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NOTARY PUBLIC PREPARATION GUIDE

A simple, practical checklist for a smooth notarization appointment in South Carolina.

BE READY BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your appointment checklist

- ■ Bring a current, acceptable government-issued photo ID.
- ■ Bring the entire document, with all required pages completed except for signatures that must be made in front of the notary.
- ■ Make sure every person whose signature needs notarization can attend in person.
- ■ Ask the document recipient whether additional witnesses are required, and arrange them in advance.
- ■ Confirm the type of notarization and any special instructions with the document preparer or recipient.
- ■ Confirm the appointment location, number of signatures, and total charges in advance.

Important reminder

A South Carolina notary must verify identity and personal appearance. The notary cannot notarize a blank or incomplete document or one lacking notarial certificate wording. Do not assume the notary can choose the legal wording for you.

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1 Identification: what to bring

South Carolina generally accepts a current federal or state government-issued identification document bearing a photograph, signature, and physical description. A current passport is acceptable without a physical description. The notary may also rely on personal knowledge or qualifying credible-witness identification as permitted by law.

Examples to ask about before your visit: current driver's license, state identification card, or passport. If your ID is expired, missing, or does not meet these requirements, contact us before scheduling.

2 Signing and document readiness

- Bring the full document, not just the signature page.
- Do not leave required information blank.
- Do not sign in advance unless the notary confirms the particular notarial act permits it. For South Carolina acknowledgments, signing occurs in the notary's physical presence.
- Make sure the document contains the required notarial certificate wording.
- Bring any document-specific instructions from the receiving agency.

3 Witnesses are not always the notary

Some documents require additional witnesses under separate legal rules. A notarial act alone does not automatically satisfy a document's witness requirements. Check with the document preparer, receiving organization, or attorney about the number and qualifications of witnesses before your appointment.

4 What happens at the appointment

- The notary reviews identification and confirms the signer is physically present.
- The notary checks the document and required notarial wording.
- The signer completes the applicable signing, acknowledgment, or oath/affirmation.
- The notary completes the notarial certificate.

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Frequently asked questions

Can someone appear on my behalf?

Generally no. The individual whose signature is notarized must personally appear before the notary; special statutory procedures apply to certain signers physically unable to sign.

Can you notarize a document from another state?

Often yes, if the notarization is performed physically within South Carolina and the requested act complies with applicable requirements.

Can a notary tell me which document or certificate to use?

A nonattorney notary cannot provide legal advice or select legal documents for you.

Can you notarize a blank form?

No. South Carolina prohibits notarizing signatures on blank or incomplete documents.

Understanding fees in South Carolina

South Carolina law caps common notarial acts at **$5 per signature** for acknowledgments, jurats, and signature witnessing; $5 per person for an oath or affirmation without a signature; and $5 per certificate for verification of fact. A separate travel fee may be charged only when agreed upon before travel and explained as separate from the statutory notarial fee and not mandated by law.

Before confirming: request an itemized quote based on the number of notarial acts and the travel distance.

Official references

South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 26, Chapter 1: scstatehouse.gov/code/t26c001.php
South Carolina Secretary of State Notaries: sos.sc.gov/services-and-filings/notaries

PREPARED CLIENTS. SMOOTHER APPOINTMENTS.

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Educational information only; not legal advice. Requirements vary by document and receiving agency. Confirm current rules and document instructions before signing. Updated October 2026.