



Things to know about apostilles and apostille agents

Notaries: if you are considering adding apostille agent services to your business, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Documents that require an apostille/authentication must be notarized prior to submitting an apostille/authentication request. If you are certifying a copy, the customer must appear in front of you for the notarization. You may not complete the notarization without the customer present!
- Keep your fees reasonable! They may be technically unlimited by law because they are not yet explicitly addressed in statute, but you do not want to give an impression of gouging customers who are in a difficult position.
- Be aware that there is at least one instance out there of a notary manufacturing apostille certificates.
- Make sure your customers know that the Secretary of State must have the original document or certified copy in order to attach an apostille. If you are working with a printout of an electronic document, there is a special certificate to be attached to the printout in addition to the certificate for the notarization. A sample of the certificate for special circumstances is available on page 61 of the Notary Public Guide.

Customers: if you are going to need an apostille in the foreseeable future, here are some things to consider:

- If you are working with an apostille agent who is going to mail your completed document and apostille, you may request a copy of the document and apostille certificate and retain it for your records in case there is a question about the legitimacy of the transaction or the apostille.
 - You may contact the Secretary of State at corporationdivision.sos@sos.oregon.gov to verify that the apostille certificate is legitimate.
- Fees for apostille agent services can vary considerably. You may wish to do some comparison shopping before making a decision about which agent to use. Using an apostille agent is not a requirement and you can contact our office for assistance in understanding what is required and how to get the request processed.
- Be aware that vital documents cannot be apostilled outside their home state. They must go to the competent entity for the state in which the vital record was created.