

# THE NOTARY NEWS

UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS NOTARIES PUBLIC DIVISION

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## LET'S TALK NOTARY



### Welcome to Let's Talk Notary

Notaries often encounter common errors such as missing or incorrect signatures, failure to properly identify signers, and incomplete or improperly completed documents. These errors can result in rejected documents, delays, or potential legal complications.

To avoid these issues, notaries should carefully follow United States Virgin Islands notary laws and procedures, verify each signer's identity using acceptable and current forms of identification, and ensure all required document fields are completed before performing the notarial act. Notaries should also maintain accurate journal records and confirm that signers are acting willingly and understand the document they are signing.

Continuing education, reviewing updates to notary laws, and using a reliable notarization checklist can further help reduce errors. By exercising diligence and paying close attention to detail, notaries can help ensure that their services remain trustworthy, professional, and legally compliant.

### Preventing Common Notary Mistakes

Prior to performing any notarization, verify that all required parties have signed the document. Missing signatures can delay transactions and may affect the validity of the document. Proper identification of the signer is equally important. Always examine the identification presented and do not accept expired, altered, or illegible forms of identification. Careful preparation and attention to detail can help prevent errors and protect the integrity of the notarization process.

Maintaining accurate notarial journal entries is essential to proper notarial practice. Record each notarial act promptly, completely, and legibly, ensuring that all required information is entered in accordance with 3 V.I.C. §829. Accurate journal records help protect both the notary and the public by providing a reliable record of notarizations performed.

Notaries must also remain alert to signs of coercion or undue influence. Every signer must appear willing and act voluntarily. If a signer appears to be under pressure, does not understand the transaction, or is unwilling to proceed, the notary should refuse the notarization until the concerns have been resolved.

Selecting the correct notarial certificate and completing all required fields, including the date and venue, is essential to the validity of a notarial act. Confirm that the certificate contains all required information and is free of errors before proceeding. If anything appears irregular or raises concerns, do not hesitate to refuse the notarization until the issue has been resolved.

If a preprinted notarial certificate contains a venue that does not match the location where the notarial act is performed, draw a single line through the incorrect venue, enter the correct location, and initial the correction. Taking these steps helps ensure the certificate accurately reflects the place of notarization and supports the integrity of the notarial act.

Every notarial act must be supported by a properly completed notarial certificate. If the document does not contain a notarial certificate, the notary cannot determine which notarial act is being requested. ***Simply signing and affixing a seal or stamp to a document is not a substitute for a compliant notarial certificate.***

Ensure that your official notary seal and stamp are applied as required by law. Verify that the seal impression is clear, legible, and reproducible in photocopies or electronic images, and that it does not obscure any written or printed text. Taking these precautions helps maintain the integrity and reliability of the notarization.

Finally, always safeguard your notarial instruments to prevent unauthorized use. Proper security of seals, stamps, and other notarial tools is essential to maintaining public trust and preventing misuse.

Remaining vigilant helps ensure that your notarial acts remain trustworthy, accurate, and legally sound.

## **Top Recommendations for Error Prevention**

### **USVI Laws:**

Visit the official website at [ltg.gov.vi](http://ltg.gov.vi) to review current notary laws and stay informed of any updates.

### **Use Checklists:**

Develop a step-by-step checklist for each notarization to ensure all requirements are completed accurately.

### **Stay Organized:**

Maintain clear, accurate, and secure records of all notarizations performed to support accountability and compliance.

### **Ask Questions:**

If you are unsure about any document or procedure, seek guidance from the Notaries Public Division or consult appropriate legal counsel.

### **Practice Diligence and Patience:**

Take the time necessary to carefully verify information and properly execute each notarial act in accordance with applicable requirements.

## **Notary Glossary**

**Journal Entry:** Information recorded in a journal describing a particular notarization.

**Notarial Certificate:** A written statement signed and sealed by the notary public certifying the facts of the notarial act performed immediately prior to filling out the notarial certificate.

**Venue/ Jurisdiction:** The location where the notarial act takes place, usually stated in the following format at the beginning of the notarial certificate:

State of \_\_\_\_\_  
County of \_\_\_\_\_

*This newsletter is provided for educational purposes to assist notaries public in the U.S. Virgin Islands and does not constitute legal advice.*

Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
Notaries Public Division  
5049 Kongens Gade  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802-6487  
{340}774-2991 extension 4120