind that the signer is who he or she claims to be. The test is: Would you be willing to swear to it in court?

Credible Witness—the notary personally knows someone or uses an approved identification document that has not been expired more than three years, who swears that he or she personally knows the signer. In order to use the credible witness as identification:

- The notary personally knows the witness or uses an approved identification document that has not been expired more than three years.
- The witness must personally know the signer.
- Both witness and signer must be present during notarization.
- Witness must take an oath from the notary. Sample oath/affirmation:

“Do you swear (or affirm) that you personally know this document signer to be the individual he/she claims to be (so help you God)?”

- Witness should sign the journal and provide his or her full name and contact address.
- Witness should be honest, competent, and impartial.
- The next journal entry is for the document that is being notarized; for the signers identification the notary will insert the “credible witnesses” name, as a credible witness for the signer. There will be two journal entries when using a credible witness. One entry for the credible witness, one entry for the person without ID who is having a document notarized.

Identification Documents—the following types of identification may be used to positively identify a client, if they are current or that expired not more than three years before performance of the notarial act.

- A driver license, ID card issued by the DMV, learners permit, provisional or limited term driver license.
 - Temporary driver license or temporary ID cards are **only good for 30 days**.
- A United States passport or an officially recognized passport of a foreign country. A United States passport refers to either a U.S. passport or a U.S. passport card issued by the U.S. Department of State.
- A United States military identification card that contains the person’s photograph and signature.
- An identity card issued by a federally recognized Indian tribe that contains the person’s photograph and signature.
- A document issued by the federal government or a state, county or local government that contains the person’s photograph and signature.

If a person is confined in a correctional facility and needs to have documents notarized, identification used to identify the incarcerated person shall be the ID that is used in the facility to positively identify an inmate through examination or comparison of official government documents or records.

The Oregon DMV has made a change in their procedure when issuing renewed and replacement driver licenses and identification cards. The old card will be invalidated with a hole punched in the name and address area and returned to the person, rather than requiring that the card be surrendered and destroyed by the DMV. The old driver license or ID card with a hole punched in it has been made invalid, and therefore cannot be used as identification by itself. For identification purposes when notarizing documents, notaries can continue to use the temporary paper driver license or temporary ID card as long as it is current.

There could be a situation when the notary requests additional information or identification credentials necessary to confirm the identity of the individual. Perhaps the notary is handed a driver license that’s bent, cut in two, or it’s simply so worn that the picture isn’t clear any longer. Perhaps the person in the identification has changed so much that it’s not certain it’s the same person any longer. The notary can

request additional information or identification documents to clear up any confusion as to the identity of the signer.

Matricula Consular ID is NOT Acceptable

Several Latin American countries, particularly Mexico, are allowing their consulates to issue matricula consular ID to their citizens in the United States, or issue the matricula consular ID to those who come to the U.S. **Oregon does not recognize** matricula consular ID. We've been advised by our Deputy Attorney General that Oregon notarial law sets out an exclusive list of "Identification Documents" a notary may rely on in verifying the identity of a person. That list does not include matricula consular ID.

3. Determine the Signer's Willingness to Sign and Awareness of What Is Being Signed

The notary, by the act of notarizing, declares that the signer did so freely and willingly. This can be especially important when people who are easily victimized must sign legal documents; i.e., minors, the infirm, and non-English speaking individuals.

The notary must make a judgment that the signer is aware of what they are signing. If the notary is questioning the awareness of the signer, the notary can engage in normal conversation with the individual. After a few minutes, it should be apparent if he or she is incoherent, disoriented, or otherwise incapacitated. When in doubt, the notary can get the opinion of a doctor or an attorney. Make the appropriate notation in the journal that they attest the signer has sufficient awareness of the notarial act to execute that act and make sure the doctor or attorney signs the journal by their remarks. Remember, the notary always has the right to refuse to complete a notarization if the notary determines that the person signing the document isn't competent or has the capacity to execute the record, isn't freely signing the document, or questions the identification that has been produced. ORS 194.245.

4. Complete the Notary Journal

Compare the signature on the document to the signature in the journal and on the identification document. Refer to Chapter 5 for the journal requirements.

5. Complete the Notarial Certificate

Refer to Chapter 7 for the certificate requirements.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. May I use a subscribing witness when doing a notarization?

Not according to notary law. There is a special provision in Real Estate Law which allows for a subscribing witness in a limited number of real estate transactions. Should this come up, the notary public would need to consult with the Real Estate Division.

2. May I notarize for a minor?

A minor must provide acceptable ID just as an adult would. ORS 194.240(2).

Have the minor put his or her age next to the signature so that the receiving party realizes that they are dealing with a minor. Note the age of the minor in the notarial journal.

Minors must be competent when signing. Ask questions of the minor such as “What kind of document are you signing?” “What will the document do?” “Do you want to sign the document?” If the notary public is not comfortable with the answers the minor gives, he or she should refuse to notarize, noting why in the notarial journal, and advise the customer to seek legal advice.

3. Must a notary always notarize?

A notary is not always required to notarize. In fact, when you are in doubt because something appears fraudulent (the ID looks fake), or some other aspect of the notarization appears amiss, you **should not** notarize. However, if it is merely discomfort because you are not familiar with the particular type of act, such as certifying to a copy, then you should consult either with a more experienced notary, or call the Notary Public section at (503) 986-2200.

It is your responsibility to maintain your expertise, since you are commissioned for **all** the permitted acts and not a specialty. Finally, you must be careful not to pick and choose whom you will notarize for, or you may be subject to a civil action for discrimination. At this time, notaries may be required by their employer to notarize only for customers of that employer, if that is the employer’s consistent policy and is not discriminating against a protected class.

4. May I notarize for someone in a hospital or nursing home?

Special care must be taken when notarizing for the elderly or those in a medical care setting. Awareness may need to be established by someone in authority (e.g., doctor, nurse, or attorney). Medications can alter the customer’s reasoning abilities. Consult with the signer’s doctor/nurse/attorney and write down their remarks in the notarial journal. Have the authority sign your journal by their remarks, as to the awareness of the customer/patient.

Prior to notarizing, ask the customer some questions about the document to be sure that they understand what they are signing and seem competent in their responses. Common sense, as well as reasonable care and caution, are the prime indicators on whether to proceed. When in doubt, don’t notarize, noting why in the notarial journal, and advise the customer to seek legal advice.

5. Should I notarize a blank or incomplete document?

Common sense would prevent most notaries from notarizing a signature on a completely blank sheet of paper, knowing that a fraudulent document could be created on the blank sheet.

Even blank spaces that can be filled in later have a potential for fraudulent use. If blanks are intended to be left blank, it is up to the customer to indicate that in some manner (e.g., N/A to indicate not applicable).

6. What should I do about issues that are not covered specifically in the law?

Use reasonable care and caution. If something does not seem right, do not proceed. Use the notarial journal to make notes as to why the notarization was refused for possible future reference. Please do not hesitate to call our office (503) 986-2200.

7. Can a notary public sign in any color of ink?

Yes. It is preferable that they sign in black or dark blue ink.

8. May a signer use a signature stamp on the document they want notarized?

Yes. A signature on a tangible record is a tangible symbol used with “present intent to authenticate or adopt a record.” ORS 194.215(15). A stamp, a mark or other indication of the execution is sufficient. It does **not** need to match or be a legible reproduction of a person’s name.

Chapter 7 - Notarial Certificates

An Oregon notary public is authorized **only** to take an acknowledgment, verify an oath or affirmation, witness a signature, certify to a copy, and make or note a commercial protest. Notaries should be prepared to notarize any of these acts, **except** a commercial protest. Commercial protests are highly technical and rare in nature. Because of this only qualified notaries may protest commercial paper.

Notarizing a Commercial Protest

A notary public may protest commercial paper **only** if the notary public is:

- An officer or employee of a financial institution, trust company, or investment company, or a person serving under the direct supervision of the officer or employee **or**
- An active member of the Oregon State Bar, or an individual serving under the direct supervision of an active member of the Oregon State Bar.

A notary public may not protest any commercial paper owned or held for collection by a financial institution, trust company, or investment company if the notary is individually a party to the commercial paper.

Notaries who do not meet this requirement **cannot** notarize Commercial Protests. A notary public who violates this law will be **subject to revocation** of their notarial commission. Each notary public who protests any commercial paper shall take the actions required by ORS 73.0505

Components of a Notarial Certificate

Oregon law states certain minimum requirements for notary certificates. If necessary certificate information is left out of pre-printed certificates, (e.g., no signature line for the swearer to a jurat) the notary must add the appropriate information to make the certificate complete. Please note that only the notary public's signature and stamp imprint, without a certificate, constitutes official misconduct. When in doubt, look up the proper format and complete the certificate. The notarial certificate must fit the notarial act being performed.

The following are the minimum requirements to be included in the notarial certificate:

1. Jurisdiction, which indicates the **state** and **county** where the notarization takes place. Notaries are commissioned for the whole state of Oregon and may notarize in all counties.

2. Statement of particulars provides details of the notarization such as:

- **Date** of notarization;
- **Who** personally appeared;
- **What** the signer did;

3. Notary stamp imprint*.

4. Notary signature, which must match the signature on file with the Secretary of State. The notary's signature may be in any color of ink that is easily reproducible; black and dark blue are recommended.

All of the components of the notarial certificate must be on the same page.

*An exception is made for subdivision, condominium or partition plats. A notary stamp is not required on these documents because the materials they are printed on (mylar) will not hold the stamp imprint using the type of ink normally associated with a notarial stamping device. ORS 194.280(8).

Instead of affixing a notarial stamp to these documents, the following must appear beneath the notary's signature on the document:

- The printed name of the notary public as it is written on the notary's commission certificate,
- The words **NOTARY PUBLIC – OREGON**;
- The words **COMMISSION NO.**, immediately followed by the notary's commission number;
- The words **MY COMMISSION EXPIRES**, immediately followed by the notary's commission expiration date expressed in the terms of the month spelled out, 2 digit date, and 4 digit year, (i.e. January 02, 2017).

Your stamp and signature without a certificate is not a valid notarization.

Selecting the Notarial Certificate

Many times a notary public is confronted with the situation wherein he or she must notarize a document that has no notarial certificate attached. Even worse, some documents may have what clearly seems to be the wrong certificate (e.g., an affidavit is using an individual acknowledgment form). Unfortunately, the client requiring the notarization often doesn't know what the certificate should be.

The natural inclination in such cases is to suggest or even automatically provide the certificate that seems to be indicated. However, a November 12, 1993 Attorney General's opinion clearly and emphatically states that a notary public must not give advice or draft a certificate. Not only could the notary be liable if the certificate is incorrect and invalidates the document, but he or she is also probably illegally practicing law. The Attorney General's opinion says:

"...the notary public should not advise any party concerning which notarial certificate to select. That action is very likely the practice of law. Only notaries public who are also licensed attorneys should provide that advice." and "...The job of the notary public is to assure that a certificate is complete and contains the required information."

Oregon Law states that a notary public cannot "execute any certificate as a notary public containing a statement known to the notary public to be false." ORS 194.340(1)(g). If there are concerns, and the notary believes the certificate is not the proper one for that type of document, the most the notary public should do is recommend that the person reexamine the document and consult with an attorney. If the person insists that this is the correct certificate, then the notary should complete the notarial act as requested, and note in the journal that the person insisted this was the correct certificate or decline to provide the notarial service. **The notary public should not take it upon himself or herself to select or substitute a certificate on behalf of the person.**

There is still the question of how to help an individual who is unsure about the proper certificate or notarial act. All he or she has been told is "Get it notarized." The Attorney General's opinion addresses that aspect: "...If the certificate is clearly incorrect, then the notary public must refuse to perform the notarial act and request that the party have the document corrected so that the certificate is not false. The notary public should advise that if the person is uncertain as to the correct certificate to include, the person should consult with an attorney."

A notary public may point out ORS 194.280, the required elements of the certificate. You may suggest the person consider using one of the "short forms" in ORS 194.285. You can have them review Chapter 8 – Oregon Notarial Certificates, of this publication and have them select the certificate. A notary public should never select the certificate for the person.

We also suggest that, if appropriate, the notary or the requesting individual contact the agency receiving and/or providing the document to determine exactly what is required. Unfortunately, for the same reasons that notaries cannot give advice, the Secretary of State, cannot assist parties with the proper form.

"In conclusion, I advise that the Corporation Division should not assist notaries public with the selection of proper certificates, and should further advise notaries public that they should not be recommending or selecting notarial certificates for persons requesting notarial certificates. So long as nothing in the certificate is false, and the necessary information is included, the notary public may complete the certificate. If the notary public has a concern about whether a particular certificate is correct, the notary public should recommend that the person seek legal advice before selecting another certificate."

A notary public is just an impartial witness, not an expert on legal procedure.

Steps to Complete the Notarial Certificate:

1. Don't advise or select the certificate for the client. If you do, you may be practicing law illegally.

2. Certificate must fit the notarization. If the client asks for one kind of notarization, but a different certificate is on the document, ask the client to contact either the sender or recipient to confirm which one is appropriate.

3. Read the certificate carefully.

- If it says "subscribed and sworn," make sure you administer an oath and witness the signature.
- "County" is always the county where you perform the notarization.
- Watch the name blanks: In a certificate that says, "before me, _____, personally appeared _____," the notary's name goes first, then the signer's.
- Fill in all the blanks. If you don't know what to put in a blank, talk with the signer and get the information. If he or she doesn't have it, then you may need to get in touch with the sender or recipient.
- Draw a line to fill extra space. For example, if the name of the signer doesn't fill the whole space left for it, put a line through the remaining portion so that no one can add to the certificate after it leaves your hands.
- Cross out inappropriate wording (e.g., "he/she executed it."). The idea is that the certificate should read smoothly, with no doubt in the reader's mind exactly who did what and when.
- Make sure all the elements of the certificate are there: jurisdiction, signer, date, etc.

4. Don't "stamp and sign." Create the certificate if there is no certificate given, if the client has informed you about the type of notarization, and there is room on the document. Otherwise, attach a "loose" certificate.

5. Identify the signer. If you are creating the certificate, remember the certificate must identify the signer: "by Jane Doe."

6. Affix the notary signature and stamp properly. The ideal place for the notary stamp is immediately left or right of the notarial certificate and notary signature. Do not put the stamp over the abbreviation "LS." Even though "LS" stands for place of the stamp, placing the stamp there could obscure some of the words or obliterate some writing.

- The imprint of the stamp must be a legible imprint capable of being copied together with the record to which it is affixed or attached or with which it is logically associated. Also, according to Oregon Administrative Rule 160-100-0110(3), "A notary public shall not place an imprint of the notary public's official stamp over any signature in a document to be notarized or in a notarial certificate, or over any writing in a notarial certificate." If your stamp is smudged so that it is illegible, or is obscured by lines or other graphics on the page, initial the first attempt and re-stamp as close as possible to the certificate.
- To be recordable, the notary stamp, certificate, and the notary's signature should be close enough to be contained on one microfilm image. That is one reason the certificate cannot be on the front side of the signature page and the stamp on the back. Many times, however, the stamp cannot be placed adjacent to the certificate and signature, but will fit in the margin. Indicate the stamp's position in the space provided for the stamp (e.g., "See notary stamp in left margin").
- If there is no space on the signature page, line out the certificate and either attach a loose certificate, or, preferably, type out the certificate on the back of the document. Check with the receiving agency before using the back of a document. Some places won't accept it at all, and others will charge extra to record the page. Some agencies, such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, may have trouble with an attached certificate. When in doubt, always check with the receiving agency.

Protect Loose Certificates

An attached or “loose” certificate is filled out like any other notarial certificate with a few additional details. Because a loose certificate is not an integral part of a document, it is very important to guard against its fraudulent use. The object is to make sure that the certificate may be used with one, and only one, particular document.

- Any notarial wording on the document itself that the certificate is replacing should be crossed out and the words “SEE ATTACHED NOTARIAL CERTIFICATE” should be typed or written on the page.
- Attach the certificate to the left-hand margin using staples or other fasteners that will make holes if detached.
- The certificate should be above the signature page, directly over the signature, so that a recorder can easily film the certificate in sequence with the signature that goes with it.
- On the certificate itself, the document’s date, type, and signer should be noted at the bottom of the certificate. It is also a good idea to show the number of pages (e.g., “Attached to declaration, signed by John Hancock on July 4, 1776, two pages”).
- Write in the notarial journal, “used loose certificate” or “attached certificate.”
- An embosser is especially useful to guard against fraudulent certificate use and is used only in addition to the stamp imprint. Affix the impression so that it rests half on the certificate and half on the signer’s page. Make sure a whole impression is also on the certificate so that an auditor can compare the divided impression to the whole. You can use the notary stamping device in the same manner, but make sure that the stamp does not obscure anything on either paper.
- Attach the certificate yourself, don’t allow someone else to do it. Sometimes a client will call later and ask for a “corrected certificate.” If there is a mistake, the document, and often the signer, will have to reappear before you. An unattached certificate is like a blank check; you are liable.

Making Corrections

Mistakes do happen. A California certificate may be presented for use in an Oregon notarization. The notary may accidentally put yesterday’s date on the certificate. The signer’s name may be misspelled on the certificate. All of these things can be corrected. Any corrections should be noted in your journal.

Correcting During the Notarization

- Don’t use white-out.
- Line through incorrect information in ink, print the correct information immediately above and initial and date nearby.
- Reapply stamp if it has been smeared.
- Record any changes in the journal.

Correcting After the Notarization

- Never allow anyone else to change your certificate. It is your responsibility to correct errors and omissions on the certificates you complete.
- Never send a completed certificate for someone else to attach. The document should be returned and you must attach the corrected certificate.
- Make corrections on the certificate by either filling in missing information (such as a stamp) or line through incorrect information in ink. Print the correct information immediately above and initial and date nearby.
- Don’t make a correction unless you can confirm it from a journal entry or the signer can verify.
- Record any changes in the journal.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. May I correct a mistake I made in a notary certificate several days after it was executed?

Corrections can be made. Only the notary public may make corrections that are needed, and the corrections must be made on the original certificate. Note in your journal any corrections or changes that were made to the certificate.

2. A notarial certificate that was pre-printed on a document did not have a jurisdiction or a signature line for the notary. What should I have done?

To have a valid notarization, certain elements must be present: jurisdiction—state and county, statement—who appeared, on what day and what they did (acknowledge, sign and swear, etc.), the notary public's signature and official notary stamp imprint.

When a certificate is not complete, the notary public can add the necessary information. In the case mentioned, the notary public should type or hand write at the beginning of the notarial certificate the jurisdiction where the notarization was taking place, and then create a signature line near where the official notary stamp imprint was placed.

A note should be made in the notarial journal entry that a correction was done to the notarial certificate at the time of notarization.

3. May I choose a notarial certificate to go on a document?

An Attorney General's opinion states:

"The notary public should not take it upon himself or herself to select or substitute a certificate on behalf of the person. In addition to the risk that the notary public may be found to be unlawfully practicing law, there is also some possibility that the notary public may become involved in litigation if the document is later found not to accomplish what was intended by the parties, and the problem is with a certificate that the notary public selected."

4. When using an attachment certificate, must I always put a complete stamp impression on the attachment?

When using an attachment certificate a complete imprint of your official stamp must be on the attachment certificate. A second imprint may overlap the document and the certificate as a protection device. OAR 160-100-0110(4).

5. May a notary public notarize a will?

YES, but only with extreme care and caution. In Oregon, wills are not required to be notarized, merely witnessed. However, the witnesses often are required to sign a "self-proving affidavit" that is notarized. So, the notary generally doesn't witness the will signer's signature, but the witnesses' signatures on their affidavits.

It is advisable to notarize wills only under the direction of an attorney. Wills are perhaps the most contested documents notaries public become involved with, and even when they are done correctly, a notarization may be called into question. When an estate goes into probate, a will can be invalidated if the notarization is incorrect, and the notary public could be held liable for damages by the benefactors.

NOTES

Chapter 8 - Oregon Notarial Certificates

On pages 50 and 51 are sample certificates from ORS 194.285 for your use. You may copy them and use them as attachment certificates, if necessary. However, you should be aware that these are not the only or even the ideal certificates for a given notarial act. Oregon law declares that these are the minimum certificates sufficient to fulfill notary law requirements. Other certificates on the following pages are also commonly encountered and may be of use.

- **Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity** is a declaration by an individual before a notary that the individual has signed a record for the purpose stated in the record. ORS 194.215(1). The signer must personally appear, acknowledge that he or she willingly and knowingly signed the document, and the notary must identify him or her as the one who did indeed sign. The signature may be made before, but not after, the notarization. **Example on page 34.**
- **Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity** is similar to the individual acknowledgment, but "...the individual signed the record with proper authority and signed it as the act of the person identified in the record." ORS 194.215(1). There are many types of representatives, including: officers or agents signing on behalf of a corporation or other business entity; partners or trustees; guardians or personal representatives; and attorneys-in-fact. Although the Oregon Short Form Certificate does not appear to require it, it is usually best to see some confirmation of the person's representative capacity, such as the power of attorney, company annual report (stating officers), official minutes, partnership agreement, etc. **Example on page 36.**
- **Verification upon Oath or Affirmation** is a declaration made by an individual on oath or affirmation that a statement in a record is true. This is also known as a jurat, and may be part of an affidavit. The notary must require that the signer personally appear, verbally swear to the oath or affirm to the truth, and sign before the notary. An oath is a solemn pledge of truthfulness to a Supreme Being; an affirmation is a solemn personal pledge of honor that something is true. Both carry the penalty of perjury if forsworn. **Example on page 38.**
- **Witnessing or Attesting a Signature** is when the document is signed in the presence of the notary. The notary determines that the individual appearing before the notary, and signing the document has the identity claimed. (Note that this certificate differs from an acknowledgment in that there is no statement of execution of a document and the signature must be signed in the presence of the notary, whereas an acknowledgment does not have to be.) **Example on page 40.**
- **Certifying to a Copy of a Document** is where the notary determines that the copy is "a full, true and accurate transcription or reproduction of the record or item." ORS 194.230(4). It is important to note that the notary is responsible for the faithful reproduction of the original. Therefore, the notary is the one that should make the copy, usually a photocopy. Notaries should not copy public records; certified copies are available from the agencies in charge of those records. It is illegal, for example, to certify to copies of Oregon birth or death certificates. **Example on page 42.**

Acknowledgment Certificate

Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity

Acknowledgments allow the signer of a document to verify that the signature on a document is the signature of the individual. An acknowledgment declares that the signer personally appeared before the notary, was properly identified to the notary, and freely declares the signature on the document to be his or her own.

There are many forms of acknowledgments, but they all say basically the same thing, “I did, of my own free will, sign this document.” By witnessing to that statement, the notary shows that the signer:

- Personally **appeared** before the notary.
- Was positively **identified** by the notary.
- Freely and willingly **acknowledged** his or her signature.

An acknowledgment does not have to be signed in the notary’s presence unless the language on the certificate requires that (“subscribed/signed before me”). If the certificate indicates the notary witnesses the signing, then the document must be re-signed before the notary, even if it had been previously signed. It is permissible to notarize a document that was signed several years ago, as long as the document has an original signature. It is not permissible for the document to be signed **after** the notarization.

There are two primary types of acknowledgment—Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity and Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity.

An **Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity** is a statement by a person that the individual has signed a record for the purpose stated in the record, ORS 194.215(1). The signer must personally appear, acknowledge that he or she willingly and knowingly signed the document, and the notary must identify him or her as the one who did indeed sign. The signature may be made before or during, but not after, the notarization.

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for taking an acknowledgment.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE

Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity

State of OREGON

County of _____

This record was acknowledged before me on _____, 20____
by _____.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT IN AN INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY

Case

Jesse M. Cota came into the Multnomah County Branch of Oregon Bank on May 23, 2013 at 1:00 p.m., to have his signature notarized on a power-of-attorney dated March 12, 2013. This power of attorney will allow his brother, Chase Cota, to sell some jointly held property in Arizona. The document is dated March 12, 2013, and has Jesse's signature at the bottom and a blank signature line with the name Chase Cota typed underneath. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Write in the journal that there was a blank where another signature was to be filled in at a later date.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
5/23/13 1:00 p.m.	Ack.	3/12/13	POA	Jesse M. Cota Jesse's address	<i>Jesse M. Cota</i>	ODL exp. 1/3/17	Blank signature to be filled in later	\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

State of OREGON

County of Multnomah

This record was acknowledged before me on May 23, 20 13
by Jesse M. Cota.

Jane Doe (signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



OFFICIAL STAMP
JANE DOE
NOTARY PUBLIC-OREGON
COMMISSION NO. 000000
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES APRIL 02, 2017

Acknowledgment Certificate

Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity

Corporations and other business entities are viewed as legal or corporate persons with the same rights as “natural” individuals, but they cannot sign on their own; they need a representative; an officer, director, partner, or attorney-in-fact, etc. Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity is similar to the individual acknowledgment, but “...the person signed the record with proper authority and signed it as the act of the person identified in the record.” ORS 194.215(1). Normally, this means signing on behalf of a business. A notary may not notarize a document for a company in which they are a shareholder, director, officer, employee, member or partner if they are a party to the instrument, either individually or as a representative of the company. ORS 194.385.

Always use the Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity form. Oregon law provides a short-form certificate. ORS 194.215(1). The notary **cannot** use a jurat (oath), since a representative can’t swear for an organization.

It is good practice to determine if the signer has the authority to represent the company. The notary must have proof if the certificate requires it, through wording like “**known to me to be**” or “**as**”.

- **Personal knowledge.** If the notary has a long-time acquaintance with the individual and would be willing to swear in court that the person is an officer of the company, then he or she can rely on that knowledge for the notarization.
- **Documentary evidence** such as a partnership agreement, corporate annual report, trust agreement, or verification from the Corporation Division, may be used as proof of representative capacity. Business cards and stationery are not sufficient evidence, and should not be relied upon.
- **Oath of a third party**, personally known to the notary, and impartial to the transaction, can sometimes be used as proof. It should be a last resort, because the opportunity for fraud is even greater when relying on someone else’s veracity and knowledge.

Combination certificates may be required where corporate entities are representatives for other entities. For example, a combination certificate might state a person is representing a corporation and is signing the document on its behalf, where the corporation is signing on behalf of a limited partnership in which it is a partner. Combination certificates can be very confusing and should be drafted by an attorney. If you don’t understand what the certificate wants you to do, don’t notarize. You can always call the office that produced the certificate, or talk to other experienced notaries, if you are unsure what is required of you.

Make sure that you note in the journal the evidence you used, any complexities in the notarization, and how the certificate was explained, if necessary.

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for taking an acknowledgment.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity

State of OREGON

County of _____

This record was acknowledged before me on _____, 20__ by _____
as _____ of _____.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT IN A REPRESENTATIVE CAPACITY

Case

Nichole M. Smith, President and General Manager of Oregon Outfitter's Corporation (Medford, Oregon), has a contract with Outdoor Gear Corporation of Anchorage, Alaska. This document needs to be signed by Ms. Smith as President of Oregon Outfitter's Corporation and notarized. The contract does not have a date on it; however, next to the signature line is a space that states "date" underneath. The document states that the contract takes effect at midnight on September 30, 2013. On July 12, 2013, at 3:00 p.m., Ms. Smith came to ABC Insurance Agency next door to her office in hope that Jane Doe, the insurance agent/notary public can help her. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Jane asked to see documentation that Nichole is in fact President of Oregon Outfitter's Corporation, and indicated it in the journal. One option to confirm appointment, if there is no documentation, is to call the Corporation Division, Business Registry Section at (503) 986-2200 or [go online](#). Please note that the Corporation Division only records president, secretary and registered agent information. The date the contract takes effect is noted as the document date in the journal. The date by the signature indicates the date signed (7/12/13).

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
7/12/13 3:00 p.m.	Rep. Ack.	9/30/13	Contract	Nichole M. Smith Oregon Outfitter's address	<i>Nichole M. Smith</i>	ODL Exp. 1/2/17	Proof of position, annual report	\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

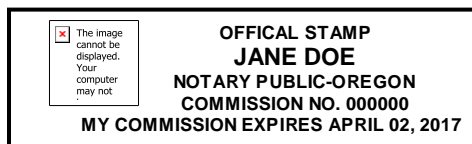
State of OREGON

County of Jackson

This record was acknowledged before me on July 12, 2013 by Nichole M. Smith
as President of Oregon Outfitter's Corporation.

Jane Doe (signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



Verification upon Oath or Affirmation Certificate

The purpose of this type of notarization, sometimes known as a jurat, is to compel truthfulness in the signer. A jurat is a declaration made by an individual on oath or affirmation that a statement on a record is true. The notary must require that the signer personally appear, verbally swear the oath or affirm to the truth, and sign before the notary. An oath is a solemn pledge of truthfulness to a Supreme Being; an affirmation is a solemn personal pledge of honor that something is true. Both carry the penalty of perjury if forsworn.

By notarizing this type of certificate, the notary shows that the signer:

- Personally **appeared** before the notary.
- Was positively **identified** by the notary.
- Took an **oath/affirmation** before the notary.
- Freely and willingly **signed** before the notary.

An oath/affirmation can be a notarial act in its own right, as when a public official is sworn into office ORS 194.215(19). A verification of oath/affirmation is a notarial act in which a notary public certifies that a person made a vow in the presence of the notary public on penalty of perjury. ORS 194.215(11).

- An oath cannot be done on behalf of someone else, including a corporation.
- Oaths cannot be given over the telephone. The oath-taker must be in the physical presence of the notary.
- A person who objects to taking an oath may instead make an affirmation, the legal equivalent that does not refer to a Supreme Being. By taking an oath or affirmation in an official proceeding, a person may be subject to criminal penalties for perjury, should he or she fail to be truthful.

Sample Oath/Affirmation

Unless otherwise indicated, an Oregon notary public may use the following or similar words in administering an oath:

- “Do you solemnly swear (or affirm) that the statements in this document are true (so help you God?)”
- “Do you solemnly swear (or affirm) that the information you are about to give (or have given) is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (so help you God?)”

The oath-taker shows compliance with the oath either by repeating the words, using “I” instead of “you,” or by saying, “I do,” or, “I will.”

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for taking a verification upon oath or affirmation, or no more than **\$10.00** for an oath or affirmation without a signature.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE Verification upon Oath or Affirmation

State of OREGON

County of _____

Signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on _____, 20__ by _____.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

VERIFICATION UPON OATH OR AFFIRMATION

Case

On January 29, 2013, Ronda L. Wilson's house caught on fire when her fireplace screen was left open. Among the items destroyed were Ronda's stock certificates from General Investments Incorporated. The company requires an affidavit to be filled out concerning the loss of the certificates. The affidavit must be notarized. On February 18, 2013, at 10:00 a.m., after signing the document (provided by General Investments), Ronda went to the Marion County Clerk's office to have the document notarized. Jane Doe, the staff notary, was on duty that morning. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Ronda will have to re-sign the document in front of Jane Doe and Jane should note this in her journal. Affidavits must be signed in front of the notary and the notary must have the individual make an oath or affirmation; Ronda chose an oath. A journal entry is not required by statute, but is strongly advised.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
2/18/13 10:00 a.m.	Jurat	2/18/13	Affidavit	Ronda L. Wilson Ronda's address	<i>Ronda L. Wilson</i>	ODL exp. 1/5/17	Re-signed before me	\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

State of OREGON
County of Marion

Signed and sworn to (~~or affirmed~~) before me on Feb. 18, 2013 by Ronda L. Wilson.

Jane Doe (signature)
Notary Public – State of Oregon



OFFICIAL STAMP
JANE DOE
NOTARY PUBLIC-OREGON
COMMISSION NO. 000000
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES APRIL 02, 2017

Witnessing or Attesting a Signature Certificate

Witnessing or attesting a signature is like an acknowledgment, except that the signer **must** sign before the notary. Also, take note that the signer must re-sign the document in the notary public's presence if the document has already been signed. A notation in the notarial journal should be made indicating that the signer re-signed the document in front of the notary.

By notarizing this type of certificate, the notary shows that the signer:

- Personally **appeared** before the notary.
- Was positively **identified** by the notary.
- Freely and willingly **signed** before the notary.

Typically the certificate says, "signed or attested", or "subscribed before me."

There are documents that may require more than one signature to be notarized. If all the signers are present at the time of the notarization, only one certificate listing all the signers may be used. If the signers are appearing before the notary public at different times, a separate certificate is required for each notarial act. ORS 194.280(a)(d).

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for witnessing a signature.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE

Witnessing or Attesting a Signature

State of OREGON

County of _____

Signed (or attested) before me on _____, 20__ by _____.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

WITNESSING OR ATTESTING A SIGNATURE

Case

Jesse Cota has family members in Barcelona, Spain. He wants to invite his cousin David Sherman to come to the United States for a visit. The form he received from the Spanish Consulate requires that his signature be notarized. On Aug. 17, 2013, at 9:00 a.m., Jesse takes the form with him to work where a co-worker, Jane Doe (a notary public), agrees to do the notarization. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Jane has Jesse sign the consulate form in front of her and records in her journal that she witnessed his signature.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
8/17/13 9:00 a.m.	Witness Signature	8/17/13	Consulate form	Jesse Cota Jesse's address	<i>Jesse Cota</i>	ODL exp. 9/17/17		\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

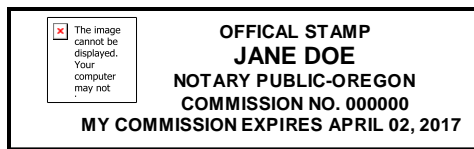
State of OREGON

County of Umatilla

Signed (~~or attested~~) before me on August 17, 2013 by Jesse Cota.

Jane Doe (signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



Copy Certification Certificate

A notary public may also certify or attest to a copy of a document. For this type of notarization, the notary officer must determine that the copy being certified is “a full, true, and accurate transcription or reproduction of the record or item.” ORS 194.230(4).

In this case, the signer is not stating anything about the document, the notary is. It is vital that the notary make the copy or carefully oversee its making. In addition, the transcription or reproduction must be full (including the margins!), true, and accurate. For this reason, it is best to photocopy the document. A certified copy does not have to be made from an original if the certificate does not specify “original document.” It may be a copy of a copy. If a notary knowingly makes a copy of a photocopy, the certificate wording “a copy of a photocopy” may be used. Personal appearance is required by the person requesting the certified copy.

A photograph cannot be notarized. No photograph is a full, true, and accurate reproduction, and it does not have the elements of a document: a personal statement by the constituent and the constituent’s signature. The notary public may notarize a statement about the photograph. After the notarial certificate is completed, one may use the official notary stamp a second time so that it overlaps the photograph and the paper it is attached to (be careful not to cover the face on the photo). This is a protection device which allows the receiving agency to know that the photograph is the one attached to the document at the time of notarization.

Notaries should not copy public records that are certified by a custodian of records, such as a county clerk. Certified copies are available from the agencies in charge of those records. If an individual wishes you to certify a copy of his or her articles of incorporation, for example, refer him or her to the Corporation Division, which has them on record. It is illegal to make copies, or to certify to copies, of Oregon birth or death certificates and marriage or divorce decrees. According to Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 432.380 and Oregon Administrative Rule 333-011-101, only the Oregon Center for Health Statistics may make copies of those records. To obtain certified copies of records from the Oregon Center for Health Statistics (vital records) call (971) 673-1190.

However, some records may be copied such as the Oregon Driver’s License, U.S. Passports and most professional licenses, because copies of these documents cannot be obtained otherwise. Check to see if the document has a “Do Not Copy” warning on it, or call the agency in question.

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for a copy certification.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE Certifying to a Copy of a Document

State of OREGON

County of _____

I certify that this is a true and correct copy of a record in the possession of _____.

Dated: _____, 20 ____.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

CERTIFYING TO A COPY OF A DOCUMENT

Case

Jule Houston, an autograph collector, has an original handwritten song, dated January 24, 1965, and signed by the artist, that he wants to sell. Rather than sending the original, the Verification Unit at Music U.S.A. has asked him to send a certified copy for them to examine. On December 2, 2013, at 8:30 a.m., Jule takes the song into the Salem branch of his Credit Union, where he has an account, and asks for a notary. Customer Service Representative Jane Doe comes to help. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Jane takes a photocopy of the handwritten song. A journal entry is not required by statute but is strongly advised.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
12/2/13 8:30 a.m.	Copy Cert.	1/24/65	Song	Jule Houston Jules' Address	<i>Jule Houston</i>	ODL exp. 2/4/17		\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

State of OREGON

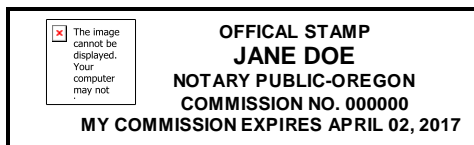
County of Marion

I certify that this is a true and correct copy of a record in the possession of Jule Houston.

Dated: December 2, 20 13.

Jane Doe (Signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



Attorney-In-Fact Acknowledgment Certificate

An attorney-in-fact acknowledgment is a type of acknowledgment in a representative capacity. The attorney-in-fact represents the person named in the document and signs on his or her behalf. A power of attorney document is the authorization the attorney-in-fact gets so that he or she can sign documents on the signer's behalf. Those documents may then be accompanied by an attorney-in-fact acknowledgment. When a notary needs to do an attorney-in-fact acknowledgment, he or she often needs to see proof of the signer's authority to sign for another. That proof is the power of attorney.

A general acknowledgment notarial certificate is usually used for a power of attorney document, i.e. someone giving someone else the power to sign documents for him/her.

The attorney-in-fact acknowledgment is always an acknowledgment, never a jurat. One can never swear an oath on behalf of another.

Check for proof (the power of attorney) that the signer has this power, especially in real estate matters where it should be of record. Note the proof in the journal.

The notary is not required to judge whether the power of attorney is valid for that particular transaction. However, if something is blatantly wrong, such as the document is obviously expired, or clearly says it is not to be used for the type of document being notarized, then the notary should not notarize, and should make a notation to that effect in the journal.

The signer must sign the document for the principal and for self. For example, "Effie M. Stone by Susan Brown, as attorney-in-fact." The notarial certificate must state that Susan Brown is signing on behalf of Effie M. Stone. The signer should sign both names in the notarial journal.

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for an attorney-in-fact acknowledgment.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE Acknowledgment through Power of Attorney

State of OREGON

County of _____

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me personally appeared _____,
(proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence)(personally known to me) to be the person whose
name is subscribed to the within record (Type of Document: _____)
as the attorney in fact of: _____, and acknowledged that (he)(she) subscribed the name
of _____ thereto as principal, and (his)(her) own name as attorney in fact.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

ATTORNEY-IN-FACT ACKNOWLEDGMENT CERTIFICATE

Case

Susan Brown currently has power of attorney for Effie M. Stone, her mother-in-law. Effie is currently out of the country but needs to sell her 2011 Honda Accord. Susan has a buyer but needs to get the bill of sale notarized. On February 28, 2013 Susan goes to her Credit Union in Oregon City and asks for a notary. Jane Doe comes to help. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Jane should verify the power of attorney giving Susan Brown the right to sign for Effie. She also has Susan sign both Effie's name and her own in her journal.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
2/28/13 2:30 p.m.	Rep. Ack.	2/28/13	Bill of Sale 2011 Honda	Susan Brown Susan's address	<i>Effie M. Stone</i> By <i>Susan Brown</i>	Susan Brown ODL exp. 6/10/17	Verified power of attorney	\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

State of OREGON
County of Clackamas

On this 28th day of February, 2013, before me personally appeared Susan Brown,
(proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence)(~~personally known to me~~) to be the person whose
name is subscribed to the within record (Type of Document: Bill of Sale-2011 Honda Accord)
as the attorney in fact of: Effie M. Stone, and acknowledged that (~~he~~)(she) subscribed the
name of Effie M. Stone thereto as principal, and (~~his~~)(her) own name as attorney in fact.

Jane Doe (signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



OFFICIAL STAMP
JANE DOE
NOTARY PUBLIC-OREGON
COMMISSION NO. 000000
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES APRIL 02, 2017

Signature by Third Party

There may be a circumstance when a person is physically unable to sign their name and needs a notarization. Whether it's a permanent or merely a temporary disability, Oregon has a law that can help. If an individual is physically unable to sign a record, the individual may direct another person, other than the notary, to sign their name for them. ORS 194.250. Both the signer and the person whom he/she directs to sign their name **must be present** during the notarization.

When performing any notarial act involving a "signature by third party," the notary public shall witness the signing of the document. Instead of the signer signing their name, the third party would sign the name of the person who is unable to sign.

The notarial certificate shall contain the phrase "Signature affixed by (name of other individual) at the direction of (name of individual)" or words to that effect.

Make sure you note in the journal indicating the signer signed on behalf of the person who is unable to sign. Instead of the signer signing their name, the third party would sign as they did in the document. As with a credible witness, it is prudent to get the third party signer's information and signature in your journal too.

By witnessing this act, the notary shows that the signer:

- Personally **appeared** before the notary.
- Was positively **identified** by the notary.
- Freely and willingly **signed by third party** before the notary.

A notary shall not charge more than \$10.00 for a Signature by Third Party.

Sample Certificate

Signature by Third Party

State of OREGON

County of _____

Signed and acknowledged before me on _____, 20____ by _____.

Signature affixed by (name of other individual) at the direction of (name of individual).

Jane Doe (*Signature*)

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

Debra O'Malley, incapacitated with a broken hand, decided to sell her vintage travel trailer. On July 8, 2013 Debra asks her friend Bev Carpenter to accompany her to the Bank where she needs to have her signature notarized on the Bill of Sale. At 2:30 p.m. Debra and Bev walk into the Bank of Ocean Shores in Tillamook, Oregon and ask to see the notary Jane Doe. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Jane watches while Bev signs Debra O'Malley's name on the Bill of Sale. Jane then adds language to the acknowledgment certificate "Signature affixed by Bev Carpenter at the direction of Debra O'Malley". Jane also makes an additional journal entry for Bev Carpenter's information.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
7/08/13 2:30 p.m.	Ack.	7/08/13	Bill of Sale	Debra O'Malley Debra's address	<i>Debra O'Malley</i>	ODL exp. 6/9/17	Signed by Bev Carpenter at the direction of Debra O'Malley	\$10.00
7/08/13 2:30 p.m.	Signature by 3 rd party	Signature by 3 rd party	Signature by 3 rd party	Bev Carpenter Bev's address (optional)	<i>Bev Carpenter</i>	ODL exp. 3/7/16 (optional)	Debra has broken hand, Bev signed for her, see above.	

CERTIFICATE

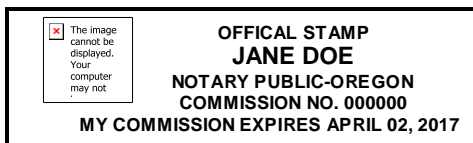
State of OREGON
County of Tillamook

Signed and acknowledged before me on July 8, 2013 by Debra O'Malley.

Signature affixed by Bev Carpenter at the direction of Debra O'Malley.

Jane Doe (Signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



Signature by Stamp Notarization

The Signature by Stamp certificate is an option for persons who cannot fully sign their name. It allows a person to use a signature stamp indicating his or her intent to sign a document. It is used when the signer cannot make a full signature because of infirmity or physical handicaps. Oregon statutes do not speak to notarizing a signature by stamp. The follow directions indicate “best practice” as understood by the Secretary of State.

When performing any notarial act involving a “signature by stamp,” the notary public shall witness the use of the signature stamp and accept the stamp in lieu of the signature of the person.

The notarial certificate shall contain the phrase “signed by stamp before me” or words to that effect.

Make sure that you note in the journal that a “signature by stamp” was used.

By witnessing this act, the notary shows that the signer:

- Personally **appeared** before the notary.
- Was positively **identified** by the notary.
- Freely and willingly **signed by stamp** before the notary.

A notary shall not charge more than **\$10.00** for a Signature by Stamp Certificate.

SAMPLE CERTIFICATE

Notarization Using Signature by Stamp

State of OREGON

County of _____

Signed by stamp before me on _____, 20____ by _____.

Notary Public – State of Oregon

EXAMPLE

Jay Johnston, a visually impaired person, wants to attend college in Atlanta, GA in the fall. He needs to send his College Entrance Exam to the Dean of Admissions' Office in Atlanta. The form he received from the Deans' office requires that his signature be notarized. On April 20, 2013 at 1:00 p.m., Jay takes the form with him to the admissions office where he currently attends college, so the college secretary, Jane Doe (a notary) can perform the notarization. How should the notary proceed?

NOTARY JOURNAL ENTRY

Jane watches while Jay uses his signature stamp to affix an impression on the form and records in her journal that she witnessed his stamp.

Date/Time of Act	Type of Act	Document Date	Document Type	Printed Name Contact Address	Signature	ID	Additional Info	Fee
4/20/13 1:00 p.m.	Witness Stamp	4/20/13	College Entrance Exam	Jay Johnston Jay's address	<i>Jay Johnston</i>	Oregon ID Card exp. 6/1/17	Signed By Stamp	\$10.00

CERTIFICATE

State of OREGON

County of **Jackson**

Signed by stamp before me on **April 20**, 2013 by **Jay Johnston**.

Jane Doe (Signature)

Notary Public – State of Oregon



OFFICIAL STAMP
JANE DOE
NOTARY PUBLIC-OREGON
COMMISSION NO. 000000
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES APRIL 02, 2017

Acknowledgment in an Individual Capacity

State of OREGON
County of _____

This record was acknowledged before me on _____, 20____
by _____.

Notary Public - State of Oregon

Acknowledgment in a Representative Capacity

State of OREGON
County of _____

This record was acknowledged before me on _____, 20____ by _____
as _____ of _____.

Notary Public - State of Oregon

Verification upon Oath or Affirmation

State of OREGON
County of _____

Signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on _____, 20____ by _____.

Notary Public - State of Oregon

Witnessing or Attesting a Signature

State of OREGON
County of _____

Signed (or attested) before me on _____ 20____ by _____.

Notary Public - State of Oregon

Certifying to a Copy of a Document

State of OREGON
County of _____

I certify that this is a true and correct copy of a record in the possession of _____.

Dated: _____, 20____.

Notary Public - State of Oregon

Acknowledgment through Power of Attorney

State of OREGON
County of _____

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me personally appeared _____
(proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence) (personally known to me) to be the person whose
name is subscribed to the within record (Type of Document: _____) as the
attorney in fact of: _____, and acknowledged that (he)(she) subscribed the name of
_____ thereto as principal, and (his)(her) own name as attorney in fact.

Notary Public - State of Oregon

Chapter 9 - Secretary of State Certificates

One of the Secretary of State's main tasks is to certify to the status of a notary or other public official. Foreign jurisdictions often require an authentication before they will accept the notarized document. The Secretary of State's office is the only one who issues these certificates because we hold the notary records or have the authority by treaty.

Authentication Certificates

When a document goes to a foreign country, it's often necessary to have the notarization or official certification authenticated. Countries that are party to the Hague Convention on Legalization of Foreign Documents require an "apostille." An apostille or an authentication certifies the authenticity of the signature, stamp and status of the official who has executed a public document. An apostille or an authentication enables a public document issued in one country to be recognized as valid in another country.

Oregon has pioneered in the United States the use of a single certificate for both apostilles and authentications. The only exception is the People's Republic of China. China receives a special certificate at this time.

Signatures that can be authenticated include:

- Notaries public
- State Registrar of Health Statistics, such as birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates
- Corporation Division signers
- County recorders
- County clerks

Authentication Certificates are prepared at the Secretary of State, Corporation Division, Public Service Building, 255 Capitol St. NE, Ste. 151, Salem, OR, 97310-1327, (503) 986-2200. For additional information on [authentication certificates](#) please go online

Certificate of Good Standing

The Certificate of Good Standing attests to the status of a notary public commission on the records of the Secretary of State. No other document is involved and this certificate may not be attached to a document.

Notary Public Notarial Commission Certificate

This certificate is issued to a notary public to show the term of appointment and the name the notarial commission was issued under. OAR 160-100-0125. It is for the notary public's record.

Certificate of Authorization

This certificate provides the specifications for making the official notary stamp. Information includes the commission name, notarial commission number and expiration date of the notary public. OAR 160-100-0125. The vendor (maker) of the stamp may return this form to you. Please DO NOT return this form to the Corporation Division. This form is for your records should you need to have another stamp made.

Chapter 10 - Foreign Language Documents

An increase in international commerce has made foreign language document notarizations more common. A notary public who fluently reads and writes a foreign language may notarize the signature on a document written in that language. The notarization takes place in the same way as any other, but the notary should note the foreign language factor in the notarial journal.

A document written in a language the notary cannot read can cause the following problems:

- The notary may be unable to get accurate data for the journal.
- The notary may be unable to complete the notarial certificate correctly because he or she can't follow the document's instructions, or does not recognize blank spaces.
- The notary may be unable to detect blatant frauds.
- If the document is written in a non-Roman alphabet, such as Arabic, Chinese, or Japanese, the notary may be unable to determine that the signer is signing the same name as the party named in the document, or if the notary is named in the document.

It is for these reasons that the Secretary of State recommends that a notary public should not notarize a document written in a language they cannot read nor use a notarial certificate written in a language that they cannot read. When in doubt, a notary can always refuse to notarize and refer the customer to a bilingual notary. Bilingual notaries can be found at consulates and embassies, in ethnic communities, at universities and community colleges, and sometimes in the Yellow Pages. Translators are often notaries. A simple Google search will usually reveal notaries who are in your area that are eager to notarize in other languages.

As an alternative, a notary can notarize signed, English translations, but these may not be acceptable to the receiving agency. It is best to confirm that option first. If a non-Roman alphabet is used, some recorders require translation. The usual procedure is to notarize the oath of the translator of the document to the accuracy and completeness of the translation. The translation is attached to the original, together with the translator's oath, and the notary notarizes both the translated document signed by the signer and the signed original document itself.

Foreign Language Certificates

A notary public may use a certificate written in a foreign language if he or she can read and write the language on the certificate (keeping in mind that the words *Notary Public* must be in English), and the certificate meets the minimum requirements of Oregon statute. ORS 194.280 and ORS 194.285. Otherwise, the notary could offer to type or attach an English language certificate chosen by the customer. Some countries may object to an attached English certificate and refuse to accept the document because of it, so it is always best for the customer to check first.

Chapter 11 – Electronic Notarizations

Beginning September 1, 2013, Oregon notaries public may notarize electronically; that is, the stamp image and certificate they use may be electronically affixed to the document that is still in electronic form. Sometimes documents are created electronically and notarized electronically, and then printed out for recording or other storage. Whether in electronic or printed form, electronically notarized documents are permissible by law.

An Oregon notary is not required to use a particular technology when notarizing electronically, but **before they begin**, they must first notify the Secretary of State that they intend to start notarizing electronically. Use the Electronic Notarization Notice form available by calling the Secretary of State at 503-986-2589. OAR 160-100-0140 spells out the requirements for the notarization technology. In general, the notary is directed to use a kind of electronic notarization that conforms to the National Electronic Notarization Standards (NENS). The notarized document must be capable of being submitted to the Secretary of State in PDF format. An electronic notarization will still consist of an official stamp, a complete notarial certificate and the official electronic notarial signature.

For more information, please see the Corporation Division website. Consult with the vendor about the requirements **before** making any purchase of electronic notarial software, including electronic signature. Make sure the vendor meets the NENS and doesn't just refer to E-SIGN and UETA.

Notarizations by Remote Presence

Some companies seek to allow electronic notarizations without personal presence of the signer. The web-based platforms sometimes allow a person to submit copies of identification over the Internet and to use a webcam in lieu of personal appearance in front of a notary public. Appearance via webcam does **not** meet the requirements for notarization in Oregon.

While Oregon notaries public are allowed, under certain conditions, to perform electronic notarizations, Oregon law still requires a person to appear personally before a notary public to obtain notarial acts like acknowledgments or oaths. This means that party must be **physically** present before the notary public. A video image or other form of non-physical representation is not a personal appearance in front of a notary public under law.

It is important that Oregon notaries do not notarize remotely. Clearly, Oregon notaries public who notarize in this fashion are breaking the law, and are subject to administrative and possibly criminal and civil sanctions. It is unclear if notarizations of Oregon citizens done remotely by notaries that are not in Oregon will be upheld in court.

Glossary of Notarial Terms

Acknowledge: To admit the existence or truth of a statement and accept responsibility.

Acknowledgment: A formal declaration made to authoritative witness by the person who executed the document that it was freely executed.

Administer: To give or apply in a formal way.

Affiant: One who makes a swearing statement in an affidavit.

Affidavit: A written declaration made under oath before a notary public or other authorized officer.

Affirmation: To declare positively or firmly; maintain to be true. An affirmation replaces “swearing before God.”

Affix: To secure (an object) to another; to attach; add to.

Apostille: Authentication document for Hague Convention members.

Appointment: The act of designating for an office or position.

Attest: To affirm to be correct, true, or genuine; corroborate.

Authenticate: To prove or verify as genuine.

Certificate: 1) A document testifying to a fact, qualification, or promise; or 2) A written statement legally authenticated.

Civil Action: Not a criminal action. A lawsuit for the purpose of protection of private (not public) rights and compensation for their violation.

Civil Liability: The responsibility and obligation to make compensation to another person for damages caused by improper performance of duties and acts.

Commercial Paper: 1) Any of various short-term negotiable papers originating in business transactions; or 2) A document whose purpose is to transfer money such as a check, bill of exchange, or draft.

Commission: A document describing the notary’s appointment and term of office.

Credible Witness: A believable witness worthy of confidence who personally knows the signer of a document.

Dispose: To store in an orderly manner. In relation to notarial journal, to store for 10 years.

Duress: Constraint by threat, coercion.

Embosser: A pliers-like device, that when squeezed together with paper between the jaws, makes raised areas and indentations on paper. Used as a protection device. Not an official notary stamp; but may be used in addition to the official notary stamp.

Felony: A crime more serious than a misdemeanor and punishable by a more stringent sentence.

Journal of Notarial Acts: Notarial journal prescribed by law to record notarial acts.

Jurat: An affidavit declaring when, where, and before whom it was sworn.

Jurisdiction/Venue: The locality where a cause of action occurs. The state and county where a notarization takes place.

L.S.: Indicates where the official notary stamp imprint is to be placed. Latin term *Locus Sigilli* means “place of the seal/stamp.”

Misconduct: Behavior not conforming to prevailing standards or laws.

Misdemeanor: An offense of lesser gravity than a felony for which punishment may be a fine or imprisonment.

Oath: A statement by a person who asserts it to be true, calling upon God as witness.

Official Notary Stamp: Rubber stamp that conforms to the laws and rules.

Personally Known: Familiarity with an individual resulting from interactions with that individual over a period of time sufficient to eliminate every reasonable doubt that the individual has the identity claimed.

Power of Attorney: A legal instrument authorizing one to act as another's agent or attorney.

Record: Information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in perceivable form.

Resignation: Written statement that one is resigning a position or office.

Revoke: To cancel or rescind.

S.S. or SCT: Indicates where the notarization is performed. Latin term *Scilicet* means "in particular" or "namely." Commonly referred to as jurisdiction.

Satisfactory Evidence: Sufficient means of identifying a signer which meets criteria set forth by law.

Sanctions: The penalty for noncompliance specified in a law or decree.

Subscribe: To sign one's name in attestation, testimony, or consent

Suspend: To cause to stop for a period; interrupt.

Swear/Sworn: To make a solemn promise; to vow, usually before God.

Venue/Jurisdiction: The locality where a cause of action occurs. The state and county where a notarization takes place.

Verification: A confirmation of the truth of a theory or fact.

Waiver of Fees: A statement which waives or gives up the right to charge for notarial services.

Witness: A person who watches an action take place.

Oregon Notary Laws & Rules

To view the laws and rules that govern notaries public please use the following links:

[Notary Public Laws – Oregon Revised Statutes \(ORS\) Chapter 194](#)

[Notary Public Rules – Oregon Administrative Rule \(OAR\) Chapter 160](#)

[New proposed rule, as well as a side by side comparison of the 2013 Notary updates](#)

Index

A

- Acknowledgment Certificate
 - Attorney-In-Fact, 44
 - Individual, 33, 34-35
 - Representative Capacity, 33, 36-37
- Address Change, 8
- Advertising, 9
- Affirmation, Verbal, 38-39
- Apostille, 52
- Application, 6
- Attaching Certificates, 30
- Attest a Signature, 40-41
- Attorney-In-Fact Certificate, 44-45
- Authentication Certificate, 52

B

- Blank Documents, 23
- Blind or Disabled, 48-49
- Bonding, 14
- Business Entity Certificate, 33, 36-37

C

- Certificates
 - Acknowledgment
 - Individual 33, 34-35
 - Representative 33, 36-37
- Authorization to Obtain Official Notary Stamp, 52
- Business Entities, 36-37
 - Components, 27
 - Copy Certification, 33, 42-43
 - Foreign Language, 51
 - Good Standing, 52
 - Loose, 30
 - Notary Public Notarial Commission, 52
 - Selecting, 28
 - Verification upon Oath/Affirmation, 33, 38-39
 - Witnessing Signature, 33, 40-41
- Commercial Protest, 27
- Commission
 - Receiving, 6
 - Reapplying, 6
- Competency, 25
- Conviction of Lesser Offense, 5

- Corrections, 30
- Credible Witness, 24
- Crime/Felony, 5

D

- Death of a Notary, 18

E

- Education, 5
- Electronic Notarization, 54
- Electronic Signature, 18,
- Employer
 - Agreement, 10
 - Policies, 10
- Errors & Omissions Insurance, 14

F

- Fees
 - Maximum Amount to Charge, 16
 - Employer, 16
 - Travel Fee, 16
 - Waiver, 16
- Felony/Crime, 5
- Foreign Language
 - Certificates, 53
 - Documents, 53
- Frequently Asked Questions, 9, 12, 15, 17, 22, 26, 31

G

- Glossary, 55-56

H

- How to Notarize, 23-25

I

- Identify Signer
 - Credible Witness, 24
 - Identification Documents, 24-25
 - Personal Knowledge, 23-24
- Impartial Witness, 5

J

Journal

- Abbreviated Multiple Entries, 20-21
- Acts Not Required to be Recorded, 21
- Agreement (Employer), 11, 16
- Importance, 18
- Multiple Journals, 22
- Public Record, 19
- Requirements, 19
- Retention, 18

Jurat, 33, 38-39

K

L

Liability, 13

Loose Certificates

- Protecting, 30
- Selecting, 28

Lost Stamping Device, 7

M

Minor, 26

Mylar, 27

N

Name Change, 8

Not Reapplying for a Commission, 7

Nursing Home, 26

O

Oath, Verbal (Sample), 33, 38-39

P

Penalties

- Administrative, 13
- Civil, 13
- Criminal, 13

Personal Knowledge, 23-24

Photograph, 42

Plats, 27

Protecting Yourself, 14

Prohibited Acts, 5

Public Records, 19

Q

Qualifications, 5

R

Relatives, Notarizing for, 5

Reapply, Commission, 6

Renewal, Commission, 6

Responsibilities, 10

Retention Agreement, 18

Rules, Oregon Administrative, 57

S

Sample Certificates, 50-51

Stamping Device

Lost, 7

Requirements, 7, 52

Select a Certificate, 28

Secretary of State

Certificates, 52

Contacting, 1

Signature by Stamp, 48-49

Statutes, Oregon Revised, 57

Steps to Notarize, 23-25

Subscribing Witness, 26

Swearing an Oath, 33, 38-39

T

Translation, 53

U

V

Verification upon Oath/Affirmation, 33, 38-39

Vital Records, 42

W

Waiver of Fees, 16

Wills, 31

Witness a Signature, 33, 40-41

X, Y, Z

Review

- Never notarize your own signature.
- Never notarize if you are named in the document or could benefit from the transaction.
- Never give legal advice by instructing signers on how to complete the document.
- Never notarize if the signer or oath-taker does not personally appear.
- Never notarize unless you can identify the signer through personal knowledge, reliable identification cards, or a credible witness known to the notary or who the notary can identify on the basis of reliable identification cards.
- Never notarize if you doubt someone's willingness to sign or ability to understand what is being signed.
- Never sign and stamp a document without first filling out the journal and the notarial certificate.
- Never allow a notarial act to go unnoted in your journal.
- Never take shortcuts. Keep an accurate and complete record.
- Never charge more notary fees than the law allows.
- Never guess. Contact the Secretary of State, Corporation Division if you have any questions.



**Corporation Division
Office of the Secretary of State**

Public Service Building, Suite 151
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-1327
(503) 986-2200

Oregon Notary Guide
Publication No. 1500
January, 2014