

Signer personally present
There are no exceptions. See page 14, Documents and Signatures. In Arizona, a signer may NOT appear via video conference for a notarization.

Signer comprehends and proceeds willingly
The notary has the right to refuse the notarization if he or she feels this is not the case.

Signer Identification
Ways to identify the signer are listed on page 16.

Original Documents
An original document is one that is unsigned or that was physically signed in "wet ink" by the document signer. Acknowledgements (page 21) and jurats (page 22) must be identified and properly performed.

Incomplete Documents
An incomplete document is a document that has not been signed where a signature line is provided or where other obvious blanks appear in the document, or that lacks a notarial certificate [A.R.S. § 41-311(4)]. The notary cannot perform a notarial act on a document that is missing pages or that contains fields that should be filled in. If missing pages cannot be presented to the notary, or if the signer does not know how to fill in the blank fields in the document, the notarization cannot be completed. A document lacking a notarial certificate is considered an "incomplete document" and is grounds for revocation.

Venues
The venue is the state and county where a notarial act occurs. On most documents, the notarial language has a space for the state and the county. The venue will not necessarily be the county on the notary seal. Notaries are authorized to perform notarizations within all counties in the state.

The presence of the commissioning county on the notary's seal does not substitute affixing a venue to the notarial certificate. The seal and venue must always appear on a notarization.

Steps to a Proper Notarization

These steps are verified and completed on EACH and EVERY notarization:

VERIFICATION

- 1. The SIGNER must be PERSONALLY PRESENT. If yes, continue.
- 2. Does the SIGNER COMPREHEND the underlying transaction on the document? If yes, continue.
- 3. Is the SIGNER PROCEEDING WILLINGLY? If yes, continue.
- 4. Has the notary IDENTIFIED the SIGNER? If yes, continue.
- 5. Has an ORIGINAL DOCUMENT been presented for notarization? If yes, then identify the type of notarial act (*jurat, acknowledgment, copy certification or oath/affirmation*). (See "Original Documents" to the left)
- 6. Has a COMPLETE DOCUMENT been presented for notarization? If yes, continue. (See "Incomplete Documents" to the left)
- 7. Verify that the NOTARIAL LANGUAGE of the desired notarial act is on the document and obvious to the signer and notary. If yes, continue. If no act is clearly indicated, then the signer or other party involved with the document must choose the notarial act. A notary can explain the differences between the various acts, but cannot choose the act or the notary risks practicing law without a license. Refer to A.R.S. § 41-311, or pages 21-25 of this notary public reference manual for the wording and format of notarial acts. If the signer identifies the notarial act, continue.
- 8. RECORD THE TRANSACTION. Indicate the notarial transaction performed in a notary journal. See journal entries page 40.

NOTARIZATION

- 9. Complete the VENUE on the document (page 14).
- 10. Complete the notarization by filling in the areas of the notarial certificate. The notarial certificate must be in a language the notary understands, A.R.S. § 41-313(B)(4), and it must contain the venue, date and facts attested to by the notary for that particular notarization. A.R.S. § 41-311(7).
- 11. SIGN the document near the title of "Notary Public." The notary must use his or her OFFICIAL wet SIGNATURE, not a facsimile (stamp or other means) of a signature on the document. The official name on the notary seal and the notary's official signature must be used exactly as the commissioned name on file with the Secretary of State's office. The title "Notary Public" may be below or next to the notary's signature block. Above all, the notary who performs the notarization must be clearly identified by the title "Notary Public." See "Notary Public Signature" on page 7 or "Name Change" page 9.
- 12. AFFIX the "Notarial Seal." It is recommended that the notary seal be placed just below the notarial certificate and to the left, if possible. The notary should not stamp over signatures or other writing, if possible. However, if there is insufficient space on a document to affix the notary seal, it is better to stamp over pre-printed language than to stamp over signatures.