

Avoid Common Notary Certificate Mistakes

By Kelle Clarke on August 05, 2015 in [Best Practices](#)

Updated 3-18-19. Minor errors on a Notary certificate can lead to major headaches down the road — including rejection of the documents by the county clerk's office or other receiving agency. Factor in potential late fees, penalties, and other costly consequences, and you could be dealing with a very angry, and possibly litigious, client.

The good news is that many of the most common errors made on Notary certificates are simple and easily avoided. The key is recognizing — and fixing — the mistake before it becomes a problem.

Mistake #1: Not reading the certificate wording carefully

[Read all notarial certificates](#) carefully to make sure you understand what you are being asked to do, and then enter the information accurately. If you don't, you won't know how to complete the certificate. One common mistake occurs when a Notary writes his/her own name in a blank that is meant for the signer's name.

Mistake #2: Not entering the correct venue

The venue space on a certificate refers to where the notarization took place. Always make sure this space is filled in accurately. If the certificate comes to you pre-printed with the wrong location, cross it out and write in the correct location where the notarization occurred.

Mistake #3: Not printing or signing your name as it appears on your Notary commission

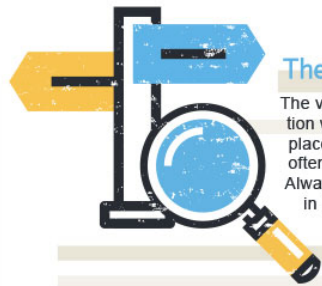
The name you write on a Notary certificate must exactly match the name on your official Notary commission. Also, you must sign each Notary certificate with the signature that you filed with your commissioning official. Don't leave out or add an initial to your signature if it doesn't match your commission name on file. **Florida**, for example, prohibits Notaries from using any name or initials other than the name appearing on the Notary's commission when signing certificates. **Texas** also specifies that Notaries must sign certificates with the name listed on the Notary commission.

Mistake #4: Improperly dating a Notary certificate

Mistakenly entering the wrong date or post-dating a certificate is a serious error. Check the calendar and make sure the date is the day you perform the notarization.



Minor errors on a notarial certificate can cause major headaches. But they are easily avoided if you recognize them before they become a problem. Here are some of the most common errors:

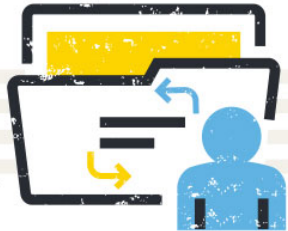


The wrong venue

The venue always refers to the location where the notarization took place. Pre-printed certificate wording often includes the wrong location. Always make sure this space is filled in accurately.

The wrong name

Your name and signature on the notarial certificate must exactly match the name on your official Notary commission. Shortcuts and nicknames are not allowed.



The wrong date

Mistakenly entering the wrong date or post-dating a certificate is a serious error. Make sure the date on the certificate reflects the day you perform the notarization.

The wrong seal location

Don't place your seal impression over other wording on the document. Make sure you place it near your signature where there is enough space.



Mistake #5: Improper placement of your Notary seal or stamp

Documents containing upside down, blurred, or [partial Notary seal or stamp impressions](#) are likely to get rejected.

Mistake #6: Stamping over wording or signatures

In this case, the seal or stamp impression covers other parts of the document, including the notarial wording or signature, making them illegible.

Mistake #7: Crossing out the commission expiration date on the stamp and handwriting in a new commission date

Sometimes Notaries think they can use a seal with an expired Notary commission date. If your state requires your seal to include the expiration date, you must obtain a seal with your current commission expiration date. Even if not required by law, correcting a commission expiration date in a seal impression could cause the document to be rejected. Either way, it's time to [order a new stamp](#).



NATIONAL NOTARY ASSOCIATION

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Bonus Mistake: Not including your title

California Notaries must include their title in the California acknowledgment form after printing their commission name: “Notary Name, Notary Public.” This problem isn’t unique to California. Notaries in other states may encounter widely circulated Notary certificates that may require them to print their title after their name.

Tips For Avoiding Common Errors On Notary Certificates

- **Know Your State Requirements:** Certificate wording varies from state to state. Stay current with your state-required certificate wording and other Notary laws.
- **Don’t Rush:** Take the time to read the certificate to make sure you know how to complete it. Double-check each entry before you complete the notarization, to catch any issues or errors.
- **Be Prepared:** Make sure your Notary tools are current, especially your official seal.

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