

## FLORIDA STATUTES

### TITLE X. PUBLIC OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND RECORDS CHAPTER 117. NOTARIES PUBLIC

#### **117.01 Appointment, application, suspension, revocation, application fee, bond, and oath.--**

(1) The Governor may appoint as many notaries public as he or she deems necessary, each of whom shall be at least 18 years of age and a legal resident of the state. A permanent resident alien may apply and be appointed and shall file with his or her application a recorded Declaration of Domicile. The residence required for appointment must be maintained throughout the term of appointment. Notaries public shall be appointed for 4 years and shall use and exercise the office of notary public within the boundaries of this state. An applicant must be able to read, write, and understand the English language.

(2) The application for appointment shall be signed and sworn to by the applicant and shall be accompanied by a fee of \$25, together with the \$10 commission fee required by s. 113.01, and a surcharge of \$4, which \$4 is appropriated to the Executive Office of the Governor to be used to educate and assist notaries public. The Executive Office of the Governor may contract with private vendors to provide the services set forth in this section. However, no commission fee shall be required for the issuance of a commission as a notary public to a veteran who served during a period of wartime service, as defined in s. 1.01(14), and who has been rated by the United States Government or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its predecessor to have a disability rating of 50 percent or more; such a disability is subject to verification by the Secretary of State, who has authority to adopt reasonable procedures to implement this act. The oath of office and notary bond required by this section shall also accompany the application and shall be in a form prescribed by the Department of State which shall require, but not be limited to, the following information: full name, residence address and telephone number, business address and telephone number, date of birth, race, sex, social security number, citizenship status, driver's license number or the number of other official state-issued identification, affidavit of good character from someone unrelated to the applicant who has known the applicant for 1 year or more, a list of all professional licenses and commissions issued by the state during the previous 10 years and a statement as to whether or not the applicant has had such license or commission revoked or suspended, and a statement as to whether or not the applicant has been convicted of a felony, and, if there has been a conviction, a statement of the nature of the felony and restoration of civil rights. The applicant may not use a fictitious or assumed name other than a nickname on an application for commission. The application shall be maintained by the Department of State for the full term of a notary commission. A notary public shall notify, in writing, the Department of State of any change in his or her business address, home telephone number, business telephone number, home address, or criminal record within 60 days after such change. The Governor may require any other information he or she deems necessary for determining whether an applicant is eligible for a notary public commission. Each applicant must swear or affirm on the application that the information on the application is true and correct.

(3) As part of the oath, the applicant must swear that he or she has read this chapter and knows the duties, responsibilities, limitations, and powers of a notary public.

(4) The Governor may suspend a notary public for any of the grounds provided in s. 7, Art. IV of the State Constitution. Grounds constituting malfeasance, misfeasance, or neglect of duty include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) A material false statement on the application.

(b) A complaint found to have merit by the Governor.

(c) Failure to cooperate or respond to an investigation by the Governor's office or the Department of State regarding a complaint.

(d) Official misconduct as defined in s. 838.022.

(e) False or misleading advertising relating to notary public services.

(f) Unauthorized practice of law.

(g) Failure to report a change in business or home address or telephone number, or failure to submit documentation to request an amended commission after a lawful name change, within the specified period of time.

(h) Commission of fraud, misrepresentation, or any intentional violation of this chapter.

(i) Charging fees in excess of fees authorized by this chapter.

(j) Failure to maintain the bond required by this section.

(5)(a) If a notary public receives notice from the Department of State that his or her office has been declared vacant, the notary shall forthwith mail or deliver to the Secretary of State his or her notary commission.

(b) A notary public who wishes to resign his or her commission, or a notary public who does not maintain legal residence in this state during the entire term of appointment, or a notary public whose resignation is required by the Governor, shall send a signed letter of resignation to the Governor and shall return his or her certificate of notary public commission. The resigning notary public shall destroy his or her official notary public seal of office, unless the Governor requests its return.

(6) No person may be automatically reappointed as a notary public. The application process must be completed regardless of whether an applicant is requesting his or her first notary commission, a renewal of a commission, or any subsequent commission.

(7)(a) A notary public shall, prior to executing the duties of the office and throughout the term of office, give bond, payable to any individual harmed as a result of a breach of duty by the notary public acting in his or her official capacity, in the amount of \$7,500, conditioned for the due discharge of the office and shall take an oath that he or she will honestly, diligently, and faithfully discharge the duties of the notary public. The bond shall be approved and filed with the Department of State and executed by a surety company for hire duly authorized to transact business in this state.

(b) Any notary public whose term of appointment extends beyond January 1, 1999, is required to increase the amount of his or her bond to \$7,500 only upon reappointment on or after January 1, 1999.

(c) Beginning July 1, 1996, surety companies for hire which process notary public applications, oaths, affidavits of character, and bonds for submission to the Department of State must properly submit these documents in a software and hard copy format approved by the Department of State.

(8) Upon payment to any individual harmed as a result of a breach of duty by the notary public, the entity who has issued the bond for the notary public shall notify the Governor of the payment and the circumstances which led to the claim.

**History.**--s. 1, Sept. 13, 1822; RS 218; s. 1, ch. 4544, 1897; GS 302; RGS 413; CGL 479; s. 1, ch. 21765, 1943; s. 1, ch. 63-138; s. 1, ch. 65-256; ss. 1, 2, ch. 67-54; ss. 10, 12, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 70, ch. 71-136; s. 1, ch. 75-161; s. 6, ch. 77-121; ss. 5, 6, ch. 81-260; s. 33, ch. 83-217; s. 3, ch. 88-557; s. 1, ch. 91-291; s. 1, ch. 92-209; s. 746, ch. 95-147; s. 18, ch. 95-280; s. 27, ch. 95-312; s. 2, ch. 96-407; s. 1, ch. 98-246; s. 9, ch. 2003-158.

**117.03 Administration of oaths.**--A notary public may administer an oath and make a certificate thereof when it is necessary for the execution of any writing or document to be published under the seal of a notary public. The notary public may not take an acknowledgment of execution in lieu of an oath if an oath is required.

**History.**--s. 1, Sept. 13, 1822; RS 219; GS 304; RGS 415; CGL 481; s. 20, ch. 73-334; s. 1, ch. 80-173; s. 2, ch. 91-291; s. 2, ch. 92-209; s. 2, ch. 93-62; s. 2, ch. 98-246.

**117.04 Acknowledgments.**--A notary public is authorized to take the acknowledgments of deeds and other instruments of writing for record, as fully as other officers of this state.

**History.**--s. 2, ch. 1127, 1860; RS 220; GS 305; RGS 416; CGL 482; s. 20, ch. 73-334; s. 8, ch. 81-260; s. 3, ch. 91-291; s. 3, ch. 93-62; s. 3, ch. 98-246.

**117.045 Marriages.**--A notary public is authorized to solemnize the rites of matrimony. For solemnizing the rites of matrimony, the fee of a notary public may not exceed those provided by law to the clerks of the circuit court for like services.

**History.**--s. 4, ch. 98-246.

**117.05 Use of notary commission; unlawful use; notary fee; seal; duties; employer liability; name change; advertising; photocopies; penalties.**--

(1) No person shall obtain or use a notary public commission in other than his or her legal name, and it is unlawful for a notary public to notarize his or her own signature. Any person applying for a notary public commission must submit proof of identity to the Department of State if so requested. Any person who violates the provisions of this subsection is guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(2)(a) The fee of a notary public may not exceed \$10 for any one notarial act, except as provided in s. 117.045.

(b) A notary public may not charge a fee for witnessing an absentee ballot in an election, and must witness such a ballot upon the request of an elector, provided the notarial act is in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(3)(a) A notary public seal shall be affixed to all notarized paper documents and shall be of the rubber stamp type and shall include the words "Notary Public-State of Florida." The seal shall also include the name of the notary public, the date of expiration of the commission of the notary public, and the commission number. The rubber stamp seal must be affixed to the notarized paper document in photographically reproducible black ink. Every notary public shall print, type, or stamp below his or her signature on a paper document his or her name exactly as commissioned. An impression-type seal may be used in addition to the rubber stamp seal, but the rubber stamp seal shall be the official seal for use on a paper document, and the impression-type seal may not be substituted therefor.

(b) Any notary public whose term of appointment extends beyond January 1, 1992, is required to use a rubber stamp type notary public seal on paper documents only upon reappointment on or after January 1, 1992.

(c) The notary public official seal and the certificate of notary public commission are the exclusive property of the notary public and must be kept under the direct and

exclusive control of the notary public. The seal and certificate of commission must not be surrendered to an employer upon termination of employment, regardless of whether the employer paid for the seal or for the commission.

(d) A notary public whose official seal is lost, stolen, or believed to be in the possession of another person shall immediately notify the Department of State or the Governor in writing.

(e) Any person who unlawfully possesses a notary public official seal or any papers or copies relating to notarial acts is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(4) When notarizing a signature, a notary public shall complete a jurat or notarial certificate in substantially the same form as those found in subsection (13). The jurat or certificate of acknowledgment shall contain the following elements:

(a) The venue stating the location of the notarization in the format, "State of Florida, County of \_\_\_\_\_."

(b) The type of notarial act performed, an oath or an acknowledgment, evidenced by the words "sworn" or "acknowledged."

(c) That the signer personally appeared before the notary public at the time of the notarization.

(d) The exact date of the notarial act.

(e) The name of the person whose signature is being notarized. It is presumed, absent such specific notation by the notary public, that notarization is to all signatures.

(f) The specific type of identification the notary public is relying upon in identifying the signer, either based on personal knowledge or satisfactory evidence specified in subsection (5).

(g) The notary's official signature.

(h) The notary's name, typed, printed, or stamped below the signature.

(i) The notary's official seal affixed below or to either side of the notary's signature.

(5) A notary public may not notarize a signature on a document unless he or she personally knows, or has satisfactory evidence, that the person whose signature is to be notarized is the individual who is described in and who is executing the instrument. A notary public shall certify in the certificate of acknowledgment or jurat the type of identification, either based on personal knowledge or other form of identification, upon which the notary public is relying.

(a) For purposes of this subsection, "personally knows" means having an acquaintance, derived from association with the individual, which establishes the individual's identity with at least a reasonable certainty.

(b) For the purposes of this subsection, "satisfactory evidence" means the absence of any information, evidence, or other circumstances which would lead a reasonable person to believe that the person whose signature is to be notarized is not the person he or she claims to be and any one of the following:

1. The sworn written statement of one credible witness personally known to the notary public or the sworn written statement of two credible witnesses whose identities are proven to the notary public upon the presentation of satisfactory evidence that each of the following is true:

a. That the person whose signature is to be notarized is the person named in the document;

b. That the person whose signature is to be notarized is personally known to the witnesses;

c. That it is the reasonable belief of the witnesses that the circumstances of the person whose signature is to be notarized are such that it would be very difficult or impossible for that person to obtain another acceptable form of identification;

d. That it is the reasonable belief of the witnesses that the person whose signature is to be notarized does not possess any of the identification documents specified in subparagraph 2.; and

e. That the witnesses do not have a financial interest in nor are parties to the underlying transaction; or

2. Reasonable reliance on the presentation to the notary public of any one of the following forms of identification, if the document is current or has been issued within the past 5 years and bears a serial or other identifying number:

a. A Florida identification card or driver's license issued by the public agency authorized to issue driver's licenses;

b. A passport issued by the Department of State of the United States;

c. A passport issued by a foreign government if the document is stamped by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services;

d. A driver's license or an identification card issued by a public agency authorized to issue driver's licenses in a state other than Florida, a territory of the United States, or Canada or Mexico;

e. An identification card issued by any branch of the armed forces of the United States;

f. An inmate identification card issued on or after January 1, 1991, by the Florida Department of Corrections for an inmate who is in the custody of the department;

g. An inmate identification card issued by the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons, for an inmate who is in the custody of the department;

h. A sworn, written statement from a sworn law enforcement officer that the forms of identification for an inmate in an institution of confinement were confiscated upon confinement and that the person named in the document is the person whose signature is to be notarized; or

i. An identification card issued by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(6) The employer of a notary public shall be liable to the persons involved for all damages proximately caused by the notary's official misconduct, if the notary public was acting within the scope of his or her employment at the time the notary engaged in the official misconduct.

(7) Any person who acts as or otherwise willfully impersonates a notary public while not lawfully appointed and commissioned to perform notarial acts is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(8) Any notary public who knowingly acts as a notary public after his or her commission has expired is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(9) Any notary public who lawfully changes his or her name shall, within 60 days after such change, request an amended commission from the Secretary of State and shall send \$25, his or her current commission, and a notice of change form, obtained from the Secretary of State, which shall include the new name and contain a specimen of his or her official signature. The Secretary of State shall issue an amended commission to the notary public in the new name. A rider to the notary public's bond must accompany the notice of change form. After submitting the required notice of change form and rider to the Secretary

of State, the notary public may continue to perform notarial acts in his or her former name for 60 days or until receipt of the amended commission, whichever date is earlier.

(10) A notary public who is not an attorney who advertises the services of a notary public in a language other than English, whether by radio, television, signs, pamphlets, newspapers, or other written communication, with the exception of a single desk plaque, shall post or otherwise include with the advertisement a notice in English and in the language used for the advertisement. The notice shall be of a conspicuous size, if in writing, and shall state: "I AM NOT AN ATTORNEY LICENSED TO PRACTICE LAW IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA, AND I MAY NOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE OR ACCEPT FEES FOR LEGAL ADVICE." If the advertisement is by radio or television, the statement may be modified but must include substantially the same message.

(11) Literal translation of the phrase "Notary Public" into a language other than English is prohibited in an advertisement for notarial services.

(12)(a) A notary public may supervise the making of a photocopy of an original document and attest to the trueness of the copy, provided the document is neither a vital record in this state, another state, a territory of the United States, or another country, nor a public record, if a copy can be made by the custodian of the public record.

(b) A notary public must use a certificate in substantially the following form in notarizing an attested copy:

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, (year) , I attest that the preceding or attached document is a true, exact, complete, and unaltered photocopy made by me of (description of document) presented to me by the document's custodian, \_\_\_\_\_, and, to the best of my knowledge, that the photocopied document is neither a vital record nor a public record, certified copies of which are available from an official source other than a notary public.

(Official Notary Signature and Notary Seal)  
(Name of Notary Typed, Printed or Stamped)

(13) The following notarial certificates are sufficient for the purposes indicated, if completed with the information required by this chapter. The specification of forms under this subsection does not preclude the use of other forms.

(a) For an oath or affirmation:

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, (year),  
by (name of person making statement).

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)  
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)  
Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

(b) For an acknowledgment in an individual capacity:

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
(year), by (name of person acknowledging) .

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)  
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)  
Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

(c) For an acknowledgment in a representative capacity:

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
(year), by (name of person) as (type of authority, . . . e.g. officer, trustee, attorney in fact)  
for (name of party on behalf of whom instrument was executed) .

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)  
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)  
Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

(14) A notary public must make reasonable accommodations to provide notarial services to persons with disabilities.

(a) A notary public may notarize the signature of a person who is blind after the notary public has read the entire instrument to that person.

(b) A notary public may notarize the signature of a person who signs with a mark if:  
1. The document signing is witnessed by two disinterested persons;  
2. The notary prints the person’s first name at the beginning of the designated signature line and the person’s last name at the end of the designated signature line; and  
3. The notary prints the words “his (or her) mark” below the person’s signature mark.

(c) The following notarial certificates are sufficient for the purpose of notarizing for a person who signs with a mark:

1. For an oath or affirmation:

(First Name) (Last Name)  
His (or Her) Mark

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, (year) , by (name of person making statement) , who signed with a mark in the presence of these witnesses:

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)  
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)  
Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

2. For an acknowledgment in an individual capacity:

(First Name) (Last Name)  
His (or Her) Mark

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, (year), by (name of person acknowledging) , who signed with a mark in the presence of these witnesses:

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)  
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)  
Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

(d) A notary public may sign the name of a person whose signature is to be notarized when that person is physically unable to sign or make a signature mark on a document if:

1. The person with a disability directs the notary to sign in his or her presence;
2. The document signing is witnessed by two disinterested persons;
3. The notary writes below the signature the following statement: "Signature affixed by notary, pursuant to s. 117.05(14), Florida Statutes," and states the circumstances of the signing in the notarial certificate.

(e) The following notarial certificates are sufficient for the purpose of notarizing for a person with a disability who directs the notary to sign his or her name:

1. For an oath or affirmation:

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to (or affirmed) before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, (year), by (name of person making statement), and subscribed by (name of notary) at the direction of and in the presence of (name of person making statement) , and in the presence of these witnesses:

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)  
(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)  
Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

2. For an acknowledgment in an individual capacity:



STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, (year), by (name of person acknowledging) and subscribed by (name of notary) at the direction of and in the presence of (name of person acknowledging) , and in the presence of these witnesses:

(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida)

(Print, Type, or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Identification Produced

**History.**--ch. 3874, 1889; RS 221; GS 306; RGS 417; CGL 483; s. 8, ch. 81-260; s. 4, ch. 91-291; s. 3, ch. 92-209; s. 4, ch. 93-62; s. 747, ch. 95-147; s. 1, ch. 97-241; s. 33, ch. 98-129; s. 5, ch. 98-246; s. 46, ch. 99-2; s. 7, ch. 2004-5.

**117.06 Validity of acts prior to April 1, 1903.**--Any and all notarial acts that were done by any notary public in the state prior to April 1, 1903, which would have been valid had not the term of office of the notary public expired, are declared to be valid.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 5217, 1903; GS 307; RGS 418; CGL 484.

**117.10 Law enforcement and correctional officers.**--Law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and correctional probation officers, as defined in s. 943.10, and traffic accident investigation officers and traffic infraction enforcement officers, as described in s. 316.640, are authorized to administer oaths when engaged in the performance of official duties. Sections 117.01, 117.04, 117.045, 117.05, and 117.103 do not apply to the provisions of this section. An officer may not notarize his or her own signature.

**History.**--s. 4, ch. 84-97; s. 43, ch. 89-526; s. 2, ch. 91-174; s. 9, ch. 91-291; s. 748, ch. 95-147; s. 4, ch. 95-283; s. 6, ch. 98-246.

**117.103 Certification of notary's authority by Secretary of State.**--A notary public is not required to record his or her notary public commission in an office of a clerk of the circuit court. If certification of the notary public's commission is required, it must be obtained from the Secretary of State. Upon the receipt of a written request and a fee of \$10 payable to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall issue a certificate of notarial authority, in a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, which shall include a statement explaining the legal qualifications and authority of a notary public in this state.

**History.**--s. 5, ch. 91-291; s. 7, ch. 98-246; s. 73, ch. 99-251.

**117.105 False or fraudulent acknowledgments; penalty.**--A notary public who falsely or fraudulently takes an acknowledgment of an instrument as a notary public or who falsely or fraudulently makes a certificate as a notary public or who falsely takes or receives an acknowledgment of the signature on a written instrument is guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

**History.**--s. 6, ch. 91-291.

**117.107 Prohibited acts.**--

(1) A notary public may not use a name or initial in signing certificates other than that by which the notary public is commissioned.

(2) A notary public may not sign notarial certificates using a facsimile signature stamp unless the notary public has a physical disability that limits or prohibits his or her ability to make a written signature and unless the notary public has first submitted written notice to the Department of State with an exemplar of the facsimile signature stamp.

(3) A notary public may not affix his or her signature to a blank form of affidavit or certificate of acknowledgment and deliver that form to another person with the intent that it be used as an affidavit or acknowledgment.

(4) A notary public may not take the acknowledgment of or administer an oath to a person whom the notary public actually knows to have been adjudicated mentally incapacitated by a court of competent jurisdiction, where the acknowledgment or oath necessitates the exercise of a right that has been removed pursuant to s. 744.3215(2) or (3), and where the person has not been restored to capacity as a matter of record.

(5) A notary public may not notarize a signature on a document if it appears that the person is mentally incapable of understanding the nature and effect of the document at the time of notarization.

(6) A notary public may not take the acknowledgment of a person who does not speak or understand the English language, unless the nature and effect of the instrument to be notarized is translated into a language which the person does understand.

(7) A notary public may not change anything in a written instrument after it has been signed by anyone.

(8) A notary public may not amend a notarial certificate after the notarization is complete.

(9) A notary public may not notarize a signature on a document if the person whose signature is being notarized is not in the presence of the notary public at the time the signature is notarized. Any notary public who violates this subsection is guilty of a civil infraction, punishable by penalty not exceeding \$5,000, and such violation constitutes malfeasance and misfeasance in the conduct of official duties. It is no defense to the civil infraction specified in this subsection that the notary public acted without intent to defraud. A notary public who violates this subsection with the intent to defraud is guilty of violating s. 117.105.

(10) A notary public may not notarize a signature on a document if the document is incomplete or blank. However, an endorsement or assignment in blank of a negotiable or nonnegotiable note and the assignment in blank of any instrument given as security for such note is not deemed incomplete.

(11) A notary public may not notarize a signature on a document if the person whose signature is to be notarized is the spouse, son, daughter, mother, or father of the notary public.

(12) A notary public may not notarize a signature on a document if the notary public has a financial interest in or is a party to the underlying transaction; however, a notary public who is an employee may notarize a signature for his or her employer, and this employment does not constitute a financial interest in the transaction nor make the notary a party to the transaction under this subsection as long as he or she does not receive a benefit other than his or her salary and the fee for services as a notary public authorized by law. For purposes of this subsection, a notary public who is an attorney does not have a financial interest in and is not a party to the underlying transaction evidenced by a notarized document if he or she notarizes a signature on that document for a client for whom he or she serves as an attorney of record and he or she has no interest in the

document other than the fee paid to him or her for legal services and the fee authorized by law for services as a notary public.

**History.**--s. 7, ch. 91-291; s. 4, ch. 92-209; s. 749, ch. 95-147; s. 19, ch. 95-280; s. 8, ch. 98-246.

**117.108 Validity of acts, seals, and certificates prior to January 1, 1995.**--A notarial act performed, a notarial certificate signed, or a notarial seal used by any notary public before January 1, 1995, which would have been valid under the laws in effect in this state on January 1, 1991, is valid.

**History.**--s. 5, ch. 93-62.

## **TITLE I. CONSTRUCTION OF STATUTES CHAPTER 1. DEFINITIONS**

### **1.01 Definitions.--**

In construing these statutes and each and every word, phrase, or part hereof, where the context will permit:

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(5) The word "oath" includes affirmations.

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(14) The term "veteran" means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released therefrom under honorable conditions only or who later received an upgraded discharge under honorable conditions, notwithstanding any action by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs on individuals discharged or released with other than honorable discharges. To receive benefits as a wartime veteran, a veteran must have served during one of the following periods of wartime service:

(a) Spanish-American War: April 21, 1898, to July 4, 1902, and including the Philippine Insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion.

(b) Mexican Border Period: May 9, 1916, to April 5, 1917, in the case of a veteran who during such period served in Mexico, on the borders thereof, or in the waters adjacent thereto.

(c) World War I: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; extended to April 1, 1920, for those veterans who served in Russia; also extended through July 1, 1921, for those veterans who served after November 11, 1918, and before July 2, 1921, provided such veterans had at least 1 day of service between April 5, 1917, and November 12, 1918.

(d) World War II: December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946.

(e) Korean Conflict: June 27, 1950, to January 31, 1955.

(f) Vietnam Era: February 28, 1961, to May 7, 1975.

(g) Persian Gulf War: August 2, 1990, and ending on the date thereafter prescribed by presidential proclamation or by law.

**History.**--RS 1, 2064; GS 1, 2580; RGS 1, 3939; CGL 1, 5858; s. 1, ch. 16297, 1933; CGL 1936 Supp. 1(1); s. 1, ch. 17750, 1937; CGL 1940 Supp. 1365(43); s. 1, ch. 24139, 1947; s. 1, ch. 57-98; s. 1, ch. 61-486; s. 1, ch. 63-572; s. 1, ch. 69-195; s. 1, ch. 73-21; s. 1, ch. 78-10; s. 1, ch. 84-114; s. 8, ch. 88-33; s. 1, ch. 90-92; s. 1, ch. 92-80; s. 1, ch. 95-147; s. 3, ch. 96-224; s. 1, ch. 96-247; s. 1, ch. 98-121; s. 1, ch. 98-324; s. 1, ch. 2003-42.

**TITLE IV. EXECUTIVE BRANCH  
CHAPTER 15. SECRETARY OF STATE**

**15.16 Reproduction of records; admissibility in evidence; electronic receipt and transmission of records; certification; acknowledgment.--**

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(7) The Secretary of State may issue apostilles conforming to the requirements of the international treaty known as the Hague Convention of 1961 and may charge a fee for the issuance of apostilles not to exceed \$10 per apostille. The Secretary of State has the sole authority in this state to establish, in accordance with the laws of the United States, the requirements and procedures for the issuance of apostilles. The Department of State may adopt rules to implement this subsection.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 67-15; ss. 10, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 1, ch. 89-341; s. 1, ch. 93-281; s. 12, ch. 99-218; s. 72, ch. 99-251; s. 3, ch. 2001-195; s. 1, ch. 2001-200.

**TITLE V. JUDICIAL BRANCH  
CHAPTER 28. CLERKS OF THE CIRCUIT COURTS**

**28.24 Service charges by clerk of the circuit court.--**The clerk of the circuit court may charge for services rendered by the clerk's office in recording documents and instruments and in performing the duties enumerated in amounts not to exceed those specified in this section. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the clerk of the circuit court shall provide without charge to the state attorney, public defender, and guardian ad litem, and to the authorized staff acting on behalf of each, access to and a copy of any public record, if the requesting party is entitled by law to view the exempt or confidential record, as maintained by and in the custody of the clerk of the circuit court as provided in general law and the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration. The clerk of the circuit court may provide the requested public record in an electronic format in lieu of a paper format when capable of being accessed by the requesting entity.

Charges ...

(24) For solemnizing matrimony .....30.00

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 3106, 1879; RS 1394; GS 1839; RGS 3084; ss. 1, 2, ch. 11893, 1927; CGL 4867; s. 2, ch. 29749, 1955; s. 1, ch. 63-45; s. 5, ch. 70-134; s. 1, ch. 77-284; s. 1, ch. 78-367; s. 1, ch. 79-266; s. 12, ch. 79-400; s. 1, ch. 82-205; s. 35, ch. 85-180; s. 2, ch. 85-249; s. 22, ch. 87-95; s. 2, ch. 87-145; s. 1, ch. 88-176; s. 1, ch. 92-200; ss. 5, 13, ch. 94-348; s. 5, ch. 95-214; s. 2, ch. 2000-144; s. 90, ch. 2003-261; s. 28, ch. 2003-402; s. 16, ch. 2004-265.

**TITLE VII. EVIDENCE  
CHAPTER 92. WITNESSES, RECORDS, AND DOCUMENTS**

**92.50 Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments; who may take or administer; requirements.--**

(1) IN THIS STATE.-Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments required or authorized under the laws of this state (except oaths to jurors and witnesses in court and such other oaths, affidavits and acknowledgments as are required by law to be taken or administered by or before particular officers) may be taken or administered by or before any judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of any court of record within this state, including federal courts, or

before any United States commissioner or any notary public within this state. The jurat, or certificate of proof or acknowledgment, shall be authenticated by the signature and official seal of such officer or person taking or administering the same; however, when taken or administered before any judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of a court of record, the seal of such court may be affixed as the seal of such officer or person.

(2) IN OTHER STATES, TERRITORIES, AND DISTRICTS OF THE UNITED STATES.-Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments required or authorized under the laws of this state, may be taken or administered in any other state, territory, or district of the United States, before any judge, clerk or deputy clerk of any court of record, within such state, territory, or district, having a seal, or before any notary public or justice of the peace, having a seal, in such state, territory, or district; provided, however, such officer or person is authorized under the laws of such state, territory, or district to take or administer oaths, affidavits and acknowledgments. The jurat, or certificate of proof or acknowledgment, shall be authenticated by the signature and official seal of such officer or person taking or administering the same; provided, however, when taken or administered by or before any judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of a court of record, the seal of such court may be affixed as the seal of such officer or person.

(3) IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.-Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments, required or authorized by the laws of this state, may be taken or administered in any foreign country, by or before any judge or justice of a court of last resort, any notary public of such foreign country, any minister, consul general, charge d'affaires, or consul of the United States resident in such country. The jurat, or certificate of proof or acknowledgment, shall be authenticated by the signature and official seal of the officer or person taking or administering the same; provided, however, when taken or administered by or before any judge or justice of a court of last resort, the seal of such court may be affixed as the seal of such judge or justice.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 48, 1845; RS 1299; GS 1730; RGS 2945; CGL 4669; s. 1, ch. 23156, 1945; s. 7, ch. 24337, 1947; s. 15, ch. 73-334; s. 3, ch. 76-237; s. 1, ch. 77-77; s. 22, ch. 78-361; s. 1, ch. 78-379.

### **92.51 Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments; taken or administered by commissioned officer of United States Armed Forces.--**

(1) Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments required or authorized by the laws of this state may be taken or administered within or without the United States by or before any commissioned officer in active service of the Armed Forces of the United States with the rank of second lieutenant or higher in the Army, Air Force or Marine Corps or ensign or higher in the Navy or Coast Guard when the person required or authorized to make and execute the oath, affidavit, or acknowledgment is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the spouse of such member or a person whose duties require the person's presence with the Armed Forces of the United States.

(2) A certificate endorsed upon the instrument which shows the date of the oath, affidavit, or acknowledgment and which states in substance that the person appearing before the officer acknowledged the instrument as the person's act or made or signed the instrument under oath shall be sufficient for all intents and purposes. The instrument shall not be rendered invalid by the failure to state the place of execution or acknowledgment.

(3) If the signature, rank, and branch of service or subdivision thereof of any commissioned officer appears upon such instrument, document or certificate no further proof of the authority of such officer so to act shall be required and such action by such commissioned officer shall be prima facie evidence that the person making such oath, affidavit or acknowledgment is within the purview of this act.

**History.**--ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 61-196; s. 3, ch. 76-237; s. 1, ch. 77-77; s. 22, ch. 78-361; s. 1, ch. 78-379; s. 518, ch. 95-147.

**92.52 Affirmation equivalent to oath.**--Whenever an oath shall be required by any law of this state in any proceeding, an affirmation may be substituted therefor.

**History.**--RS 1300; GS 1731; RGS 2946; CGL 4670; s. 3, ch. 76-237; s. 1, ch. 77-77; s. 22, ch. 78-361; s. 1, ch. 78-379.

**92.525 Verification of documents; perjury by false written declaration, penalty.**--

(1) When it is authorized or required by law, by rule of an administrative agency, or by rule or order of court that a document be verified by a person, the verification may be accomplished in the following manner:

(a) Under oath or affirmation taken or administered before an officer authorized under s. 92.50 to administer oaths; or

(b) By the signing of the written declaration prescribed in subsection (2).

(2) A written declaration means the following statement: "Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing [document] and that the facts stated in it are true," followed by the signature of the person making the declaration, except when a verification on information or belief is permitted by law, in which case the words "to the best of my knowledge and belief" may be added. The written declaration shall be printed or typed at the end of or immediately below the document being verified and above the signature of the person making the declaration.

(3) A person who knowingly makes a false declaration under subsection (2) is guilty of the crime of perjury by false written declaration, a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(4) As used in this section:

(a) The term "administrative agency" means any department or agency of the state or any county, municipality, special district, or other political subdivision.

(b) The term "document" means any writing including, without limitation, any form, application, claim, notice, tax return, inventory, affidavit, pleading, or paper.

(c) The requirement that a document be verified means that the document must be signed or executed by a person and that the person must state under oath or affirm that the facts or matters stated or recited in the document are true, or words of that import or effect.

**History.**--s. 12, ch. 86-201.

## **TITLE X. PUBLIC OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND RECORDS**

### **CHAPTER 113. COMMISSIONS**

**113.01 Fee for commissions issued by Governor.**--A fee of \$10 is prescribed for the issuance of each commission issued by the Governor of the state and attested by the Secretary of State for an elected officer or a notary public.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 14669, 1931; s. 1, ch. 15925, 1933; s. 1, ch. 17133, 1935; CGL 1936 Supp. 460(1), (4), 479(1); s. 1, ch. 28296, 1953; s. 2, ch. 65-256; s. 1, ch. 67-460; s. 1, ch. 81-260; s. 5, ch. 84-114; s. 3, ch. 93-268; s. 17, ch. 95-280; s. 1, ch. 96-407.

## CHAPTER 116. POWERS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

**116.35 Notary public commissions; employees of state and county agencies.--**Each agency, board, commission or department of the state and of the several counties of the state is hereby authorized to pay the cost of securing a notary public commission for any employee of such agency, board, commission or department. Such cost is declared to be an expense of such agency, board, commission or department and shall be expended from the budget thereof. The chief administrative officer of each such agency, board, commission or department shall determine the number of notaries public necessary for the proper administration of such agency, board, commission or department. All fees collected by such notaries public as hereinafter provided shall become fee receipts of the state or the several counties and shall be deposited in the general fund from which the budget of such agency, board, commission or department is allocated.

**History.--**s. 1, ch. 67-282.

**116.36 Notary public commissions; municipal employees.--**Each agency, board, commission or department of each of the several municipalities of the state is hereby authorized to pay the cost of securing a notary public commission for any employee of such agency, board, commission or department. Such cost is declared to be an expense of such agency, board, commission or department and shall be expended from the budget thereof. The chief administrative officer of each such agency, board, commission or department shall determine the number of notaries public necessary for the proper administration of such agency, board, commission or department. All fees collected by such notaries public as hereinafter provided shall become fee receipts of such municipality and shall be deposited in the general fund thereof.

**History.--**s. 2, ch. 67-282.

**116.37 Notary public commissions; elected officers.--**In all cases where such agency, board, commission or department is under the direction of one or more elected officers such officer or officers may become notaries public in like manner as provided in the case of employees as aforesaid.

**History.--**s. 2, ch. 67-282.

### **116.38 Notary fees.--**

(1) Except as is hereinafter provided, all such notaries shall collect fees for their services as notaries performed in connection with such agency, board, commission or department at the rates provided for under chapter 117; provided, however, that in any case wherein a certain fee shall be provided by law for such service then in that event such fee as provided by law shall be collected.

(2) No notary fee shall be charged or collected by such notaries in connection with such agency, board, commission or department, in connection with or incidental to the issuance of motor vehicle license tags or titles.

(3) No notary public fees shall be charged by such notaries for notarizing loyalty oaths which are required by law.

(4) The chief administrative officer of any such agency, board, commission or department may, upon determining that such service should be performed as a public service, authorize such service to be performed free of charge.

**History.--**s. 4-7, ch. 67-282.

## CHAPTER 118. INTERNATIONAL NOTARIES

### 118.10 Civil-law notary.--

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Authentic act” means an instrument executed by a civil-law notary referencing this section, which instrument includes the particulars and capacities to act of any transacting parties, a confirmation of the full text of any necessary instrument, the signatures or their legal equivalent of any transacting parties, the signature and seal of a civil-law notary, and such other information prescribed by the Secretary of State.

(b) “Civil-law notary” means a person who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar, who has practiced law for at least 5 years, and who is appointed by the Secretary of State as a civil-law notary.

(c) “Protocol” means a registry maintained by a civil-law notary in which the acts of the civil-law notary are archived.

(2) The Secretary of State shall have the power to appoint civil-law notaries and administer this section.

(3) A civil-law notary is authorized to issue authentic acts and thereby may authenticate or certify any document, transaction, event, condition, or occurrence. The contents of an authentic act and matters incorporated therein shall be presumed correct. A civil-law notary may also administer an oath and make a certificate thereof when it is necessary for execution of any writing or document to be attested, protested, or published under the seal of a notary public. A civil-law notary may also take acknowledgments of deeds and other instruments of writing for record, and solemnize the rites of matrimony, as fully as other officers of this state. A civil-law notary is not authorized to issue authentic acts for use in a jurisdiction if the United States Department of State has determined that the jurisdiction does not have diplomatic relations with the United States or is a terrorist country, or if trade with the jurisdiction is prohibited under the Trading With the Enemy Act of 1917, as amended, 50 U.S.C. ss. 1, et seq.

(4) The authentic acts, oaths and acknowledgments, and solemnizations of a civil-law notary shall be recorded in the civil-law notary’s protocol in a manner prescribed by the Secretary of State.

(5) The Secretary of State may adopt rules prescribing:

(a) The form and content of authentic acts, oaths, acknowledgments, solemnizations, and signatures and seals or their legal equivalents;

(b) Procedures for the permanent archiving of authentic acts, maintaining records of acknowledgments, oaths and solemnizations, and procedures for the administration of oaths and taking of acknowledgments;

(c) The charging of reasonable fees to be retained by the Secretary of State for the purpose of administering this chapter;

(d) Educational requirements and procedures for testing applicants’ knowledge of all matters relevant to the appointment, authority, duties or legal or ethical responsibilities of a civil-law notary;

(e) Procedures for the disciplining of civil-law notaries, including, but not limited to, the suspension and revocation of appointments for failure to comply with the requirements of this chapter or the rules of the Department of State, or for misrepresentation or fraud regarding the civil-law notary’s authority, the effect of the civil-law notary’s authentic acts, or the identities or acts of the parties to a transaction;



(f) Bonding or errors and omissions insurance requirements, or both, for civil-law notaries; and

(g) Other matters necessary for administering this section.

(6) The Secretary of State shall not regulate, discipline, or attempt to discipline any civil-law notary for, or with regard to, any action or conduct that would constitute the practice of law in this state, except by agreement with The Florida Bar. The Secretary of State shall not establish as a prerequisite to the appointment of a civil-law notary any test containing any question that inquires of the applicant's knowledge regarding the practice of law in the United States, unless such test is offered in conjunction with an educational program approved by The Florida Bar for continuing legal education credit.

(7) The powers of civil-law notaries include, but are not limited to, all of the powers of a notary public under any law of this state.

(8) This section shall not be construed as abrogating the provisions of any other act relating to notaries public, attorneys, or the practice of law in this state.

**History.**--s. 7, ch. 97-241; s. 1, ch. 97-278; ss. 10, 20, ch. 98-246; s. 74, ch. 99-251.

### **118.12 Certification of civil-law notary's authority; apostilles.--**

If certification of a civil-law notary's authority is necessary for a particular document or transaction, it must be obtained from the Secretary of State. Upon the receipt of a written request from a civil-law notary and the fee prescribed by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall issue a certification of the civil-law notary's authority, in a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, which shall include a statement explaining the legal qualifications and authority of a civil-law notary in this state. The fee prescribed for the issuance of the certification under this section or an apostille under s. 15.16 may not exceed \$10 per document. The Department of State may adopt rules to implement this section.

**History.**--s. 75, ch. 99-251.

## **TITLE XX111. MOTOR VEHICLES CHAPTER 319. TITLE CERTIFICATES**

### **319.23 Application for, and issuance of, certificate of title.--**

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(3) If a certificate of title has not previously been issued for a motor vehicle or mobile home in this state, the application, unless otherwise provided for in this chapter, shall be accompanied by a proper bill of sale or sworn statement of ownership, or a duly certified copy thereof, or by a certificate of title, bill of sale, or other evidence of ownership required by the law of the state or county from which the motor vehicle or mobile home was brought into this state. The application shall also be accompanied by:

(a)1. A sworn affidavit from the seller and purchaser verifying that the vehicle identification number shown on the affidavit is identical to the vehicle identification number shown on the motor vehicle; or

2. An appropriate departmental form evidencing that a physical examination has been made of the motor vehicle by the owner and by a duly constituted law enforcement officer in any state, a licensed motor vehicle dealer, a license inspector as provided by s. 320.58, or a notary public commissioned by this state and that the vehicle identification number shown on such form is identical to the vehicle identification number shown on the motor vehicle; and

(b) If the vehicle is a used car original, a sworn affidavit from the owner verifying that the odometer reading shown on the affidavit is identical to the odometer reading shown on the motor vehicle in accordance with the requirements of 49 C.F.R. s. 580.5 at the time that application for title is made. For the purposes of this section, the term “used car original” means a used vehicle coming into and being titled in this state for the first time.

(c) If the vehicle is an ancient or antique vehicle, as defined in s. 320.086, the application shall be accompanied by a certificate of title; a bill of sale and a registration; or a bill of sale and an affidavit by the owner defending the title from all claims. The bill of sale must contain a complete vehicle description to include the vehicle identification or engine number, year make, color, selling price, and signatures of the seller and purchaser. Verification of the vehicle identification number is not required for any new motor vehicle; any mobile home; any trailer or semitrailer with a net weight of less than 2,000 pounds; or any travel trailer, camping trailer, truck camper, or fifth-wheel recreation trailer.

**History.**--s. 4, ch. 23658, 1947; s. 3, ch. 25150, 1949; s. 1, ch. 28184, 1953; s. 2, ch. 61-296; s. 6, ch. 65-190; ss. 24, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 1, ch. 72-15; s. 2, ch. 75-66; s. 1, ch. 77-102; s. 4, ch. 78-221; s. 1, ch. 78-225; s. 2, ch. 78-412; s. 1, ch. 79-32; s. 1, ch. 79-399; s. 1, ch. 80-388; s. 7, ch. 82-134; s. 2, ch. 83-91; s. 42, ch. 85-180; s. 7, ch. 88-306; s. 1, ch. 89-53; ss. 12, 16, ch. 89-333; s. 339, ch. 95-148; ss. 13, 21, ch. 96-413; s. 12, ch. 99-248; s. 5, ch. 2001-196; s. 112, ch. 2002-20.

## **CHAPTER 320 MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSES**

### **320.04 Registration service charge.--**

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(2) No tax collector, deputy tax collector, or employee of the state or any county shall charge, collect, or receive any fee or compensation for services performed as notary public in connection with or incidental to the issuance of license plates or titles. The provisions of this subsection and of s. 116.38(2) prohibiting the charging, collecting, or receiving of notary public fees do not apply to any privately owned license plate agency appointed by the county manager of a charter county which has an appointed tax collector.

**History.**--s. 2, ch. 7275, 1917; RGS 1007; s. 3, ch. 8410, 1921; s. 2, ch. 10182, 1925; CGL 1281; s. 1, ch. 15625, 1931; ss. 1, 5, ch. 16085, 1933; ss. 1, 2, ch. 23149, 1945; s. 10, ch. 26484, 1951; s. 43, ch. 26869, 1951; s. 1, ch. 61-403; s. 1, ch. 63-143; s. 6, ch. 65-190; ss. 24, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 1, ch. 72-79; s. 1, ch. 74-338; s. 6, ch. 75-66; s. 3, ch. 78-207; s. 47, ch. 80-274; s. 1, ch. 82-50; s. 23, ch. 82-134; s. 8, ch. 83-318; s. 2, ch. 85-324; s. 54, ch. 90-132; s. 8, ch. 98-324; s. 19, ch. 99-248; s. 4, ch. 99-289; s. 44, ch. 2000-152; s. 26, ch. 2000-313.

## **TITLE XXX. SOCIAL WELFARE CHAPTER 425. RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES**

**425.26 Trustees, officers or members, notaries.--**No person who is authorized to take acknowledgments under the laws of this state shall be disqualified from taking acknowledgments of instruments executed in favor of a cooperative or to which it is a party, by reason of being an officer, director or member of such cooperative.

**History.**--s. 25, ch. 19138, 1939; CGL 1940 Supp. 6494(68).

**TITLE XXXII. REGULATION OF PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS  
CHAPTER 454. ATTORNEYS AT LAW**

**454.23 Penalties.--**Any person not licensed or otherwise authorized to practice law in this state who practices law in this state or holds himself or herself out to the public as qualified to practice law in this state, or who willfully pretends to be, or willfully takes or uses any name, title, addition, or description implying that he or she is qualified, or recognized by law as qualified, to practice law in this state, commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

**History.--**s. 21, ch. 10175, 1925; CGL 8133; s. 384, ch. 71-136; s. 1, ch. 74-128; s. 184, ch. 97-103; s. 1, ch. 2004-287.

**TITLE IIIVIII. BANKS AND BANKING  
CHAPTER 655. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS GENERALLY**

**655.94 Special remedies for nonpayment of rent.--**

(1) If the rental due on a safe-deposit box has not been paid for 3 months, the lessor may send a notice by registered mail to the last known address of the lessee stating that the safe-deposit box will be opened and its contents stored at the expense of the lessee unless payment of the rental is made within 30 days. If the rental is not paid within 30 days from the mailing of the notice, the box may be opened in the presence of an officer of the lessor and of a notary public who is not a director, officer, employee, or stockholder of the lessor. The contents shall be sealed in a package by a notary public who shall write on the outside the name of the lessee and the date of the opening. The notary public shall execute a certificate reciting the name of the lessee, the date of the opening of the box, and a list of its contents. The certificate shall be included in the package, and a copy of the certificate shall be sent by registered mail to the last known address of the lessee. The package shall then be placed in the general vaults of the lessor at a rental not exceeding the rental previously charged for the box. The lessor has a lien on the package and its contents to the extent of any rental due and owing plus the actual, reasonable costs of removing the contents from the safe-deposit box.

**History.--**s. 70, ch. 92-303.

**TITLE XXXIX. COMMERCIAL RELATIONS  
CHAPTER 668. ELECTRONIC COMMERCE  
PART II. UNIFORM ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS ACT**

**668.50 Uniform Electronic Transaction Act. --**

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(11) NOTARIZATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT.--

(a) If a law requires a signature or record to be notarized, acknowledged, verified, or made under oath, the requirement is satisfied if the electronic signature of the person authorized by applicable law to perform those acts, together with all other information required to be included by other applicable law, is attached to or logically associated with the signature or record. Neither a rubber stamp nor an impression type seal is required for an electronic notarization.

(b) A first-time applicant for a notary commission must submit proof that the applicant has, within 1 year prior to the application, completed at least 3 hours of interactive or

classroom instruction, including electronic notarization, and covering the duties of the notary public. Courses satisfying this section may be offered by any public or private sector person or entity registered with the Executive Office of the Governor and must include a core curriculum approved by that office

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 2000-164.

## **TITLE XL. REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY**

### **CHAPTER 695. RECORD OF CONVEYANCES OF REAL ESTATE**

**695.03 Acknowledgment and proof; validation of certain acknowledgments; legalization or authentication before foreign officials.**--To entitle any instrument concerning real property to be recorded, the execution must be acknowledged by the party executing it, proved by a subscribing witness to it, or legalized or authenticated by a civil-law notary or notary public who affixes her or his official seal, before the officers and in the form and manner following:

(1) **WITHIN THIS STATE.**--An acknowledgment or proof made within this state may be made before a judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of any court; a United States commissioner or magistrate; or a notary public or civil-law notary of this state, and the certificate of acknowledgment or proof must be under the seal of the court or officer, as the case may be. All affidavits and acknowledgments heretofore made or taken in this manner are hereby validated.

(2) **WITHOUT THIS STATE BUT WITHIN THE UNITED STATES.**--An acknowledgment or proof made out of this state but within the United States may be made before a civil-law notary of this state or a commissioner of deeds appointed by the Governor of this state; a judge or clerk of any court of the United States or of any state, territory, or district; a United States commissioner or magistrate; or a notary public, justice of the peace, master in chancery, or registrar or recorder of deeds of any state, territory, or district having a seal, and the certificate of acknowledgment or proof must be under the seal of the court or officer, as the case may be. If the acknowledgment or proof is made before a notary public who does not affix a seal, it is sufficient for the notary public to type, print, or write by hand on the instrument, "I am a Notary Public of the State of (state), and my commission expires on (date)."

(3) **WITHIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.**--If the acknowledgment, legalization, authentication, or proof is made in a foreign country, it may be made before a commissioner of deeds appointed by the Governor of this state to act in such country; before a notary public of such foreign country or a civil-law notary of this state or of such foreign country who has an official seal; before an ambassador, envoy extraordinary, minister plenipotentiary, minister, commissioner, charge d'affaires, consul general, consul, vice consul, consular agent, or other diplomatic or consular officer of the United States appointed to reside in such country; or before a military or naval officer authorized by the Laws or Articles of War of the United States to perform the duties of notary public, and the certificate of acknowledgment, legalization, authentication, or proof must be under the seal of the officer. A certificate legalizing or authenticating the signature of a person executing an instrument concerning real property and to which a civil-law notary or notary public of that country has affixed her or his official seal is sufficient as an acknowledgment. For the purposes of this section, the term "civil-law notary" means a civil-law notary as defined in chapter 118 or an official of a foreign country who has an official seal and who is authorized to make legal or lawful the execution of any document

in that jurisdiction, in which jurisdiction the affixing of her or his official seal is deemed proof of the execution of the document or deed in full compliance with the laws of that jurisdiction.

**History.**--RS 1973; ch. 5404, 1905; GS 2481; ss. 1, 2, ch. 7849, 1919; RGS 3823; CGL 5699; s. 7, ch. 22858, 1945; s. 1, ch. 28225, 1953; s. 1, ch. 69-79; s. 1, ch. 71-53; s. 26, ch. 73-334; s. 3, ch. 80-173; s. 1, ch. 84-97; s. 763, ch. 97-102; s. 21, ch. 98-246.

### **695.031 Affidavits and acknowledgments by members of armed forces and their spouses.--**

(1) In addition to the manner, form and proof of acknowledgment of instruments as now provided by law, any person serving in or with the Armed Forces of the United States, including the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or any component or any arm or service of any thereof, including any female auxiliary of any thereof, and any person whose duties require his or her presence with the Armed Forces of the United States, as herein designated, or otherwise designated by law or military or naval command, may acknowledge any instrument, wherever located, either within or without the state, or without the United States, before any commissioned officer in active service of the Armed Forces of the United States, as herein designated, or otherwise designated by law, or military or naval command, or order, with the rank of second lieutenant or higher in the Army or Marine Corps, or of any component or any arm or service of either thereof, including any female auxiliary of any thereof, or ensign or higher in the Navy or United States Coast Guard, or of any component or any arm or service of either thereof, including any female auxiliary of any thereof.

(2) The instrument shall not be rendered invalid by the failure to state therein the place of execution or acknowledgment. No authentication of the officer's certificate of acknowledgment or otherwise shall be required, and no seal shall be necessary, but the officer taking the acknowledgment shall endorse thereon or attach thereto a certificate substantially in the following form:

On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, (year), before me \_\_\_\_, the undersigned officer, personally appeared \_\_\_\_, known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be serving in or with, or whose duties require her or his presence with the Armed Forces of the United States, and to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument, and acknowledged that she or he executed the same for the purposes therein contained, and the undersigned does further certify that she or he is at the date of this certificate a commissioned officer of the rank stated below and is in the active service of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(Signature of commissioned officer.)

(Rank of commissioned officer and command or branch of service to which officer is attached.)

**History.**--s. 7, ch. 22858, 1945; s. 1, ch. 57-40; s. 764, ch. 97-102; s. 28, ch. 99-6.

**Note.**--Former s. 120.08.

### **695.25 Short form of acknowledgment.--**

The forms of acknowledgment set forth in this section may be used, and are sufficient for their respective purposes, under any law of this state. The forms shall be known as "Statutory Short Forms of Acknowledgment" and may be referred to by that name. The authorization of the forms in this section does not preclude the use of other forms.

(1) For an individual acting in his or her own right:

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (date) by (name of person acknowledging), who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of person taking acknowledgment)  
(Name typed, printed or stamped)  
(Title or rank)  
(Serial number, if any)

(2) For a corporation:

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (date) by (name of officer or agent, title of officer or agent) of (name of corporation acknowledging), a (state or place of incorporation) corporation, on behalf of the corporation. He/she is personally known to me or has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of person taking acknowledgment)  
(Name typed, printed or stamped)  
(Title or rank)  
(Serial number, if any)

(3) For a partnership:

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (date) by (name of acknowledging partner or agent), partner (or agent) on behalf of (name of partnership), a partnership. He/she is personally known to me or has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of person taking acknowledgment)  
(Name typed, printed or stamped)  
(Title or rank)  
(Serial number, if any)

(4) For an individual acting as principal by an attorney in fact:

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (date) by (name of attorney in fact) as attorney in fact, who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification on behalf of (name of principal).

(Signature of person taking acknowledgment)  
(Name typed, printed or stamped)  
(Title or rank)  
(Serial number, if any)

(5) By any public officer, trustee, or personal representative:

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (date) by (name and title of position), who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification.

(Signature of person taking acknowledgment)  
(Name typed, printed or stamped)  
(Title or rank)  
(Serial number, if any)

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 73-62; s. 10, ch. 91-291; s. 7, ch. 93-62; s. 772, ch. 97-102.

**695.26 Requirements for recording instruments affecting real property.--**

\*(1)(d) The name of any notary public or other officer authorized to take acknowledgments or proofs whose signature appears upon the instrument is legibly printed, typewritten, or stamped upon such instrument immediately beneath the signature of such notary public or other officer authorized to take acknowledgment or proofs.

\*This is not the only recording requirement but it is the only one that is directly related to the notarization. This section does not apply to: documents executed before July 1,1991: an instrument executed, acknowledged, or proved outside of the state: or a will. For a complete understanding of recording requirements, please review all of s.695.26, Florida Statutes, or contact the recording section of the county clerk’s office.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 90-183; ss. 8, 22, ch. 94-348; s. 773, ch. 97-102.

**TITLE XLII. ESTATES AND TRUSTS**  
**CHAPTER 732. PROBATE CODE: INTESTATE SUCCESSION AND WILLS**

**732.503 Self-proof of will.--**

A will or codicil executed in conformity with s. 732.502(1) and (2) may be made self-proved at the time of its execution or at any subsequent date by the acknowledgment of it by the testator and the affidavits of the witnesses, each made before an officer authorized to administer oaths and evidenced by the officer’s certificate attached to or following the will, in substantially the following form:

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

We, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ the testator and the witnesses, respectively, whose names are signed to the attached or foregoing instrument, having been sworn, declared to the undersigned officer that the testator, in the presence of witnesses, signed the instrument as the testator's last will (codicil), that the testator (signed) (or directed another to sign for him or her), and that each of the witnesses, in the presence of the testator and in the presence of each other, signed the will as a witness.

(Testator)  
(Witness)  
(Witness)

Subscribed and sworn to before me by \_\_\_\_\_, the testator who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification, and by \_\_\_\_\_, a witness who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification, and by \_\_\_\_\_, a witness who is personally known to me or who has produced (type of identification) as identification, on \_\_\_\_\_, (year).

(Signature of Notary Public)  
(Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of Notary Public)

(2) A will or codicil made self-proved under former law, or executed in another state and made self-proved under the laws of that state, shall be considered as self-proved under this section.

**History.**--s. 1, ch. 74-106; s. 21, ch. 75-220; s. 12, ch. 77-87; s. 8, ch. 93-62; s. 962, ch. 97-102; s. 18, ch. 98-246; s. 43, ch. 2001-226.

**Note.**--Created from former s. 731.071.

## **TITLE XLIII. DOMESTIC RELATIONS**

### **CHAPTER 741. MARRIAGE; DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

#### **741.07 Persons authorized to solemnize matrimony.--**

(1) All regularly ordained ministers of the gospel or elders in communion with some church, or other ordained clergy, and all judicial officers, including retired judicial officers, clerks of the circuit courts, and notaries public of this state may solemnize the rights of matrimonial contract, under the regulations prescribed by law. Nothing in this section shall make invalid a marriage which was solemnized by any member of the clergy, or as otherwise provided by law prior to July 1, 1978.

(2) Any marriage which may be had and solemnized among the people called "Quakers," or "Friends," in the manner and form used or practiced in their societies, according to their rites and ceremonies, shall be good and valid in law; and wherever the words "minister" and "elder" are used in this chapter, they shall be held to include all of the persons connected with the Society of Friends, or Quakers, who perform or have charge of the marriage ceremony according to their rites and ceremonies.

**History.**--s. 1, Nov. 2, 1829; s. 2, ch. 1127, 1861; RS 2056; GS 2575; RGS 3934; CGL 5853; s. 1, ch. 28104, 1953; s. 1, ch. 74-372; s. 1, ch. 78-15; s. 34, ch. 95-401.



**741.08 Marriage not to be solemnized without a license.--**Before any of the persons named in s. 741.07 shall solemnize any marriage, he or she shall require of the parties a marriage license issued according to the requirements of s. 741.01, and within 10 days after solemnizing the marriage he or she shall make a certificate thereof on the license, and shall transmit the same to the office of the county court judge or clerk of the circuit court from which it issued.

**History.--**ss. 2, 3, Nov. 2, 1829; s. 1, ch. 3890, 1889; RS 2057; GS 2576; RGS 3935; CGL 5854; s. 28, ch. 73-334; s. 1, ch. 74-372; s. 1059, ch. 97-102.

**741.10 Proof of marriage where no certificate available.--**When any marriage is or has been solemnized by any of the persons named in s. 741.07, and such person has not made a certificate thereof on the marriage license as required by s. 741.08, or when the marriage license has been lost, or when by reason of death or other cause the proper certificate cannot be obtained, the marriage may be proved by affidavit before any officer authorized to administer oaths made by two competent witnesses who were present and saw the marriage ceremony performed, which affidavit may be filed and recorded in the office of the county court judge or clerk of the circuit court from which the marriage license issued, with the same force and effect as in cases in which the proper certificate has been made, returned and recorded.

**History.--**s. 1, ch. 3126, 1879; RS 2059; GS 2578; RGS 3937; CGL 5856; s. 28, ch. 73-334; s. 1, ch. 74-372.

## CHAPTER 744. GUARDIANSHIP

### **744.3215 Rights of persons determined incapacitated.-**

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(2) Rights that may be removed from a person by an order determining incapacity include the right:

- (a) To marry.
- (b) To vote.
- (c) To personally apply for government benefits.
- (d) To have a driver's license.
- (e) To travel.
- (f) To seek or retain employment.

(3) Rights that may be removed from a person by an order determining incapacity and which may be delegated to the guardian include the right:

- (a) To contract.
- (b) To sue and defend lawsuits.
- (c) To apply for government benefits.
- (d) To manage property or to make any gift or disposition of property.
- (e) To determine his or her residence.
- (f) To consent to medical and mental health treatment.
- (g) To make decisions about his or her social environment or other social aspects of his or her life.

**History.--**s. 34, ch. 89-96; s. 19, ch. 90-271; s. 36, ch. 93-39; s. 13, ch. 94-183; s. 44, ch. 96-169; s. 6, ch. 96-354; s. 1782, ch. 97-102.

**TITLE XLVI. CRIMES  
CHAPTER 775. DEFINITIONS; GENERAL PENALTIES;  
REGISTRATION OF CRIMINALS**

**775.082 Penalties; applicability of sentencing structures; mandatory minimum sentences for certain reoffenders previously released from prison.--**

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(3) A person who has been convicted of any other designated felony may be punished as follows:

(d) For a felony of the third degree, by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

(4) A person who has been convicted of a designated misdemeanor may be sentenced as follows:

(a) For a misdemeanor of the first degree, by a definite term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year;

(b) For a misdemeanor of the second degree, by a definite term of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days.

**History.--**s. 3, ch. 71-136; ss. 1, 2, ch. 72-118; s. 2, ch. 72-724; s. 5, ch. 74-383; s. 1, ch. 77-174; s. 1, ch. 83-87; s. 1, ch. 94-228; s. 16, ch. 95-184; s. 4, ch. 95-294; s. 2, ch. 97-239; s. 2, ch. 98-3; s. 10, ch. 98-204; s. 2, ch. 99-188; s. 3, ch. 2000-246; s. 1, ch. 2001-239; s. 2, ch. 2002-70; ss. 1, 2, ch. 2002-211.

**775.083 Fines.--**

(1) A person who has been convicted of an offense other than a capital felony may be sentenced to pay a fine in addition to any punishment described in s. 775.082; when specifically authorized by statute, he or she may be sentenced to pay a fine in lieu of any punishment described in s. 775.082. A person who has been convicted of a noncriminal violation may be sentenced to pay a fine. Fines for designated crimes and for noncriminal violations shall not exceed:

(a) \$15,000, when the conviction is of a life felony.

(b) \$10,000, when the conviction is of a felony of the first or second degree.

(c) \$5,000, when the conviction is of a felony of the third degree.

(d) \$1,000, when the conviction is of a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(e) \$500, when the conviction is of a misdemeanor of the second degree or a noncriminal violation.

(f) Any higher amount equal to double the pecuniary gain derived from the offense by the offender or double the pecuniary loss suffered by the victim.

(g) Any higher amount specifically authorized by statute.

Fines imposed in this subsection shall be deposited by the clerk of the court in the fine and forfeiture fund established pursuant to s. 142.01. If a defendant is unable to pay a fine, the court may defer payment of the fine to a date certain.

(2) In addition to the fines set forth in subsection (1), court costs shall be assessed and collected in each instance a defendant pleads nolo contendere to, or is convicted of, or adjudicated delinquent for, a felony, a misdemeanor, or a criminal traffic offense under state law, or a violation of any municipal or county ordinance if the violation constitutes a misdemeanor under state law. The court costs imposed by this section shall be \$50 for a felony and \$20 for any other offense and shall be deposited by the clerk of the court into an appropriate county account for disbursement for the purposes provided in this subsection. A county shall account for the funds separately from other county funds as crime prevention funds. The county, in consultation with the sheriff, must expend such

funds for crime prevention programs in the county, including safe neighborhood programs under ss. 163.501-163.523.

(3) The purpose of this section is to provide uniform penalty authorization for criminal offenses and, to this end, a reference to this section constitutes a general reference under the doctrine of incorporation by reference.

History.--s. 4, ch. 71-136; s. 6, ch. 74-383; s. 1, ch. 77-97; s. 1, ch. 77-174; s. 1, ch. 96-408; s. 1810, ch. 97-102; s. 117, ch. 2003-402.

## **CHAPTER 831. FORGERY AND COUNTERFEITING**

**831.01 Forgery.--**Whoever falsely makes, alters, forges or counterfeits a public record, or a certificate, return or attestation of any clerk or register of a court, public register, notary public, town clerk or any public officer, in relation to a matter wherein such certificate, return or attestation may be received as a legal proof; or a charter, deed, will, testament, bond, or writing obligatory, letter of attorney, policy of insurance, bill of lading, bill of exchange or promissory note, or an order, acquittance, or discharge for money or other property, or an acceptance of a bill of exchange or promissory note for the payment of money, or any receipt for money, goods or other property, or any passage ticket, pass or other evidence of transportation issued by a common carrier, with intent to injure or defraud any person, shall be guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

**History.--**s. 1, ch. 1637, 1868; RS 2479; s. 6, ch. 4702, 1899; GS 3359; RGS 5206; CGL 7324; s. 1, ch. 59-31; s. 1, ch. 61-98; s. 959, ch. 71-136; s. 32, ch. 73-334.

### **831.02 Uttering forged instruments.--**

Whoever utters and publishes as true a false, forged or altered record, deed, instrument or other writing mentioned in s. 831.01 knowing the same to be false, altered, forged or counterfeited, with intent to injure or defraud any person, shall be guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

**History.--**s. 2, ch. 1637, 1868; RS 2480; GS 3360; RGS 5208; CGL 7326; s. 2, ch. 59-31; s. 2, ch. 61-98; s. 960, ch. 71-136.

## **CHAPTER 839. OFFENSES BY PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES**

**839.11 Extortion by officers of the state.--**Any officer of this state who willfully charges, receives, or collects any greater fees or services than the officer is entitled to charge, receive, or collect by law is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

**History.--**RS 2569; GS 3481; RGS 5354; CGL 7489; s. 1021, ch. 71-136; s. 1, ch. 79-132; s. 9, ch. 79-163; s. 1322, ch. 97-102.

### **838.022 Official misconduct.--**

(1) It is unlawful for a public servant, with corrupt intent to obtain a benefit for any person or to cause harm to another, to:

(a) Falsify, or cause another person to falsify, any official record or official document;  
(b) Conceal, cover up, destroy, mutilate, or alter any official record or official document or cause another person to perform such an act; or

(c) Obstruct, delay, or prevent the communication of information relating to the commission of a felony that directly involves or affects the public agency or public entity served by the public servant.

(2) For the purposes of this section:

(a) The term “public servant” does not include a candidate who does not otherwise qualify as a public servant.

(b) An official record or official document includes only public records.

(3) Any person who violates this section commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

**History.**--s. 5, ch. 2003-158.