

What to Bring and What to Expect at Your Notary Appointment

A Quick Guide for Texas Consumers

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Texas Notary Public | Notary ID: 135524904 | Commission Expires: 07/22/2029 |
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Please Note

This guide is for general information only and is not legal advice. A notary public is not an attorney (unless separately licensed as one) and cannot advise you on which document you need, what a document means, or how to fill it out. If you have questions about the contents or legal effect of a document, please consult a licensed Texas attorney.

Before Your Appointment

- 1. Confirm that your document is complete.** Bring the full document, including every page. A notary should not notarize a document with missing pages or blank spaces that are meant to be filled in. If you are unsure what belongs in a blank, ask the person or agency that gave you the document, or an attorney, before your appointment.
 - 2. Do not sign yet (in most cases).** For many notarial acts, you must sign **in front of the notary**. Leave the signature line blank until your appointment unless the person who gave you the document has told you otherwise. If you have already signed, let your notary know in advance, because some notarial acts allow this and others do not.
 - 3. Check what the receiving party requires.** Banks, courts, title companies, government agencies, and employers sometimes have their own forms, wording, or requirements, such as witnesses or a specific type of notarization. The notary cannot tell you what they require, so it is worth confirming with them ahead of time.
 - 4. Know the name of the notarial act, if the document tells you.** Some documents state whether they need an acknowledgment, a jurat (a sworn statement), or something else. If your document does not say and you are unsure, check with whoever requested it. A notary cannot choose the type of notarization for you.
 - 5. Make sure everyone who needs to sign can attend.** Every person whose signature is being notarized must be present, with valid identification.
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What to Bring

<i>Item</i>	<i>Why it matters</i>
The complete, unsigned document	The notary must be able to see the whole document and, for most acts, watch you sign it.
Valid government-issued photo ID	The notary must verify who you are. The ID should be current, not expired, and show your photo and signature. Examples include a driver's license, state ID card, or passport. Ask your notary what they accept.
All signers	Each signer must appear personally and show acceptable ID.
Any required witnesses	If your document calls for witnesses, bring them. Witnesses may need their own ID. The notary cannot tell you whether your document requires witnesses.
Payment	Confirm the fee and accepted payment methods when you book.
Names and details you may need to recall	Be ready to confirm the names of the parties and the document title.

About identification: *If your ID is expired, damaged, or does not match the name on the document, tell your notary before the appointment. Texas law limits what a notary may accept, and in some cases the appointment cannot go forward without proper identification.*

What Happens at the Appointment

1. **Greeting and review.** The notary confirms what document is being notarized and checks that it appears complete.
2. **Identity check.** The notary examines your ID and compares it to you and to the name on the document.
3. **Willingness and awareness.** The notary will make sure you are signing on your own, willingly and without pressure. If a signer seems confused, rushed, or coerced, the notary may decline to proceed.
4. **The notarial act.** Depending on your document, you may be asked to:
 - o **Acknowledge** that you signed the document willingly, or
 - o **Swear or affirm** (a jurat) that the statements in the document are true, and sign in front of the notary.
5. **Signing.** You sign where indicated, in the notary's presence if required.

6. **Notarial certificate, signature, and seal.** The notary completes the notarial certificate, signs it, and adds their official seal.
 7. **Journal entry.** Texas notaries are required to keep a journal of notarial acts. You may be asked to sign it and provide identification details.
 8. **Done.** You receive your notarized document. The notary does not keep a copy of your document.
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Fees and Travel

- Texas law sets maximum fees for certain notarial acts. Notaries may not charge more than the law allows for those acts.
 - **Mobile or travel fees** are separate from the notarial fee and should be discussed and agreed upon **before** the appointment.
 - Fees for after-hours, rush, or multi-signer appointments, where permitted, should also be confirmed in advance.
 - Please ask about fees when you book so there are no surprises.
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Reasons a Notary May Have to Decline

A notary may be unable to proceed, even when the request is made in good faith, if:

- The signer cannot be properly identified
- The ID is expired, unreadable, or not acceptable
- The document is incomplete or has blank spaces that should be filled in
- The signer does not appear to understand what they are signing or seems pressured
- The notary has a personal interest in the document or transaction
- Asking the notary for legal advice, to choose a document or notarization for you, or to draft a legal document, is outside the notary's role
- A required person is not present
- The notary is being asked to certify a copy of a document they are not permitted to certify

If your appointment cannot go forward, the notary can usually tell you why in general terms, but cannot advise you on how to fix the document. Please contact the receiving party or a licensed attorney.

Quick Checklist

- ☐ Document is complete and unsigned (unless instructed otherwise)
- ☐ Valid, unexpired government-issued photo ID for every signer
- ☐ All signers will be present
- ☐ Witnesses arranged, if the document requires them

- ☐ Receiving party's requirements confirmed
- ☐ Fees and travel charges confirmed
- ☐ Payment ready

Helpful Resources

Please verify requirements against current official sources, since laws and rules change.

- **Texas Secretary of State, Notary Public Unit:** sos.state.tx.us (or sos.texas.gov), including the *Texas Notary Public Handbook*
- **Texas Government Code, Chapter 406** (Notaries Public and Commissioners of Deeds)
- **Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code, Chapter 121** (Acknowledgments and Proofs of Written Instruments)
- **State Bar of Texas:** texasbar.com, including attorney referral resources
- **Texas Law Help:** texaslawhelp.org, free legal information for Texans

Disclaimer and Use Notice

This guide provides general information about notary appointments and does not constitute legal advice. It does not create an attorney-client relationship. Requirements may vary by document and receiving agency, and the author makes no warranty about accuracy, completeness, or timeliness. Use is at your own risk.

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