

Notarizing Handwritten Documents

Perhaps a father needs to have a statement notarized that authorizes his child to go on a trip with a friend's family. He might decide to handwrite it. The same could be true for a building tenant who needs to provide a letter to a housing authority verifying household income. Or, perhaps a separated couple facing an income tax issue may need to quickly submit a notarized declaration that they have lived apart for several months.

Handwritten documents can be created on the fly. They can be notarized if they are complete and attached to proper notarial certificates.

Below are the steps to follow when notarizing a handwritten document.

1. Check the document for completeness. In other words, check the document for blank lines or missing information; have the signer fill in blank spaces or enter "N/A."
2. If the handwritten document includes a notarial certificate, ensure that the notarial certificate complies with your state's notary laws. (Handwritten certificates are perfectly legal and acceptable as long as they include the correct language.)
3. Review the venue. If necessary, make corrections to the venue; simply draw a line through the incorrect words, initial it, and print the correct venue information. Do not use correction tape or apply a product like White-Out to any part of a notarial certificate.
4. If no notarial certificate has been included, provide the signer with samples of your state's acceptable jurat and acknowledgment certificates; allow them to make a selection. Never choose for the signer.
5. Properly identify the signer. Refer to your state's notary laws for acceptable forms of identification.
6. Record the required information in your record book. You may want to include a comment that the document was handwritten. You could also add a note that the signer presented the document without a certificate and that he or she selected one.
7. Ask the signer to sign the document if it is not already signed. (If the notary certificate is a jurat, the document must be signed in the notary's presence. If the document is attached to an acknowledgment, the signer may sign the document before meeting with the notary.)
Perform the appropriate verbal ceremony.
8. Complete the notarial certificate with the date of the act; add your seal.