

Q When notarizing a signature, what elements must be included in my notarial certificate?

A Sample notarial certificates are found in section 117.05(13), Florida Statutes. The essential elements are:

- the venue—where the notarization takes place (State of Florida, County of ____);
- the type of notarial act performed—whether you administered an oath to the document signer or took his or her acknowledgment (look for the key words “sworn to” or “acknowledged”);
- that the document signer personally appeared before the notary at the time of the notarization (usually indicated by the words “before me”);
- the date of the notarization;
- the name of the person(s) whose signature is being notarized;
- the type of identification relied upon in identifying the signer, either based on personal knowledge or an acceptable form of identification;
- the notary’s signature (exactly as commissioned);
- the notary’s name printed, typed, or stamped below the signature; and
- the notary’s official seal (The seal must contain the words “Notary Public-State of Florida” and the notary’s name, expiration date, and commission number, and must be affixed in black ink.)

If the prepared notarial certificate does not have each of these elements, you should add the appropriate language to the certificate to make it fully comply with the statutory requirements. Please review the form certificates on pages 30-31.

Q As a bilingual notary public, may I certify the accuracy of a translation of a document from English to Spanish, or vice versa?

A Certifying a translation is not an authorized duty of a Florida notary public. However, you may notarize the signature of the translator on an affidavit where the translator certifies and swears to the accuracy of his or her translation. If you are the translator for a particular document, you would be translating the document, not in your capacity as a notary public, but as a person who is fluent in both languages required for the translation. You should make an affidavit and have your signature notarized by another notary. The following sample affidavit should be sufficient to certify the accuracy of a translation.

STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF _____
Before me this day personally appeared _____ (name of translator) who, being duly sworn, deposes and says:
I am fluent in both _____ (language) and _____ (language).
I certify that I have accurately translated the attached document, (name or description of document), from _____ (language) into (language).
<i>Signature of Translator</i> (Address) _____
Sworn to and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, 20____, by _____ (name of translator).
Personally known _____ or Produced identification _____ Type of identification _____
(SEAL)
<i>Notary Public</i> (TYPE, PRINT, OR STAMP NAME OF NOTARY PUBLIC)