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Notarizations and Certified Copies Services Offer by the Arkansas Division of Legal Services

Limitations on Notarizations. A notary acts as an official, unbiased witness to the identity and signature of individuals who appear before the notary for some specific purpose, such as taking an oath or signing a legal document. For this reason, the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate cannot:

- a. Notarize unsigned documents;
- b. Notarize incomplete documents;
- c. Notarize a document unless the person whose signature is notarized is present before the notary; or,
- d. Provide "Signature Guarantees." Signature Guarantees are defined as a warranty, with respect to the signature of a security or an originator of an instruction regarding a security.

Limitation on Certified Copies. The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate may make certified copies of some original documents. However, the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate cannot make certified copies of public records or vital records such as:

- a. Court Records;
- b. Birth Certificates;
- c. Marriage Certificates;
- d. Death Certificates;
- e. Car Titles;
- f. Passports; and
- g. Military Leave and Earning Statements.

The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate may only authenticate copies of public records or publically recorded documents for military administration (including finance and personnel administration) and for Federal administration where allowed by law or other regulations. The Notary must supervise the photocopying or make the copy themselves.

The Notary may keep a copy for his or her records to later ascertain that the certified document has not been altered.

This handout is distributed by the Arkansas Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Office of Legal Assistance, as a preventive law service. This document and other helpful information on similar personal legal affairs topics can be found on the office's website located at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/695875>. For more information on this topic or to consult with a legal assistance attorney contact the Arkansas National Guard Office of Legal Assistance at 501-212-5040 to establish eligibility and appointment times.