

Common Types of Notarizations

As notaries, we are not able to offer legal advice. If it is unclear to us as to which notarial act you want, we will ask you which type you need. We cannot decide for you, and if after reviewing the following common types of notarizations, you are still unsure, it is best to contact the document's preparer and find out.

What to look for

Don't be fooled by the document's title. It is the specific notary wording that determines the actual notarial power that should be used to complete the notarization properly. We, as notaries, cannot notarize unless the proper notary wording is on the document. Proper notary wording includes the **venue** and the **notary statement**. If the proper notary wording is not on the document, but you know which type of notarial act you want, we can either add the notary wording directly to the document or attach a separate sheet of paper with the notary wording on it, only with your permission.

Venue

The **venue** is the geographic location where the notarial act is performed, i.e., the state (Commonwealth) and County where you are located in for the notarization.

Example: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 County of Montgomery

Notary Statement

The **notary statement** determines the notarial act to be completed. The two most common notarial acts are *affidavits* and *acknowledgements*.

Affidavit

An affidavit is a voluntary, written, sworn statement signed in our presence. You, the affiant, are responsible for the truth and accuracy of the statement you make in the affidavit.

The notary statement of an affidavit contains the words ***sworn to and subscribed, or sworn by and subscribed, before me this day...*** This statement is referred to as a jurat.

Example: Subscribed and sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 20__.

Acknowledgement

An acknowledgement is a method of authenticating a signature on a document. It is a declaration made in our presence by the person who signed, or is signing, the document. The individual that appears before us will declare that he or she did in fact sign the document and knew what he or she was doing at the time the document was signed.

The notary statement of an acknowledgement contains these words or words very similar to the following:

Example: On this, the __ day of _____, 20__, before me _____, the undersigned officer, personally appeared _____, known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person__ whose name__ is/are subscribed to the within instrument, and acknowledged that _he_ executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness thereof, I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

Certified Copies

A certificate is a statement by us, the notary that certifies the accuracy of a copy of an original.

Please note: we cannot make certified copies of public documents, such as birth certificates, death certificates, marriage licenses, and naturalization certificates.

The first thing we will do is inspect the original to make sure, to the best of our ability, that the document has not been tampered with or altered.

The next thing we will do is make the photocopy and compare it to the original. It is much faster and easier to have the copies made by us, since after we inspect the original to see that it has not been tampered with or altered, the comparison is more straightforward, because we know that the document has not been altered prior to making the copy. If you make the copy and bring it to us for notarization, we must compare each page line-by-line to the original to ensure the copy is true and accurate, which can take a lot of time.

The next thing we will do is add the venue and the appropriate certificate wording, either directly to the copy or via an attachment, and add our signature and seal.

Example: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 County of Montgomery

I, _____, a notary public, certify that this (or the attached copy) of the _____, dated _____, is an accurate, correct and complete copy of the original document presented to me by _____, on _____.