

A Notary Signature is Essential on All Notarized Documents

The most critical of the five notary-specific elements on a notarized document is the notary signature. The lack of a notary signature is fatal to the notarization. It is essential that the notary always signs every notarial certificate that he or she notarizes. By signing the notary certificate, a notary is verifying that the venue, notary commission expiration date, and the notary certificate are true and correct.

Even if the name of the notary public is spelled out in his official seal, even if he uses a rubber stamp that states his name, and even if his name appears pre-printed in the notary certificate, the lack of a notary signature is considered to be negligence that will render the notarization invalid.

One recent example of such a rejection occurred in Florida, where a candidate for re-election for the state legislature was denied access to the general election ballot due to one notary who failed to sign the notary certificate that accompanied the candidate's paperwork, followed by a second notary who failed to indicate in the notary certificate how they verified his identity (which is a required item in Florida notary certificates). The result of the notary errors was that the candidate's district had to spend tens of thousands of dollars to hold a special election.

The signature of the notary public (which is considered his official signature) should match the one on file with his state commissioning authority. If that signature was legible cursive writing, the notary should not use an unreadable or scribble signature when signing as a notary. If his official signature includes his full middle name, the notary should not use just a middle initial when signing as a notary.

One reason that the signatures have to match is so that the state can issue an apostille if one is requested. A matching signature is one way that the state government can verify that the notarization was done by the person whose name appears as the notary on the document.

Another reason that the signatures have to match is that it adds consistency to all the documents notarized during that commission, which can cut down on notary identity theft. If the signatures are always the same, when a document is presented that has a different signature, this raises a red flag.

Consistently using your official notary signature on every document that you notarize avoids the problems outlined in this article.

In Delaware, your signature on a notarized document **Must** be the **same EXACT name** as noted on your commission.

NOTE: This article serves as information purposes to broaden the knowledge of the notary public. The Delaware Notary Association is dedicated in keeping the Delaware Notary with working information in performing their duties to the best they can and to the fullest.

This article is part of the series that began with [What Does a Notary Public Do?](#)