



Apostille or Authentication Certificates **FACT SHEET**



Apostille ([pronounced “ah-po-steel”](#)) is a French word meaning certification.

An official certificate from a government that makes a document from one country acceptable in another. Apostilles and authentication certificates validate the seal and signature of a notary on a document so that it can be accepted in a foreign country.

Apostilles are used when public documents are being transferred between countries that are a party to the [Hague Apostille Convention of 1961](#). This international treaty streamlined the cumbersome, traditional procedure for authenticating documents.

An apostille is issued by your Secretary of State or **Office of the Lieutenant Governor**. The single apostille is the only certification needed. Once prepared and verified, the apostille is attached and sent along with the notarized documents. **Notaries cannot issue apostilles**. This all happens after the notarization and requires no action on the part of the notary.

[Authentication Certificates](#) are used for destination nations that are **not** part of the Hague Convention. The United States Virgin Islands cannot apostille or issue notarial certification for any document(s) that is/are issued by anyone other than a Virgin Islands notary or elected or appointed official.

Certified true copies of **Spanish** and **French** documents must be translated and certified by a translator into English. All documents must also be notarized by a U.S. Virgin Islands notary public.

The following documents SHOULD NOT be notarized by a notary public

- A birth certificate, death certificate and marriage certificate bearing the signature of the state registrar or the Office of Vital Records & Statistics Division.
- Documents certified by a Clerk of the Court such as a marriage license or a divorce document bearing the stamp and seal of the clerk.
- University and school transcripts that have the signature of the school registrar or issuing official notarized at the time of issuance. **All transcripts must be submitted without a broken seal.**
- Vehicle Titles that are certified by the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Original certified copies of documents filed with the Division of Corporations or original Certificates of Status bearing the signature of the Lieutenant Governor.