

Department of the Secretary of State
Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions
Division of Corporations, UCC and Commissions
101 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0101



Official Notarial Signature

A new law affecting notaries public became effective on September 12, 2009. This new law requires all Maine notaries public to maintain an official signature to be used when signing all notarial acts. A notary public must sign by hand producing the notary public's official signature in the same form as it appears on the notary public's most recent oath of office. If the official signature of the notary public changes during the commission term, the notary public must immediately provide the Secretary of State with a new sample of the notary public's official signature. This change in law was necessary to provide and maintain a consistent signature for notaries public for various reasons. The Secretary of State's office is charged with verifying notarial acts for a variety of situations and maintaining a verifiable and official notarial signature on our records assists our office with this important validation process. In the past, the Secretary of State's office has been unable to identify a notary public because the signature was not legible and a commission expiration date had not been provided.

This notice is just making you aware of the change in law and to keep notaries public current on changes that affect their commission responsibilities. The Secretary of State encourages notaries public to avoid signing notarial acts in a careless manner and to sign notarial acts in a consistent manner.

It is important that our office is able to verify your signature when we need to do certifications of your acts. To do this, we need to verify your signature by comparing it with the signature from the most recent oath of office on file with our office. If we do not believe that the signatures are substantially the same, we cannot certify your act. Additionally, we would need to be able to verify your signature if we received any complaints regarding signature fraud in connection with your commission.

If there has been no change to your signature since your last oath of office certificate was signed, then no action is necessary at this time. However, if your signature has changed since your last oath of office certificate was signed, you must submit a change in your official notarial signature. This form, "Notice of Change in Official Notarial Signature," can be found on our website at:

www.maine.gov/sos/cec/notary/notaries.html.

You may submit this notice by emailing a scanned copy of it to cec.notaries@maine.gov, by faxing it to (207) 287-5874 or by mailing it to the Bureau of Corporations, Elections & Commissions, Division of Corporations, UCC and Commissions, 101 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0101.

If you have any questions regarding this law change, please contact our office at (207) 624-7752 or by to CEC.Notaries@Maine.gov.