

## Is a University ID Acceptable When Notarizing Documents?

The most basic task of the Notary Public which underlies all other processes and procedures is that of properly identifying the signer of a document. The validity of the notarization hangs on whether or not the person who signed is actually the person who is named in a document. Hence, proper identification is key, and how the Notary verifies identity must follow strict rules and guidelines. If you are a Notary who practices on a regular basis, you will observe that everyone does not necessarily have the most commonly accepted forms of ID, such as a State Issued Driver's License or a U.S. Passport. As time goes on, and our country continues to be the melting pot that it is, we will be approached by constituents who do not have the most common ID documents. As a responsible notary, it is up to you to become knowledgeable about what are proper and acceptable identification documents.

An acceptable identification document must contain the following elements: a photo, a signature, and a traceable identification number issued by a Federal, State or Local governing body. The most common identification documents which provide these elements are: State issued Driver's License or Non-Driver's ID; U.S. or Foreign Passport; Permanent Resident Card; Armed Services Military ID Card; DHS (Department of Homeland Security) documents which include such items as US Travel Document I-327, American Indian Card I-872, and others. Please note that not all of the above documents have expiration dates. For those that do, some states will stipulate how old the document may be before it becomes invalid. For example, a Driver's License within two years of expiration date, or an unexpired Passport. Notaries should become familiar with the specific statutes regarding identification documents in their own state.

What happens when a signer doesn't have one of the above-listed cards? For instance, what if an employee from a state university only possesses the Employee ID badge issued by the university? While many of these badges contain a photo and identification number, often they do not contain a signature. Even if the notarization is taking place on the college campus and being performed by a university employee for another university employee, the employee badge would not be considered a valid form of identification for the purposes of notarization. Most states require a local, state or federal government-issued identification document for properly verifying identity. Notarization statutes prevail regardless of when or where the notarization is taking place; the rules can never be modified or bent no matter what the circumstance. Many transit systems issue passes to their employees which contain a photo and number; the number actually identifies the worker and is placed on their paychecks each pay period. While this pass has validity in the transit system, it will not be accepted for purposes of notarization. Notaries, whenever possible, should let their clients know beforehand that they will need to produce a form of identification from the above list. This will prevent disappointment and inconvenience to the client who finds that the item they want to use for identification is not acceptable. If a signer does not have acceptable ID, this is an instance where the notary may and should refuse to notarize.