

Important Instructions for Getting Your Document Notarized

Now that you have your deed, power of attorney, or other important document it will need to be signed (or executed) in person, before (in front of) a Notary Public, or other duly authorized individual, legally able to take your oath, affirmation or acknowledgement. Print your documents, single sided, then please read the process below. Contact our office if you have any questions about the process at all. If your document is not properly acknowledged, it may cause significant delay.

In Massachusetts:

In Massachusetts you may find a Notary Public at some of these locations:

- Insurance companies
- Banks
- Accountants
- Real estate offices
- Town halls
- Libraries
- Law offices
- AAA

You must appear in person before a commissioned Massachusetts Notary Public. Contact the office of the Notary Public in advance to make an appointment. The Notary Public will require that you provide valid, current, government issued, photo identification.

Bring the unsigned document to the Notary Public, sign the document in front of the Notary. The Notary will take your oath or acknowledgement, sign and apply their notary seal. **Note: an embossed notary seal is not required.** However, the Notary must sign the notary clause **and** provide their commission expiration date.

You are welcome to contact our office to schedule an appointment with one of our staff Notaries to have your documents notarized. In most cases, same day service is available. There is no fee for our notary service, however, please do not come in without making an appointment.

Outside of Massachusetts, but in the United States, or official U.S. Territory:

Massachusetts has reciprocity with all 49 U.S. States and all U.S. territories. This means that Massachusetts will recognize the acknowledgement of notaries from other states and territories. Provided that:

- The Notaries follow the laws of their own state or territory;
- The notary clause or acknowledgement clearly states that the signing was the persons “free act and deed”;
- The notary clause or acknowledgement clearly states that the persons signing the document “personally appeared” before the notary.

Note: Electronic, online, remote or video notary services are not recognized in Massachusetts for real estate documents. Original signatures of the signor and Notary are required. Electronic signatures are not acceptable. **Do not use** the services of remote notaries, you must personally appear before the Notary, or the document will not be valid for recording in Massachusetts.

Outside of the United States:

It is a very difficult and time-consuming process to have U.S. documents notarized in foreign countries. You must plan in advance if you expect that you will not be able to appear before a Notary Public in the United States.

If you plan to have a Massachusetts document notarized in a foreign country, please visit the website for the U.S. Department of State for clear instructions on the process:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal-considerations/judicial/authentication-of-documents/notarial-and-authentication-services-consular-officers.html>

You will need to travel to the local U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate Office in the foreign country you are in to get the document notarized. Many Embassies and Consulates require that you schedule an appointment several weeks in advance. They do not accept walk in appointments.

Members of the U.S. Military:

Persons serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, wherever located, may acknowledge documents before a Commissioned Officer in active service in a Massachusetts or U.S. military unit with the rank of Second Lieutenant or higher in the Army, Air Force or Marine Corps, or the rank of Ensign or higher in the Navy or Coast Guard.

The Document must contain a statement that the person signing the documents is actively serving in or with the Armed Forces of Massachusetts or United States and that the person signing personally appeared, and the signing was their free act and deed.

Quick Reference Do's and Don'ts of Document Notarization

Do's	Don'ts
Do plan in advance. Get the document notarized as soon as possible.	Don't wait until a few days before the document is needed.
Do have a valid, unexpired, government issued photo identification with you to show the Notary.	Don't show up without a photo identification.
Do print your document single sided.	Don't print your documents double sided.
Do bring your unsigned documents to the Notary.	Don't sign or date the documents prior to being in front of the Notary.
Do have your document notarized in the U.S.	Don't have your document notarized outside of the U.S. unless it is absolutely necessary.
Do be prepared to pay the Notary. In Massachusetts, a Notary is limited to the amount they can charge. You should not need to pay more than \$10.00 in most cases.	Don't ask a Notary to notarize a document that they have not witnessed being signed. It is against the terms of their commission. They can be prosecuted if caught doing it.
Do make an appointment with the Notary in advance.	Don't show up to the Notary's office without an appointment.
Do make certain that the words "free act and deed" are included on the acknowledgement.	Don't expect the Notary to be able to answer questions about the document. They are not required to.
Do appear in person.	Don't use a remote, online, or video Notary service. You must appear in person for the document to be recordable in Massachusetts.
Do make sure that original documents are available for real estate closings. Copies are not acceptable.	Don't sign documents electronically, only original documents with original signatures are accepted for real estate closings.
Do contact our office if you have ANY questions at all about getting your document notarized.	Don't get your document notarized in any other manner than what is listed here. It may not be acceptable for recording in Massachusetts.