



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GREAT SEAL
LANSING

Instructions to Authenticate Recorded Documents Court Documents

We CAN authenticate: Only **Certified** copies from the County Clerk's office; City Clerks in the counties of Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb ONLY; or the State Registrar's office.

We CANNOT authenticate: From Court or Probate clerks. Do **not** get copies from these officials.

Out of State Court Records

To obtain recorded documents from a County Clerk:

- County Clerk telephone numbers are listed online and can also be found on our website.
- Contact the County Clerk where the birth, marriage, divorce or death occurred.
- Request a *certified* copy of the document you need.
- Once you receive the certified copy of the document, either mail it to the Lansing office or bring it to one of our branch offices that provide authentication services (see attachment).
- Wayne, Macomb and Oakland County recorded documents may be obtained from the City Clerks in those counties only.

To obtain recorded documents from the State Registrar:

- The telephone number for the State Registrar's office is 517-335-8666.
- Request a certified copy of the document and tell them it is for use in another country.
- You can make arrangements with the State Registrar's office to mail the document directly to the Office of the Great Seal for state authentication. Our office cannot provide status updates.
- If an Authenticated copy was not requested from State Registrar, you can mail it to the Lansing office or bring it to one of our branch offices that provide authentication services.
- You can also order recorded documents off their website. Their address is www.michigan.gov/mdch.



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Helpful Tips

- ✓ **Must be a Michigan Court Document.**
- ✓ **If the court document is certified by the court and a court official, you will have to make a true copy statement on the document.**
 - ✓ **How to make a true copy statement.**
 - Print or type: “this is a true copy of my _____ ” (list type of document) directly on the document. This statement can be put on a separate sheet of paper stapled to the front of the divorce document.
 - Sign under true copy statement in front of a Michigan notary. Have your signature notarized by a Michigan notary public.
 - The only person who can make the true copy statement is the person named in the document or the person who produced the document.

Exceptions to this rule:

- ✓ If the person named on the document is under the age of 18, a parent can make the true copy statement on their behalf.
- ✓ If the person named in the document is deceased, the only other people who can make a true copy statement on document on their behalf is a family member, an attorney of the estate.
- A Michigan notary public cannot make a “true copy” statement on copies of any records.



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✓ **If including a true copy statement, make sure the notarization is correct.**

✓ **A proper notarization should include:**

- Notary printed name
- Notary signature
- Date of notarization
- Commission Expiration date
- County of commission
- Acting in the county of _____ (if different than county of commission)

✓ **Additionally:**

- All Elements must be reproducible, an Embosser alone is not acceptable.
- If using a stamp, all elements must be legible and reproducible.
- The use of the stamp or embosser cannot make any part of the document illegible.
- If a correction needs to be made to a notarization, the only person who should make the correction is the original notary and the notary should initial any change.
- Notary must have an English version of their notarization.
- The entire notarization block must be on the same page.



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✓ **Notaries cannot:**

- Notarize a document without witnessing a signature.
- Make a true copy statement.
- Make a certification statement regarding a person, business, or document. Examples: Stating a person is alive. Stating a business is incorporated under the laws of a particular state. State the qualifications of a person.
- Cannot include the term Notario Publico/ Notaria Publica in their notarization or be referred to as Notario Publico/ Notaria Publica within the document.
- Be stated in the beginning of the document and state the whole document.
- Witness the signature of a family member.
- Notarize a document in which the notary has a financial interest in.
- Cannot charge over \$10.00 for their notarization. They may charge extra for travel, but this must be agreed upon before the notarization.
- Notary cannot charge a fee to make a correction to their notarization.
- If using Electronic or Remote notarization, notary cannot charge a travel or convenience fee.
- Notarial elements, either written, stamped, or embossed cannot make any portion of the document or notarial block illegible.
- Cannot notary stamp or notary emboss pages to show a page belongs within the document. Every stamp or embossing is considered a notarization and requires witnessing a signature and having all the elements of a proper notarization.