

Identifying the 5 Main Notarial Acts

The signer must always personally appear on the date and in the place you indicate on the notarial certificate.

During ALL notarial acts, the notary must screen the signer for identity, comprehension, and intent. If a document does not indicate which notarial act to perform, the signer must choose. As a notary you must remain impartial and cannot influence a signer's decision. Below are steps and tips to help you successfully perform the 5 main notarial acts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The signer acknowledges that they have signed the document for its intended purpose.

- 1) Review the document.
- 2) Identify the signer.
- 3) Have the signer verbally acknowledge their signature is/was made willingly and competently.
- 4) Verify the signer's signature.
- 5) Complete the notarial certificate and journal entry.

Words to look for in the notarial certificate:

Acknowledge or Declare

TIP: This is the only act for which a document can come pre-signed.

JURAT

The signer swears under oath that everything in the document is true.

- 1) Review the document.
- 2) Identify the signer.
- 3) Have the signer verbally acknowledge their signature is being made willingly and competently.
- 4) Watch the signer sign the document and verify their signature.
- 5) Administer oath or affirmation aloud.
- 6) Complete the notarial certificate and journal entry.

Words to look for in the notarial certificate:

Subscribed and sworn to

TIP: A specific oath may be written on the document.

COPY CERTIFICATION

The notary certifies the copy they made is a true and accurate copy.

- 1) Verify the document is one that a RI notary may lawfully copy and certify.
- 2) Personally photocopy or supervise the copying of the document.
- 3) Compare the original document to the copy to verify it is accurate and complete.
- 4) Complete the notarial certificate and journal entry.

Words to look for in the notarial certificate:

True, exact, complete and unaltered copy

TIP: The document holder and the document owner do not have to be the same person. The document owner does not need to be present.

SIGNATURE WITNESSING

The signer signs the document in the presence of the notary.

- 1) Review the document.
- 2) Identify the signer.
- 3) Have the signer verbally acknowledge their signature is being made willingly and competently.
- 4) Watch the signer sign the document and verify their signature.
- 5) Complete the notarial certificate and journal entry.

Words to look for in the notarial certificate:

Signed on the attached document in my presence

TIP: When a signer requests a signature witnessing, they are simply establishing that they appeared before a notary public on a certain date.

OATH/AFFIRMATION

The oath taker verbally promises to tell the truth.

- 1) Identify the oath taker.
- 2) Administer oath or affirmation aloud.
- 3) Complete the journal entry.

Words for the Oath or Affirmation:

"Do you swear to tell the truth, whole truth, and nothing but the truth [so help you God] or [on your personal honor]?"

TIP: There is no notarial certificate for this act.