



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
NOTARIES PUBLIC DIVISION
Apostille and Authentication Services • Fact Sheet

APOSTILLE OR AUTHENTICATION CERTIFICATES

FACT SHEET

AT A GLANCE

The seal and signature of a public or notarized document are verified by an apostille or authentication certificate to ensure that the document is acceptable in another country.

1 WHAT IS AN APOSTILLE?

Apostille (pronounced “ah-po-steel”) is a French word meaning certification. An apostille is an official government certificate that makes a document issued in one country acceptable in another.

Apostilles are used when public documents are transferred between countries that are parties to the 1961 Hague Apostille Convention. The Convention streamlined the traditional process for authenticating documents.

2 WHO ISSUES AN APOSTILLE?

An apostille is issued by the appropriate Secretary of State or by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Once prepared and verified, the apostille is attached to the notarized document. The single apostille is the only certification needed for use in a participating country.

3 WHEN IS AN AUTHENTICATION CERTIFICATE REQUIRED?

An authentication certificate is used when the destination country is **NOT** a party to the Hague Apostille Convention. Like an apostille, it validates the seal and signature appearing on the document. The U.S. Virgin Islands cannot apostille or issue a notarial certification for a document issued by anyone other than a U.S. Virgin Islands notary public or an elected or appointed official.

4 FOREIGN-LANGUAGE DOCUMENTS

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

IMPORTANT FOR NOTARIES

Notaries public cannot issue apostilles. The apostille process occurs after notarization and requires no additional action by the notary.



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DOCUMENTS THAT SHOULD NOT BE NOTARIZED

These records already carry an official certification, signature, stamp, or seal.

IMPORTANT -Do not add a notarial act to the documents listed below. Submit the official certified document in the form described.

1

Vital records

Birth certificates, death certificates, and marriage certificates bearing the signature of the state registrar or the Office of Vital Records & Statistics Division.

2

Court-certified documents

Documents certified by a Clerk of the Court, including a marriage license or divorce decree document bearing the clerk's stamp and seal.

3

University and school transcripts

Transcripts bearing the signature of the school registrar or issuing official, notarized at the time of issuance. All transcripts must be submitted with the **seal unbroken**.

4

Vehicle titles

Vehicle titles certified by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

5

Division of Corporations & Trademarks Records

Original certified copies of documents filed with the Division of Corporations & Trademarks, or original Certificates of Status bearing the signature of the Lieutenant Governor. (*The Director of Corporations & Trademarks is required to provide an affidavit in conjunction with this process.*)

QUESTIONS? Notaries Public Division • 5049 Kongens Gade • St. Thomas, VI 00802 •
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