

The four types of Notarial Acts

1. **Acknowledgment** shall mean a notarial act in which an individual, at a single time and place:

- a. appears in person before the Notary Public and presents a document;
- b. is identified by the Notary Public through satisfactory evidence of identity; and
- c. indicates to the Notary Public that the signature on the document was voluntarily affixed by the individual for the purposes stated within the document and, if applicable, that the individual had authority to sign in a particular representative capacity.

A Notary shall take the **ACKNOWLEDGMENT** of the signature or mark of persons acknowledging for themselves or in any representative capacity by using substantially the following form:

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me, the undersigned notary public, _____ (name of document signer) personally appeared, proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were _____, to be the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document, and acknowledged to me that (he) (she) signed it voluntarily for its stated purpose. (as partner for _____, a partnership) (as _____ for _____, a corporation or other entity) (as attorney in fact for _____, the principal) (as _____ for _____, (a) (the) _____) as the voluntary act of the (partnership)(corporation or other entity)(principal) (). _____ (official signature and seal of notary public)

2. **Jurat** means a notarial act in which an individual, at a single time and place:

- a. appears in person before the Notary Public and presents a document;
- b. is identified by the Notary Public through satisfactory evidence of identity;

- c. signs the document in the presence of the Notary Public; and
- d. takes an oath or affirmation before the Notary vouching for the truthfulness or accuracy of the signed document.

A Notary shall use a **JURAT** certificate in substantially the following form in notarizing a signature or mark on an affidavit or other sworn or affirmed written declaration:

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me, the undersigned notary public, _____ (name of document signer) personally appeared, proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were _____, to be the person who signed the preceding or attached document in my presence and who swore or affirmed to me that the contents of the document are truthful and accurate to the best of (his) (her) knowledge and belief. _____ (official signature and seal of notary public)

3. **Signature witnessing** shall mean a notarial act in which an individual, at a single time and place:

- a. appears in person before the Notary Public and presents a document;
- b. is identified by the Notary Public through satisfactory evidence of identity; and
- c. signs the document in the presence of the Notary Public.

A Notary shall **WITNESS A SIGNATURE** in substantially the following form in notarizing a signature or mark to confirm that it was affixed in the notary’s presence without administration of an oath or affirmation:

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me, the undersigned notary public, _____ (name of document signer) personally appeared, proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were _____, to be the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document in my presence. _____ (official signature and seal of notary public)

4. **Copy certification** shall mean a notarial act in which a Notary Public:

- a. is presented with a document;
- b. copies or supervises the copying of the document using a photographic or electronic copying process;
- c. compares the document to the copy; and
- d. determines that the copy is accurate and complete.

A Notary shall **CERTIFY A COPY** by using substantially the following form:

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, I certify that the (preceding) (following) (attached) document is a true, exact, complete and unaltered copy made by me of _____ (description of the document), presented to me by _____. _____ (official signature and seal of notary public)


FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



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Information on

Apostilles and
Certificates of
Appointment





William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Public Records Division - Commissions Section

The Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office is the only office in Massachusetts that is authorized to issue an Apostille or Certification for a notarized document going to a foreign country. Massachusetts does not certify out-of-state documents. They must be certified by the state of origin.

What is an Apostille?

An Apostille is a document issued only by the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth that verifies the authenticity of the signature on the document; the capacity in which the person signing the document acted; and the identity of any stamp or seal affixed to the document. The Apostille is a specific form of authentication for countries that participate in the Hague Convention of 1961.

What is a Certification of Appointment?

A Certification of Appointment certifies that the individual who performed the notarization was appointed to a Notary Public commission at the time of notarization and is a qualified Notary Public in the State of Massachusetts.

What do I need to check before I present my documents for authentication?

- 1.That the Notary Public has signed his/her name exactly as he/she was commissioned.
- 2.That the notarial certificate has been completed.
- 3.That the Notary Public’s expiration date is on the document correctly, clearly and completely.
- 4.The Notary Public has affixed the notary seal on the document and the imprint is legible.

Where may I get a copy of my marriage certificate?

The city or town clerk where you applied and filed your marriage license will provide you with a certified copy.

Where may I get a copy of my divorce decree?

Contact the district court clerk in the district where your divorce decree was filed and request a certified copy.

Where may I get a copy of my birth certificate?

Contact the Office of Vital Records, 617-740-2600, or your local city or town clerk where the birth was recorded.

Apostille walk-in:

You may bring in your request to any of our three offices. The addresses are as follows:

Secretary of the Commonwealth
Commissions Section
One Ashburton Place, Room 1719
Boston, MA 02108
617-727-2836 • www.sec.state.ma.us/pre

Secretary of the Commonwealth
436 Dwight Street, Room 102
Springfield, MA 01103
413-784-1376 • www.sec.state.ma.us/wso

Secretary of the Commonwealth
218 South Main Street
Suite 206, Fall River, MA 02721
508-646-1374 • www.sec.state.ma.us/wso

Fees

The fee for an Apostille is \$6.00 per document. Checks or money orders should be made payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the correct amount. Cash is not recommended because the office cannot refund cash lost in transit.

The Secretary of the Commonwealth always recommends that you verify the information needed with the officials from the country of destination. In most cases we have found that the steps below are generally accepted. We however do not guarantee they will be accepted in every situation.

In-state schools steps to Certifying a Transcript or Diploma

- 1.Have your school registrar certify to the record in the presence of a Notary.
- 2.The Notary Public will then notarize the signature of the school registrar.

The notarized school transcript or diploma is then sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth for the Apostille or Certification.

Out-of-state school transcripts and diplomas, cannot be certified in Massachusetts. They must be certified by the state of origin.



Additional information

- Should you need to obtain a copy of your Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), contact the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Information Services, 617-660-4600, www.mass.gov/cjis.
- For Police Certificate of Good Standing contact your local Police Department.
- For individuals needing a photograph notarized, a Notary Public may not certify nor authenticate a photograph. However, a Notary Public may notarize a statement by the principal regarding the photograph. That notarization does not authenticate or certify the photograph, it only verifies that the individual making the statement signed the statement.
- Should you need to contact other State Authentication Authorities we suggest you visit the National Association of Secretaries of State web site at www.nass.org.
- To obtain birth certificates from other vital statistics offices in the United States visit www.vitalrec.com.
- For countries that are members of the Hague Legalization Convention visit the Hague Conference on Private International Law web site at www.hcch.net.