



3 Things Notaries Should Avoid During COVID-19

By David Thun on May 21, 2020

During COVID-19, Notaries need to take additional precautions to protect their health and the health of their signers. Here are 3 things Notaries should avoid when notarizing during the current health crisis:

1. Don't Perform In-Person Notarizations If You Or Your Signer Are Feeling Sick

COVID-19 has hit our economy hard, and many businesses are struggling right now — especially Notaries. But it's important you protect yourself and your customers by following appropriate [health safety precautions](#). If you feel sick, don't risk spreading illness to other people by meeting face-to-face with signers. If you learn that a signer is not feeling well, or you see warning signs of illness, it's OK to decline the assignment if you believe the environment would put your health at risk.



If you have reason to believe you have been exposed to the coronavirus, even if you do not have symptoms, you should cancel any appointments you have scheduled until the period of self-isolation or quarantine is over. If you are performing a loan signing and need to stop an assignment due to health concerns, be sure to immediately notify the company or service that gave you the assignment.

To help Notaries and document signers, many states have issued [emergency notarization rules](#) temporarily allowing Notaries and signers to communicate and notarize documents remotely for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.

2. Don't Violate Local Health Safety Orders When Performing Notarizations

To ensure everyone's health and well-being, it's important that Notaries follow all local health safety orders when performing notarizations. For example, don't meet a signer for a notarization at a local restaurant or coffee shop if local health officials prohibit customers from gathering at these places. Notaries should keep informed about any guidelines from city, state and local health officials regarding COVID-19, and only perform notarizations that comply with official health instructions.

3. Don't Violate Basic Notarization Rules During COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented situation that has left many Notaries and signers struggling with unexpected challenges. However, remember that even during a crisis such as COVID-19, Notaries cannot [violate proper procedures](#) when identifying signers and performing notarizations, even if a signer claims extenuating circumstances due to the coronavirus.

If you are asked to perform an illegal act such as ignoring identification requirements for a signer, backdating a document or other improper notarial acts, you must still refuse — the COVID-19 emergency is not an acceptable excuse to break the law.

If your state permits you to perform remote notarizations, be sure to follow all your state's rules for doing so. The one exception to this rule is if your state has a temporary authorization to perform videoconference notarizations and you are performing the notarial act in conformance with the temporary authorization.

David Thun is an Associate Editor at the National Notary Association.

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