



OGO NOTARY & SIGNING SERVICES

WHAT WE DO MATTERS | THE WEEKLY NOTARY BRIEF

NATIONAL NOTARY BRIEF

Apostille Work Is Changing Beyond State Lines

Two international developments and a newly updated federal processing page matter to notaries and apostille facilitators serving families, students, businesses and travelers.

Viet Nam enters the Apostille Convention. The Hague Conference announced that the Apostille Convention entered into force for Viet Nam on September 11, 2026. That creates a path toward replacing multi-stage consular legalization with an apostille for qualifying public documents. Transition periods can be uneven, however. Before quoting a job, confirm that the Convention applies between the issuing and destination countries and that the receiving institution is following the new process.

Thailand is next. Thailand deposited its accession in June 2026, with entry into force scheduled for February 28, 2027. Until then, documents intended for Thailand generally continue through the existing authentication and legalization route. For notaries serving international families, the date belongs on the calendar now.

Federal authentication timing is clearer. The U.S. Department of State updated its authentication-service instructions on September 1. It advises mailing when travel is five weeks or more away; routine walk-in drop-off and pickup when travel is two to three weeks away, with processing within seven business days; and narrowly limited appointments for qualifying life-or-death travel within two weeks. The federal fee remains \$20 per document.

WHY IT MATTERS

Apostille facilitation is not simply shipping paperwork. The value is accurate routing: identifying the issuing authority, destination country, competent authority, deadline and required return method before accepting payment.

ACTION THIS WEEK

Create a one-page intake checklist with five required fields: issuing state or federal agency, document type, destination country, deadline, and receiving institution. Never promise acceptance on the strength of an apostille alone.

Sources: HCCH Viet Nam; HCCH Thailand; U.S. Department of State Authentication Services, updated September 1, 2026.



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STATE SPOTLIGHT 01 OF 50 FLORIDA

Florida Notaries Should Watch RON Identity Rules

Florida permits traditional, electronic and remote online notarization, but a pending rule-development effort could refine how RON identity proofing works.

The current rule has not changed. Florida Rule 1N-7.001 still lists February 16, 2020 as the effective date of the final adopted rule. The Department of State held an August 14, 2026 workshop to consider amendments addressing biometric verification for RON identity proofing. As of this issue, no new final standard or effective date appears on the official rule page.

Do not get ahead of the rule. A platform may offer facial comparison or another biometric tool, but platform capability is not the same as a newly adopted Florida requirement. Florida RONs should continue following Chapter 117, the existing administrative rule, and their approved provider workflow until official text is adopted.

Processing remains slower for RON and apostilles. In its September 10 update, Florida reported processing RON registrations received August 13-14 and apostille requests received August 12, while regular commissions had advanced to September 8. This indicates a materially longer queue for RON registration and mailed apostille work than for ordinary commissions.

FLORIDA QUICK FACTS

Traditional fee ceiling: \$10 per notarial act.

RON fee ceiling: \$25 per online notarial act.

Paper seal: rubber stamp in photographically reproducible black ink.

Personal appearance: physical presence or authorized audio-video technology is required.

ACTION THIS WEEK

Keep a written platform-compliance file containing your provider agreement, digital certificate information, electronic seal, training certificate, bond and E&O records. Review the state rule page before changing identity-proofing procedures.

Sources: Florida Statutes Chapter 117; Rule 1N-7.001; Division of Corporations processing dates.



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SERVICE FOCUS HOSPITAL AND SENIOR NOTARIZATION

The Appointment Begins Before the Stamp

Hospital and senior assignments demand calm preparation, impartiality and a willingness to stop when the legal requirements are not satisfied.

Confirm the signer - not merely the caller. A relative, attorney or care coordinator may schedule the visit, but the notarial act belongs to the person signing. Speak directly with the signer whenever possible. Confirm willingness, communication ability, acceptable identification and the general purpose of the requested notarial act without selecting the document or giving legal advice.

Capacity is a moment-in-time observation. Florida prohibits notarizing when the signer appears mentally incapable of understanding the nature and effect of the document. A diagnosis, age, hospitalization or physical disability does not by itself answer the question. The notary observes the signer during the appointment, remains alert to coercion or confusion and declines when the statutory standard cannot be met.

Physical limitations require precision. Florida provides procedures for a notary to sign for a person who is physically unable to sign or make a mark, but those procedures contain specific safeguards. Never improvise. Review the statutory certificate language and witness requirements before accepting such an assignment.

Protect dignity and privacy. Ask visitors to step away when appropriate, lower your voice, keep documents out of public view and avoid discussing the signer's affairs with relatives without permission. Hospital staff confirm access and medical logistics; they do not direct the notarial decision.

GO OR NO-GO CHECK

Before traveling, confirm: signer availability; acceptable identification; document completeness; witness responsibility; facility access; parking or after-hours instructions; quoted notarial and travel charges; and who will receive the completed document.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARY

The notary verifies identity, willingness and the requested notarial act. The notary does not diagnose capacity, choose legal documents, explain legal consequences or guarantee that a receiving institution will accept the document.

Sources: Florida Statutes section 117.05 and section 117.107. Educational information only; not legal or medical advice.



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CLIENT GROWTH ELDER LAW PROFESSIONALS

Market Reliability Instead of Selling a Stamp

Elder-law attorneys and care professionals do not need another generic notary advertisement. They need a dependable resource for sensitive, time-dependent appointments.

Lead with the operational problem. The strongest introduction is not “I am a notary.” It is: “I provide scheduled and urgent mobile notarization for seniors, hospitals, assisted-living communities and families, with documented intake, clear boundaries and dependable communication.” That tells the professional what problem you solve.

Build a one-page referral sheet. Include service territory, normal and after-hours availability, accepted payment methods, witness policy, identification reminder, hospital-access procedure and a direct scheduling method. State clearly that you do not prepare documents or give legal advice.

Ask for a workflow conversation. Rather than requesting referrals immediately, ask how the firm currently handles off-site notarizations, last-minute witness needs and clients who cannot travel. Listen for friction: delayed discharges, unavailable witnesses, incomplete intake, missed appointments or poor status communication.

Earn the second call. After an assignment, confirm arrival, completion or the neutral reason the notarization could not proceed. Do not disclose private document contents. Send a professional receipt and close the communication loop promptly.

A SIMPLE FIRST CONTACT

“I support Brevard County families and professionals with mobile notary appointments for seniors, hospitals and estate-related documents. I do not prepare or interpret documents. I would appreciate ten minutes to learn how your office handles off-site notarizations and whether a dependable backup resource would be useful.”

FOUR-WEEK OUTREACH PLAN

Week 1: Identify ten elder-law and probate practices.

Week 2: Deliver or email the referral sheet.

Week 3: Follow up with one useful checklist, not a sales blast.

Week 4: Record responses, next steps and referral preferences.

OGO Notary principle: Be useful before asking to be chosen.



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THE NOTARY BUSINESS DESK

A Deduction Begins With a Business Record

Equipment, mileage, insurance, software and education may support a notary business, but buying something does not automatically make it deductible.

Start with the ordinary-and-necessary test. The IRS generally describes a deductible business expense as one that is ordinary in the trade or business and helpful and appropriate for that business. Mixed-use items require care. A phone, laptop, vehicle or internet connection used personally and professionally may need a reasonable business-use allocation.

Capture the record when the expense occurs. Waiting until tax season invites missing receipts and weak explanations. Maintain a business bank or card account, save the receipt, record the business purpose and categorize the expense consistently. For vehicle use, contemporaneous mileage records are far stronger than reconstructed estimates.

Separate expense from equipment decisions. A printer, scanner, computer, power station or mobile-office accessory may have different tax treatment depending on cost, business use and applicable elections. The right question is not simply “Can I write it off?” but “How should my tax professional treat and document it?”

Track revenue with equal discipline. Record notarial fees, travel or convenience charges, printing, witness coordination, platform income and refunds separately. Clear records help evaluate which services are profitable before they help prepare a tax return.

FIVE RECORDS TO KEEP

1. Receipt or invoice
2. Date and amount
3. Vendor
4. Specific business purpose
5. Payment account and category

THIS WEEK'S SYSTEM STEP

Create seven core categories: supplies and seals; equipment; vehicle and travel; insurance and bonding; software and platforms; education and memberships; marketing and website. Ask a qualified tax professional to tailor the categories and treatment to your business.

Member resource: Visit OGONotary.com for free notary guides and business tools. **Shop the OGO Notary Essentials collection** for equipment and supplies selected for working notaries.

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Sources: IRS Guide to Business Expense Resources and IRS Recordkeeping. **Disclaimer:** This publication is provided for general educational, informational, and entertainment purposes only. It is not legal, tax, accounting, financial, medical, healthcare, or other professional advice. Information may change and may not apply to every person, transaction, jurisdiction, or circumstance. Consult the appropriate government authority and a qualified licensed professional before acting. No professional-client or provider-patient relationship is created.