

§ 92.22

must be signed and sealed by the notarizing officer (see §§92.15 and 92.16 on signing and sealing notarial certificates).

§ 92.22 “Affidavit” defined.

An affidavit is a written declaration under oath made before some person who has authority to administer oaths, without notice to any adverse party that may exist. One test of the sufficiency of an affidavit is whether it is so clear and certain that it will sustain an indictment for perjury, if found to be false. An affidavit differs from a deposition in that it is taken *ex parte* and without notice, while a deposition is taken after notice has been furnished to the opposite party, who is given an opportunity to cross-examine the witness.

§ 92.23 Taking an affidavit.

The notarizing officer taking an affidavit should:

(a) Satisfy himself, as far as possible, that his notarial act will be acceptable under the laws of the jurisdiction where the affidavit is to be used (see §92.5);

(b) Require the personal appearance of the affiant at the time the affidavit is taken;

(c) Require satisfactory identification of the affiant; and

(d) Administer the oath to the affiant before the affiant signs the affidavit.

[22 FR 10858, Dec. 27, 1957, as amended at 60 FR 51723, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.24 Usual form of affidavit.

Affidavits are usually drawn by competent attorneys or are set out in established forms. The form and substantive requirements of an affidavit depend principally upon the purpose for which it is made and the statutes of the jurisdiction where it is intended to be used. When a notarizing officer finds it necessary in the discharge of his official duties to prepare an affidavit, or when he assists a private person in preparing an affidavit (see §92.11(b)), he should, where possible, consult the pertinent statutory provisions.

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§ 92.25 Title of affidavit.

Generally an affidavit taken for use in a pending cause must be entitled in that cause so that it will show to what proceedings it is intended to apply, and may support an indictment for perjury in case it proves to be false. If there is no suit pending at the time the affidavit is taken or if the affidavit is not to be used in any cause in court, no title need be given.

§ 92.26 Venue on affidavit.

The venue must always be given and should precede the body of the affidavit. (See §92.14 regarding venue on notarial certificates generally.)

§ 92.27 Affiant’s allegations in affidavit.

(a) *Substance of allegations.* Although a notarizing officer is generally not responsible for the correctness of the form of an affidavit or the manner in which the allegations therein are set forth (see §92.11(a) regarding the preparation of legal documents by attorneys; §92.11(b) regarding the preparation of legal documents by notarizing officers; and §92.24 regarding the form of an affidavit), he may, in appropriate instances, draw the affiant’s attention to the following generally accepted criteria as regards the substance of the allegations:

(1) Material facts within the personal knowledge of the affiant should be alleged directly and positively. Facts are not to be inferred where the affiant has it in his power to state them positively and fully.

(2) If the matters stated in the affiant’s affidavit rest upon information derived from others rather than on facts within his personal knowledge, he should aver that such matters are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

(3) If the allegations made on information and belief are material, the sources of information and grounds of belief should be set out and a good reason given why a positive statement could not be made.

(4) If the conclusions of the affiant are drawn from the contents of documents, such contents should be set out or exhibited, so that the authority to whom the affidavit is presented may

determine whether the affiant's deductions are well founded.

(b) *Veracity of allegations.* Notarizing officers are not required to examine into the truth of the affiant's allegations or to pass upon any contentious questions involved. In many instances the matters referred to in an affidavit will be of a technical or special nature beyond the officer's general knowledge or experience. However, he may, in certain circumstances, refuse to take an affidavit. (See § 92.9 regarding the types of situations in which an officer might properly refuse to perform a notarial service; also see § 92.10 regarding the waiver and other statements which may be included in a notarial certificate where evidence exists of falsity in the affiant's declaration.)

[22 FR 10858, Dec. 27, 1957, as amended at 60 FR 51723, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.28 Signature of affiant on affidavit.

The signature of the affiant is indispensable. The affiant should always sign the affidavit in the presence of the notarizing officer.

§ 92.29 Oath or affirmation to affidavit.

Affidavits made before notarizing officers must be sworn to or affirmed (see § 92.23(d)).

[22 FR 10858, Dec. 27, 1957, as amended at 60 FR 51723, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.30 Acknowledgment defined.

An acknowledgment is a proceeding by which a person who has executed an instrument goes before a competent officer or court and declares it to be his act and deed to entitle it to be recorded or to be received in evidence without further proof of execution. An acknowledgment is almost never made under oath and should not be confused with an oath (see § 92.18(a) for definition of oath). Moreover, an acknowledgment is not the same as an attestation, the latter being the act of witnessing the execution of an instrument and then signing it as a witness. Instruments requiring acknowledgment generally are those relating to land, such as deeds, mortgages, leases, contracts for the sale of land, and so on.

§ 92.31 Taking an acknowledgment.

(a) *Officers' assurance of acceptability of notarial act.* A notarizing officer taking an acknowledgment should, if possible, ascertain the requirements of the jurisdiction in which the acknowledged document is to be used and execute the certificate in accordance with those requirements. Not all States or Territories will accept certificates of acknowledgment executed by notarizing officers other than consuls. Therefore, notarizing officers and consular agents who are called upon to perform this notarial act should consult the applicable State or territorial law to ascertain whether certificates of acknowledgment will be acceptable. (See § 92.5 regarding acceptability of consular notarial acts under state or territorial law.) Furthermore, public policy generally forbids that the act of taking and certifying an acknowledgment be performed by a person financially or beneficially interested in the transaction to which the acknowledged document relates. Notarizing officers should keep this point in mind, especially in connection with acknowledgments by members of their families.

(b) *Personal appearance of grantor(s).* A notarizing officer taking an acknowledgment should always require the personal appearance of the grantor(s), i.e., the person or persons who have signed the instrument to be acknowledged. Since the officer states in his certificate that the parties did personally appear before him, failure to observe this requirement invalidates the notarial act and makes the officer liable to the charge of negligence and of having executed a false certificate. A notarizing officer should never take an acknowledgment by telephone.

(c) *Satisfactory identification of grantor(s).* The notarizing officer must be certain of the identity of the parties making an acknowledgment. If he is not personally acquainted with the parties, he should require from each some evidence of identity, such as a passport, police identity card, or the like. The laws of some States and Territories require that the identity of an acknowledger be proved by the oath of one or more "credible witnesses", and that a statement regarding the proving of identity in this manner be included