



Remote Online Notarization: What you need to know.

Given the reality of business in a post-pandemic world, the attorneys at Wegman Hessler have vastly expanded our electronic and online services for our clients. Between video-conferencing capabilities, remote collaboration options, and updated technical and security protocols, we are well-suited to continue serving our clients with the same level of attention and skill that our clients have come to expect. Among the newer offerings is our ability to notarize documents remotely. If you are a client in need of remote notarization services, here are some things you need to know:

1. REMOTE NOTARIZATION IS FAIRLY NEW.

Prior to legislation effective September 20, 2019, remote notarization was not legal in Ohio. The very timely passage of this notarization reform legislation puts Ohio ahead of many other states in being able to adapt to rapidly changing business requirements.

2. NOTARIES MUST BE AUTHORIZED.

In order to be approved by the Secretary of State to perform online remote notarizations, Ohio notaries must meet required education and testing requirements and also have the technical capabilities required to ensure the legality of the notarization process.

3. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET.

In order to take advantage of Wegman Hessler's remote notarization capabilities, the client must have:

1. Access to a laptop or desktop computer with a microphone and webcam (a phone or tablet will not work).
2. A reliable internet connection.
3. Reasonable familiarity with video-conferencing and screen-sharing through Zoom or an equivalent platform.

4. IDENTITY VERIFICATION IS REQUIRED.

Prior to executing documents remotely, signers must pass a two-step identity verification process. Step one involves correctly answering knowledge-based authentication questions similar to those required when signing up for online access to a bank account. These questions are not shared with the notary and are generated by the secure notarization software platform based on the signer's input of his or her birthdate and social security number. Step two involves the verification of a government-issued ID card such as a driver's license using photo-recognition technology.

5. PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCEPTION.

If the remote notary has previous personal knowledge of the signer and can successfully verify the signer's identity during the course of the two-way video conference, the identity verification process outlined in item 4 above, is not necessary.

6. DOCUMENTS NOTARIZED REMOTELY ARE VALID FOR ALL PURPOSES.

The notarized documents contain tamper-proof e-signatures and a notarized seal indicating that the notarization was performed pursuant to State of Ohio remote notarization requirements. The notarizations are valid for all purposes pursuant to Ohio law.