

in the certificate of acknowledgment. (See § 92.32(b) regarding forms of certificates of acknowledgment generally.) Mere introduction of a person not known to the notarizing officer, without further proof of identity, is not considered adequate identification for acknowledgment purposes.

(d) *Explanation of contents of instrument.* The notarizing officer must assure himself that the person acknowledging an instrument understands the nature of the instrument. If the person does not understand it, the officer is legally and morally bound to explain the instrument in such a way as to make the person who has signed it realize the character and effect of his act. This duty is particularly important where the signer of a document has little or no knowledge of the language in which the document is written.

(e) *Acknowledgments of married women.* Some of the States still require that a married woman who has executed an instrument of conveyance jointly with her husband be examined separately by the notarizing officer at the time the acknowledgments of the couple are taken. Notarizing officers should consult the applicable statutory provisions before taking the acknowledgments of a husband and wife to a document which they have both executed.

[22 FR 10858, Dec. 27, 1957, as amended at 60 FR 51722 and 51723, Oct. 3, 1995]

#### § 92.32 Notarial certificate to acknowledgment.

(a) *Title.* The notarial certificate evidencing the taking of an acknowledgment is commonly known as a "certificate of acknowledgment" or sometimes simply as an "acknowledgment."

(b) *Form.* The form of a certificate of acknowledgment varies widely depending on the laws of the jurisdiction where the acknowledged document is intended to be used, the purpose for which the document is intended, and the legal position of the persons who have executed it. Instruments to be acknowledged are frequently prepared on printed forms, the entire contract or deed being on one sheet together with the certificate of acknowledgment. Often the document, including the certificate of acknowledgment, is drawn up in advance by an attorney. In these

cases, the notarizing officer may use the certificate which is already on the document, making whatever modifications are manifestly required to show that the certificate was executed by a notarizing officer. However, if he finds it necessary to prepare the certificate of acknowledgment, the officer should consult the appropriate reference work for guidance as to the proper form. When no prescribed form can be found, the officer should use the language in Form FS-88, Certificate of Acknowledgment of Execution of an Instrument, inserting the certificate immediately at the close of the deed on the last page if space permits, or, if a separate sheet is necessary, using the printed Form FS-88 itself.

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

#### § 92.33 Execution of certificate of acknowledgment.

(a) *When certificate should be executed.* A notarizing officer should execute a certificate of acknowledgment immediately after the parties to the instrument have made their acknowledgment. Allowing several days or weeks to elapse between the time the acknowledgment is made and the certificate executed is undesirable, even though the officer may remember the acknowledgment act.

(b) *Venue.* The venue must be shown as prescribed in § 92.14.

(c) *Date.* The date in the certificate must be the date the acknowledgment was made. This is not necessarily the same as the date the instrument was executed. In fact, there is no reason why an instrument may not be acknowledged a year or more after the date of its execution, or at different times and places by various grantors.

(d) *Names of parties.* The name or names of the person or persons making the acknowledgment should appear in the certificate in the same form as they are set out in the acknowledged document, and in the same form as their signature on the instrument.

(e) *Additional statements.* When executing a certificate of acknowledgment on Form FS-88, the notarizing officer may include any necessary additional statements in the blank space below the body of the certificate.

## § 92.34

(f) *Signing and sealing certificate.* The certificate of acknowledgment shall be signed and sealed as prescribed in §§ 92.15 and 92.16.

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

### § 92.34 Fastening certificate to instrument.

The proper place for the certificate of acknowledgment is after the signature of the parties to the instrument. If the instrument is a printed form, the certificate will almost invariably be a part of the form. When Form FS-88 is used or when the certificate must be prepared on a sheet separate from the instrument, it should be fastened to the instrument as the last sheet. The method of fastening notarial certificates is prescribed in § 92.17.

### § 92.35 Errors in certificate of acknowledgment.

A notarizing officer having taken an acknowledgment of an instrument and made a certificate of that fact cannot afterwards amend or change his certificate for the purpose of correcting a mistake. This can be done only by the parties reacknowledging the instrument. However, typographical errors may be corrected by striking out the erroneous characters and inserting the correct ones above. Such changes should be initiated by the parties who executed the instrument and by the notarizing officer.

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

### § 92.36 Authentication defined.

An authentication is a certification of the genuineness of the official character, i.e., signature and seal, or position of a foreign official. It is an act done with the intention of causing a document which has been executed or issued in one jurisdiction to be recognized in another jurisdiction. Documents which may require authentication include legal instruments notarized by foreign notaries or other officials, and copies of public records, such as birth, death, and marriage certificates, issued by foreign record keepers.

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### § 92.37 Authentication procedure.

(a) The consular officer must compare the foreign official's seal and signature on the document he is asked to authenticate with a specimen of the same official's seal and signature on file either in the Foreign Service office or in a foreign public office to which he has access. If no specimen is available to the consular officer, he should require that each signature and seal be authenticated by some higher official or officials of the foreign government until there appears on the document a seal and signature which he can compare with a specimen available to him. However, this procedure of having a document authenticated by a series of foreign officials should be followed only where unusual circumstances, or the laws or regulations of the foreign country require it.

(b) Where the State law requires the consular officer's certificate of authentication to show that the foreign official is empowered to perform a particular act, such as administering an oath or taking an acknowledgment, the consular officer must verify the fact that the foreign official is so empowered.

(c) When the consular officer has satisfactorily identified the foreign seal and signature (and, where required, has verified the authority of the foreign official to perform a particular act), he may then execute a certificate of authentication, either placing this certificate on the document itself if space is available, or appending it to the document on a separate sheet (see § 92.17 on the fastening of notarial certificates).

### § 92.38 Forms of certificate of authentication.

The form of a certificate of authentication depends on the statutory requirements of the jurisdiction where the authenticated document will be used (see § 92.39 regarding the provisions of Federal law). Before authenticating a document for use in a State or Territory of the United States, a consular officer should consult the pertinent law digest to ascertain what specific requirements must be met, or