

Prepare for a Successful Signing

Thank you for calling on me to assist as your notary public. Please review these important considerations for your signing appointment.

The Notary's Role

It is the notary's job to ensure that these five conditions are met:

- The person who is signing is doing so voluntarily;
- The signer has a valid form of identification, their ID is current, and it belongs to them;
- The signer understands the purpose of their documents;
- The signer is able to communicate their wishes;
- And the notary portion of the document is compliant with Virginia law.

Acceptable Forms of Identification

The individual doing the signing must have a current photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport. Please note that notaries may not accept a screenshot of an ID or the Virginia mID app as identification. As for expired ID, Virginia law **does** allow the notary to accept an expired ID **only** if the signer resides in an assisted living facility or nursing home **and** their ID has expired within the last five years.

Alertness, Awareness, and Coherence

In order for the notary to notarize a signature, the signer, or principal, has to meet these conditions:

- They must be coherent at the time of the appointment;
- They must be alert, show awareness of their situation, and be willing to sign;
- They must be able to communicate directly with the notary in a common language. Virginia notaries are not permitted to use interpreters, and family members may not speak on the signer's behalf. If the signer does not speak English, I'd be happy to assist in locating a notary public who speaks their language.

Conditions of the Signing Environment

It always helps to provide a table with a clean surface and chairs for the comfort of the signers and their witnesses, especially if they are elderly. If you have estate planning documents, you may need space for papers to be organized.

The Important Role of the Witness

Please review your documents in advance to see whether witnesses are required to sign. If you have a last will and testament, note the following rules:

- Witnesses must be 18 or over and show competency;
- Like the principal signer, witnesses must provide their valid photo ID;
- Witnesses must be disinterested parties; they cannot be named in or benefit from the documents.

If your signing appointment is to be held at a healthcare facility or senior living facility and you're asking staff members to act as witnesses, please arrange that in advance. I have found that many few facilities do not permit their staff members to witness signings.

Notes on Documents and the Signing Process

- You'll need to provide the entire document at the signing table, not just the signature page.
- The handling of a lengthy document can get messy. It's helpful if the pages are numbered. For example: Page 1 of 10, Page 2 of 10, etc. And the receiving party can see that all pages are included when submitted.
- All blanks must be filled in--either beforehand or during the appointment.
- Please **do not sign or initial** until the notary is present.
- It is the notary's job to check that the notarial block below each signature line has all the essential elements required by Virginia law.
- The notarial portion (text, signature, and seal) should not be split across two pages; it should fit on one page.
- If the notarial portion is not included in your document, or if the text of the notarial portion doesn't comply with Virginia law, the notary may attach a loose certificate that is compliant with Virginia law.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. I look forward to assisting you.

June Siegel-Hill

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Emerald Mobile Notary Service

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