

How to Prepare for Your Notary Appointment

A simple checklist for a smooth, efficient signing

A little preparation can prevent delays or an incomplete appointment. Use this checklist before the notary arrives, especially when several people, witnesses, or time-sensitive documents are involved.

Before the appointment

- ✓ **Confirm what kind of notarization is required**
Ask the document preparer or receiving organization whether the document requires an acknowledgment, verification on oath or affirmation, or another notarial act. The notary cannot choose for you.
- ✓ **Review the entire document**
Fill in information that applies to you and resolve unanswered questions with the document preparer. A notary generally cannot proceed with an incomplete document containing unexplained blanks.
- ✓ **Ask whether you should wait to sign**
A verification on oath or affirmation requires signing in the notary's presence. An acknowledgment may involve a signature made earlier, but the receiving party may have its own instructions.
- ✓ **Gather acceptable identification**
Each signer should have current, satisfactory identification. Contact the notary before the appointment if an ID is expired, damaged, missing, or shows a different name.
- ✓ **Confirm every required signer and witness**
All signers must personally appear. If witnesses are required, confirm how many are needed, who may serve, and whether they need identification.
- ✓ **Check names and document instructions**
Make sure names are spelled consistently across the document and identification. Ask the document preparer how any difference should be handled.

At the appointment



Be ready to communicate directly

The signer must be able to communicate with the notary, indicate willingness, and show awareness of the general nature of the transaction.



Allow time for the required formalities

The notary will examine identification, complete the appropriate ceremony, witness or receive the signature as required, complete the certificate, and record the act in the notarial journal.



Keep the document assembled

Bring every page, attachment, and instruction sheet. The notary should be able to review the document for completeness even when only one signature page is notarized.

Special situations

Hospital or care-community appointments

Schedule for a time when the signer is most alert and available. Confirm facility access, identification, witnesses, and any visitor requirements before the appointment.

Documents in another language

Tell the notary in advance. The signer and notary must be able to communicate directly, and the notarial certificate must meet applicable requirements.

A signer who cannot sign conventionally

Contact the notary before the appointment. State law may allow an alternative procedure, but it must be planned and completed correctly.

Questions before your appointment?

Call or text (757) 634-1009 so we can identify potential issues before travel begins.

Educational information only. A notary public cannot select or prepare legal documents or provide legal advice. For questions about the document or the required notarial act, contact the document's preparer, receiving agency, or a qualified attorney.