

Six Critical Steps to Follow if a Notary Stamp is Lost

If you lose your notary seal, will you react like the notary public in today's example? Of course, you won't! Everything that this notary does is wrong. Today, learn from his mistakes and make note of the six critical steps that you must follow when a notarial seal is lost.

Meet Neglectful Paul, a terribly careless notary public:

Neglectful Paul arrived at work and reached inside his unlocked notary supplies drawer for his favorite notary stamp. The round notary seal with blue ink wasn't in its place. He wasn't worried. Neglectful Paul popped open his mobile notary briefcase and retrieved a smaller, rectangular-shaped notary seal that was tucked behind a stack of loose notarial certificates. The careless notary thought little more about his lost notary seal and went about his business.

At the end of the day, Neglectful Paul glanced around once more, scanning the notary office for his missing notarial seal. He remembered that he might have left it on the customer counter the previous day when he left hurriedly for a mobile notary assignment. He decided to check. A notary fee sign sat on the busy customer countertop beside a tray of notary journals that Neglectful Paul and the other notaries used when they were in the office. He peeked around the notary fee sign and looked in the tray of notary journals; the notary seal was not there.

The notary shrugged and boasted to his notary co-workers that the spare notary stamp in his briefcase had saved the day. Neglectful Paul said that if his favorite notary seal didn't reappear in a week or so, he would invest in two duplicates just in case he lost another one. Neglectful Paul left his office feeling satisfied that he had done all he needed to do regarding the lost notary seal.

Neglectful Paul is a perfect example of what NOT to do. Here are the correct steps you must take if you lose your notary seal:

1. **Look diligently for the missing notarial seal; do so immediately!** In the wrong hands, your seal can be used to commit fraud or forgery.
2. **Immediately advise the notary public administrator in your state that you have lost your seal.** Some states require notaries to fill out a form; others require a call to the state's office. Many states have certain procedures to follow, but if none are outlined for your state, we suggest that you notify the office that issued your notary commission by contacting them by phone: (302)739-4111 or by email: Notary@Delaware.gov .

3. **Report the missing notary seal to your local law enforcement.** Write a very detailed description of the notary stamp including its brand, type, shape, size, and ink color; take it with you when you make your report.
4. **Advise your notary bonding agency.** If you purchased your notary bond, contact your bonding and supply company. If your state does not require you to have a notary bond, you may skip this step. THIS IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. Notary Bonds are NOT required in Delaware.
5. **Order a new notary seal.** Don't order a duplicate of your lost notary stamp. Your replacement notary seal should be a different size or shape, and, if possible, it should have a different color of ink. Consider changing your official notary name and signature. This might include a name change fee, but it would provide double protection for you if your notary seal is used to commit fraud or forgery. If you do decide to change your commission name, please logon to your profile on the State of Delaware Notary Public website and follow the procedures in changing your name. The Delaware Notary Association recommends to contact the State of Delaware Notary Public office answering any detailed questions at (302)739-4111. **Black ink is the only color acceptable** for your inked stamp here in the State of Delaware.
6. **Keep records; staple copies of the above documentation in your journal.** Make a detailed memo (notation) in your notary record book / journal (which is recommended but not required) about the circumstances involving your missing notarial seal; document the steps you took and the date you began using your new notary stamp.

If you need of general guidance, please contact the Delaware Notary Association at (302)598-0047, (302)547-8697 or email: Mike.DelawareNotary@verizon.net . Any detailed questions should be directed to the State of Delaware Notary Public Office at (302)739-4111.

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.