



## COVID-19 Notary Services Impact Bulletin – 50 State Survey

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With COVID-19 social-distancing and stay at home orders, millions of Americans have been forced to adapt and find new ways to transact business. While people are generally familiar with receiving documents by email for review and signature, questions arise when they come to a notary acknowledgment block under their signature line. With in-person contact limited, most people no longer have access to a notary public at work, an attorney's office or a bank. While sometimes not legally required, state laws do typically require notary acknowledgments for recording of documents conveying interests in real property (such as deeds, mortgages and deeds of trust) and for various affidavits and other public documents. Though some states had already passed remote notary legislation prior to COVID-19 to facilitate electronic closings and provide access to notaries in rural locations (with many other states in various stages of drafting or considering legislation), the current COVID-19 business environment has resulted in many states adopting emergency measures to ensure legal transactions requiring notary acknowledgments for signatures can continue. Some of these emergency orders temporarily relax remote notarization requirements in states that were already allowing the same, while other orders introduce remote notarization de novo during the COVID-19 crisis.

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