

Certification, Authentication, & Apostilles

A **certification** or **authentication** is a sealed certificate that confirms the authority of a public official, such as a notary public, recorder of deeds, or county clerk, to act in a particular capacity in connection with a document that he or she has signed. The authentication certificate will verify that the named individual and their position are a matter of record in the Secretary of State's Office. A certification is used for verifying a notary. Authentications are used for verifying recorders of deeds, circuit clerks, judges, county clerks and the State Registrar (i.e., birth certificate, marriage statement and divorce statement).

The **apostille** is a specific form of authentication that is prepared pursuant to an international treaty known as "The Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirements of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents". The convention eliminates the need for authentication above the level of the Secretary of State and is only accepted by countries that have signed the treaty.

The country in which the documents will be used determines the type of certificate that this office will attach to the original document.

Please refer to the [Missouri Notary Handbook](#) booklet for more information on certifications, authentications and apostilles.

- [Sample Apostille](#)
- [Sample Authentication](#)
- [Sample Certification](#)

Procedures for obtaining an apostille, authentication or certification

1. Birth Certificate - must be a certified copy from the [Bureau of Vital Records](#) contact number (573) 751-6387
2. Marriage License - must be a certified copy from the Recorder of Deeds of the county of the marriage or a statement related to marriage from the [Bureau of Vital Records](#) (see [Missouri Notary Handbook](#) booklet for example)
3. Divorce Decree - must be a certified copy from the Circuit Clerk of the county where the divorce is recorded
4. School Documents - must be a certified copy from the school (see [Missouri Notary Handbook](#) booklet for example)
5. Notarized Documents - must have the proper notarization on the document including the notarial paragraph, notary's signature and seal. (see [Missouri Notary Handbook](#) booklet for information on notarized documents)

Documents should be sent to:

Commissions
Secretary of State's Office

600 West Main, Room 322
Jefferson City, MO 65101

A letter stating what country the documents will be sent to; a return address; and a contact phone number and e-mail address must be included with the documents.

The fee for certifying documents is \$10 per certification or authentication. Examples of fees charged: If one document contains multiple notarizations all by the same notary the fee is \$10; if multiple documents all contain notarizations by the same notary the fee is \$10 per document; if one document contains multiple notarizations by different notaries the fee is \$10 per notary. The Secretary of State's Office accepts checks and money orders made payable to the Director of Revenue; MasterCard; Visa; American Express; and Discover. Credit card payments will incur a small convenience fee (see more information [here](#)). To pay by credit card, the following must be included in your letter:

- Your name exactly as it appears on the credit card
- Credit card number
- Expiration date
- CVV Code on the back of the card
- Billing Zip code for the card
- Approval for the office to charge the account

Documents sent by special delivery using a credit card for payment must include a completed air bill. Documents will be returned regular mail unless there is a pre-paid envelope with an addressed air bill included with the documents.

State law limits the state's allowable fee for processing certain documents to \$100 per child per adoption, or per multiple children adopted at the same time.