



What is an Apostille and Why Do I Need It

Many transactions in México will require certain types of documents to be notarized and then have the notaries validity certified through a process known as an apostille.

General Information

In 1961 many nations joined together to create a simplified method of "legalizing" documents for universal recognition. Members of the conference, referred to as the Hague Convention, adopted a document referred to as an Apostille that would be recognized by all member nations.

Documents sent to member nations, completed with an Apostille at the state level, may be submitted directly to the member nation without further action.

México is a member nation.

Process

- The Secretary of State's four regional offices (Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco) can only authenticate a California notary public's signature **if the county clerk/recorder (on the notary public's stamp) first authenticates the signature**
 - The customer must take the notarized document to the county clerk/recorder for certification
 - Then submit the certified document to one of the four regional offices for authentication.
 - Having a document certified at the county level is only required for authentication at our regional offices.
 - The Secretary of State's Sacramento office can authenticate documents notarized by a California notary public without being certified at the county level.
- The customer must identify the country of destination when the documents are submitted to the Secretary of State. If documents are submitted by mail to the Sacramento office, a letter identifying the country of destination must accompany the documents. To facilitate the processing of documents submitted by mail, please include a self-addressed envelope.
- Documents can be hand delivered to any office location for over-the-counter processing between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) or mailed to the Sacramento office. Regional offices do not process mailed in documents. Office locations are as follows:

Sacramento (Secretary of State) Office

Street Address:

Notary Public Section
1500 11th Street, 2nd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-3595

Mailing Address:

Notary Public Section
Post Office Box 942877
Sacramento, CA 94277-0001

Regional Offices

Fresno:

1315 Van Ness Avenue, Suite
203
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 445-6900

Los Angeles:

300 South Spring Street, Room 12513
Los Angeles, CA 90013
(213) 897-3062

San Diego:

1350 Front Street, Suite 2060
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 525-4113

San Francisco:

455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14500
San Francisco, CA 94102-7007
(415) 557-8000

- When submitting documents to any of our offices for over-the-counter processing, no appointment is necessary. Customers are served on a "first come first serve" basis.
- Documents submitted for over-the-counter processing are normally processed within an hour. The average processing time for documents submitted by mail is approximately two weeks.
- There is a \$20.00 processing fee (per signature authenticated) and a \$6.00 special handling fee (per public official for documents submitted over the counter). Payments for documents submitted:
 - By mail to Sacramento can be made by check or money order.
 - Over-the-counter in Sacramento can be made by check, money order, cash, or credit card (Visa or MasterCard).
 - Over-the-counter in any of the four regional offices can be made by check, money order, or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). Regional offices are not able to accept cash.
- Checks or money orders should be made payable to the Secretary of State.

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