

The Contents of a Notary Journal

There are three primary types of notary journals. One has minimal space per entry; one has more generous space per entry but fewer entries per page; and one is designed for notary signing agents and has frequently-seen real estate documents pre-listed in it. Each of these three types can be found in paperback or hardback. Which type you choose is your decision. It is important to see a sample page of the journal before you buy it, as you will be using it for some time.

While most notary journals have a sample page within them showing how to use that particular journal, those samples may lead you to use the journal in ways that conflict with your state's laws or with sound business practices. Be sure to check the rules in your state for any exceptions. Since Delaware DOES NOT require a journal having journal but is HIGHLY recommended. The information you put in your journal is for remembering what was done at the time of each notarization. The more information you put in can help you remember in case you are questioned when contacted by the recipient or receiving party. The information in your journal is for the eyes of you, the notary.

A notary journal is an official record of your actions as a notary public and should be constructed so as to withstand the passage of time and to be impossible to alter by removing pages or by inserting events before they occurred. For these reasons, it should be well-bound with numbered pages and spaces for entries. At a minimum, each entry in the notary journal must contain the following ten items:

- 1) The printed name and current address of the document signer(s).
- 2) The signature of each document signer
- 3) Details of how each signer's identity was verified (personal knowledge, credible witness, or valid and proper form of I.D.)
- 4) What notarial service was performed (acknowledgment, jurat, verification, or copy certification).
- 5) The notary fee charged
- 6) The names of any person(s) named in the document whose signatures were not notarized (other signers who are not present), if any
- 7) A name and address for each witness who signs the document, if any
- 8) The signature of each witness who signs the document, if any
- 9) How each witness's identity was verified (as above), if any
- 10) Any other elements or items mandated by the laws of your state, including thumbprints where required

If you cannot fit all this information into one entry (or if your state requires a separate entry for each signer, including each witness), use extra entry lines and indicate in the notes section that all these entries are for one document.

In addition to the above, if any of the following items apply, it is a good idea to include them:

- 11) Where the notarization took place (the residence address of the signer, place of work, or other location)
- 12) The capacity of the signer (if they are signing as an attorney-in-fact with a power of attorney or as a corporate officer)
- 13) The number of pages of the document, including the notary certificate
- 14) Details of any corrections made to the document or the notary certificate, including who made the corrections

- 15) Information about any loose notary certificates attached to the document or any notary certificate stamped or hand-written onto the document
- 16) Details about any property involved (address for real estate, make and model and year for cars, etc.)
- 17) Who prepared the document and/or who is named within it as the other party (or parties) besides the signer (title company XYZ, lender ABC, attorney-in-fact Bob Smith, heirs, agents, etc.)
- 18) If the document involves children, the names of the children
- 19) Any unusual details about the notarization that will assist you in recalling it later if needed

The act of entering this information into the notary journal forces the notary to complete the notarization properly and creates a record that he did so. The more relevant details you record in your notary journal, the better it will protect you from possible problems over the passage of time.

If you need a notary journal, please contact the American Society of Notaries at <http://www.ASNNOTARY.org> or call (850)671-5164.

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

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.