

2 STEPS OF NOTARIZATION

The process of notarization involves two critical steps that a notary public should always follow: screen the signer and complete the notarial certificate. It is also encouraged to make a journal entry.

STEP 1. Screen the Signer

Not all notarizations require the document to be signed in front of the notary public, (e.g. acknowledgment, copy certification) but you should always screen the signer.

Personal Appearance - Personal appearance by the individual requesting notarization is required at the time of notarization in **ALL** instances.

Determine Willingness - Make sure the signer is not being forced to sign the document. If you suspect coercion, it is best to refuse to notarize.

Determine Awareness - Do not notarize the document if you have a reasonable belief that the person signing the document is not aware of the significance of the transaction.

Determine Identity - You must have satisfactory evidence that a person is the individual whose true signature is on the document. Identity may be proven through: personal knowledge, identification documents (i.e. driver's license), or the sworn word of a credible identifying witness.

STEP 2. Complete Certificate of a Notarial Act

When notarizing a document, you must complete and sign a certificate of a notarial act. It indicates the procedure followed in performing the notarization. The certificate includes:

1. a place at the top to fill in the jurisdiction ("State of ____" and "County of ____"). This is the location where your "feet are planted" at the time the document is notarized.
2. a place to include the title "Notary Public" under your signature; not your title at work.

See Iowa Code sections 9B.15 and 9B.16 for more information on certificates

Make a Journal Entry

Although Iowa law does not require notaries public to keep a journal, it is strongly recommended. A journal serves as a permanent record of notarizations you perform. When making journal entries:

1. Complete the entry in ink; do not use a pencil.
2. Enter the data before the notarial certificate is complete to prevent the signer from leaving before all data is recorded.
3. Record all notarizations - even the requests for notarization that you have refused.

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	Date/Time of Notarization	Type of Notarization	Document Date	Type of Document Notarized	Name and Address of Signer	Signer Identification	Additional Information	Signature of Signer	
1									1
2									2
3									3
4									4

1. Date and time of day of the notarization
2. Type of notarization (i.e. jurat, acknowledgment).
3. Date of the document.
4. Type of document being notarized.
5. Name and address of signer.
6. Description of how signer was identified - include ID issuing agency, ID# and issuance/expiration date
7. Any additional pertinent information.
8. Signature of document signer .