

## Common Mistakes

A notary public can avoid making the ten most common mistakes identified by Secretary of State investigators by doing the following:

1. Require the presence of all persons for whom you perform notarial acts. The person who has signed a document must be with you at the time you complete a jurat or certificate of acknowledgment.
2. Make sure all jurats and certificates of acknowledgment you complete are worded exactly the same as required by California Government Code section 8202 (jurat) or California Civil Code section 1189 (certificate of acknowledgment). Jurats and certificates of acknowledgment are available online.
3. Complete a notarial certificate for every official act. Merely signing and stamping a document is not a notarial act, and stamping pages attached to the page with a completed notarial certificate is not permitted.
4. Keep your notary journal and official seal in a locked and secure place to which only you have access and do not permit anyone to assist you in completing journal entries. Your notary journal and official seal must always be under your direct and exclusive control.
5. Notify the Secretary of State immediately if your journal or seal is lost or stolen.
6. Record in your notary journal the details of every official act, including acts for which a signature by a customer is not required, such as certifying a copy of a power of attorney.
7. Record, without abbreviations, all the information required by law to be recorded for every notarial act. A person may request a copy of one line of a journal page, which would be useless if that line is filled with indecipherable abbreviations. A complete entry is necessary to provide a complete record of the notarial act.
  - a. California law requires that you record the following in your journal:
    - i. the date and time of each notarial act;

