

North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State

NEWS

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Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State

For Immediate Release

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NC Secretary of State's Emergency Video Notarization Proposal Signed Into Law by Governor Cooper

RALEIGH -- Emergency video notarizations are now temporarily authorized under state law for most notarial acts until August 1, 2020 as a result of the State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously, a notarization had to be conducted with the notary and principal signer in close physical proximity. N.C. Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall advocated to the Governor and General Assembly for this additional flexibility for North Carolina's 157,000 commissioned Notaries Public and those they serve.

"These emergency video notarizations will allow crucial business transactions, real estate transactions, medical documents, court documents, and all other important documents to be notarized in a healthy and expedient manner during this time of stay-at-home orders and social distancing," said Sec. Marshall. "This added flexibility protects the health and safety of our citizens, and helps keep our economy moving."

Personal appearance before a notary when signing important documents like title transfers, real estate mortgages or wills is the most trusted form of identity verification. But during these unprecedented times, Sec. Marshall and Secretary of State staff proactively worked with professional associations, businesses, notary experts, legislative leaders, the Governor's Office and other crucial stakeholders to ensure signatures may be authenticated safely while at the same time maintaining North Carolina's traditionally strong safeguards against impostor dealings. The Secretary of State previously issued recommended best practices for notaries while social distancing.

[Senate Bill 704](#) establishes the technology and record-keeping requirements for the emergency video notarizations, including maintenance of notary journal records for 10 years. It also establishes a process for documents still required to have an original "wet" signature. Identification requirements under the current notary law remain. Notaries Public may always decline to perform a notarial act if not satisfied the principal's identity has been adequately established, or when fraud is suspected. The [Emergency Video Notarization Requirements](#) can be found on the Secretary of State's Web site at www.sosnc.gov.

Under the revised law, emergency video notarizations of absentee ballots are prohibited, as are video notarizations of proofs and verifications as defined by G.S. 10B-3(28).

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