

Identifying Your Signer

When reviewing a signer's ID, you are looking for two things: the photo on the ID looks like the person standing before you and the signature on the ID reasonably matches the signature on the document.

RI Notaries Public are required to screen signers to confirm their identity, comprehension, and intent. To positively identify your signer, they must be physically in your presence and bring with them an original ID or qualifying credible witness.



ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION

- Driver's license or identification card issued by the RI Division of Motor Vehicles or by another state or territory of the United States, Canada, or Mexico;
- U.S. passport or a passport issued by a foreign government; or
- Identification card issued by any branch of the U.S. military.

All identification must be either current or expired not more than three years.

Copies of identification are not acceptable.

USING A CREDIBLE WITNESS

If your signer does not have an ID that meets the criteria above, they may use a credible witness. A credible witness must be someone who:

- Is personally known to the signer;
- Is physically in the room with the signer and notary;
- Is unaffected by the document the signer wishes to have notarized; and
- Is willing to be placed under oath to swear that the signer is who they claim to be.

You will identify the qualifying credible witness using one of the acceptable forms of identification listed above and place them under oath, asking them to swear to the signer's identity. Once the oath is administered, you may proceed with the notarial act as usual.

Be sure to capture both the signer's and the credible witness's signatures and detail how you identified them in your notary journal.

Personal Knowledge

Being personally known DOES NOT mean you have known someone for an extensive amount of time. It means that, at some point in your relationship with the signer, you have successfully identified them using one of the types of identification listed above.