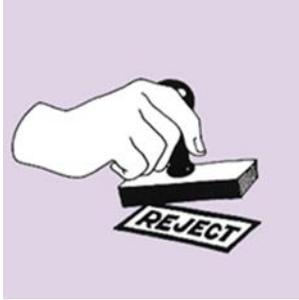


# **DEAD ON ARRIVAL**

## **11 Ways to Murder Your Apostille Application**

Florida Document Specialists  
by John Bayne

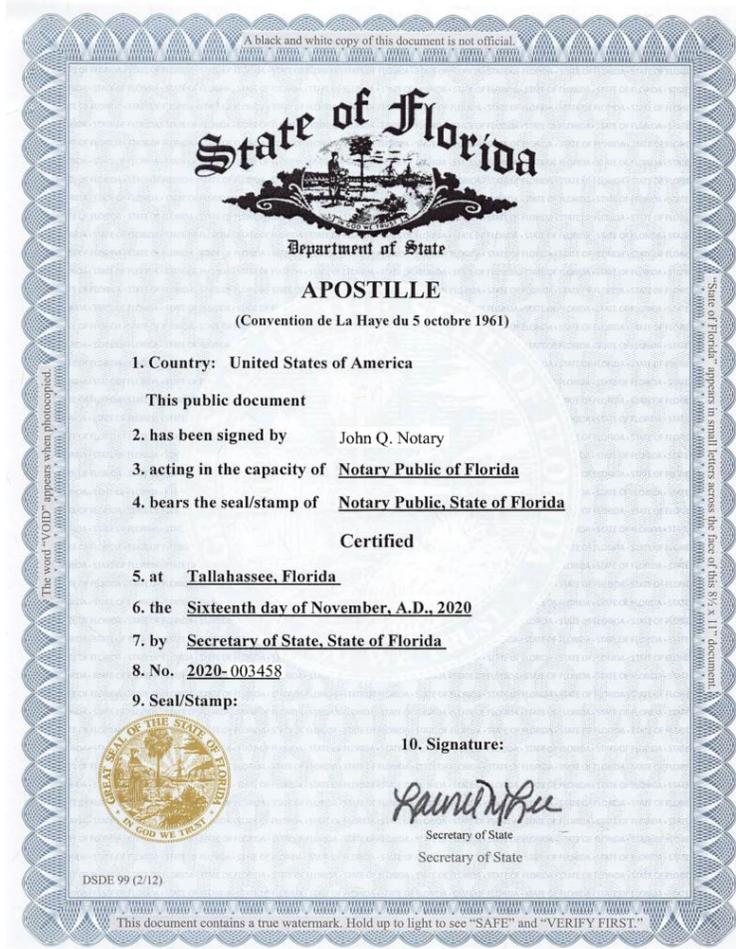


## Your Voyage into the Belly of the Beast

At first glance, the apostille process may seem simple—a basic stamp of bureaucracy. Just complete a form, pop it in the mail, and voila!

Yet, beneath this veil of simplicity lies a complex maze of procedures. Any misstep along the way risks the sudden, unmerciful homicide of your apostille application, consequently jeopardizing critical plans such as international weddings, teaching roles abroad, or transitioning to an expatriate lifestyle—all of which hinge on the successful authentication of your important documents.

Let's journey through this complex maze together, deftly avoiding potential obstacles, ensuring your pursuit of acquiring an apostille is seamless and successful.



## Understanding the Mystery: What is an Apostille?

An apostille is often seen as nothing more than a "cover sheet". But in truth, it's more like the trusted badge of legitimacy for documents, like a superhero's cloak. It's a potent stamp of approval from the Florida Department of State, giving the green light that "Yes, these documents are all set for international use!" This powerful certificate authenticates a wide range of documents. However, getting it isn't always straightforward. It's often like trying to coax a cat into a carrier, filled with unexpected challenges. A single misstep can be like dropping your ice cream cone on a hot summer day - instantly ruining your well-planned efforts.



## Deadline Awareness: Understanding the Apostille Process Before Making Plans

We often encounter situations like, "I'm departing for Europe next week and I need these FBI background checks apostilled by Monday." It can be quite a shock for people when they find out that the U.S. Department of State requires 11-13 weeks to process them. Many refuse to accept this, spending hours online seeking a "faster" service to no avail. This applies to Florida apostilles as well. If you need your documents apostilled within 15 days, mailing them won't get the job done. Therefore, never finalize travel plans, wedding plans, or similar, without first comprehending the timeframes involved and planning accordingly.



## The Florida Department of State: The Solitary Sentinel

The quest for apostilles in Florida brings you face-to-face with a single colossal gatekeeper—the [Florida Department of State](#) in Tallahassee. This bureaucratic giant works alone, without the assistance of any branch offices. Your documents need to be spot-on, because a single error can mean your application is stabbed in the heart.



## Navigating the Apostille Jungle: The Three Pathways

**The Express Lane:** The quickest path to navigate the apostille process is to hand-deliver your documents to the [Department of State in Tallahassee](#). If you manage to get there early enough, you may be able to wait while a technician processes your request. However, bear in mind that if there are issues with your documents, you may not be able to address them immediately, especially if you're traveling.

**The Mail-in Lottery:** Mailing in your documents can be quite unpredictable. Provided your envelope successfully navigates the postal system, your application then enters a substantial queue and could be waiting around for about 20-30 days. One small error in your paperwork could lead to a denial - with no phone call or email, just a concise letter of rejection in your mailbox. Consequently, you'll need to start all over again and cross your fingers that you've got it right the second time around. It's always best to have a professional inspect your work beforehand.

**The Professional Guide:** Arguably the most reliable method involves employing an [apostille agent](#). This specialist will personally submit your documents, guaranteeing their safe arrival and processing at the Department of State. Once the apostilles are issued, your agent will ensure they're promptly returned to you by handing them over to FedEx or DHL.



## 11 Ways to Murder Your Apostille Application

<p><b>1 -The Ignorant Notary:</b> Entrusting your apostille application to an uninformed notary is akin to a death sentence. Their errors are a major cause for rejections. The seemingly helpful guy with a notary stamp at the UPS Store could be your apostille's executioner.</p> <p><b>2-The Negligent Notary:</b> Using outdated or non-English notarial language, forgetting essential details, or omitting the venue statement are swift ways to smother your apostille dreams.</p> <p><b>3- The Destructive Notary:</b> Handing vital records, such as a birth certificate, to an destructive notary is like handing them a weapon. Any attempts to notarize such documents will poison your order, ensuring that it arrives at the Department of State without a pulse.</p> <p><b>4-Aged Vital Records:</b> Submitting old vital records is like digging your own apostille grave. The Department of State demands fresh, certified copies, signed by the current state registrar.</p> <p><b>5-Public School Transcript Pitfall:</b> Public school transcripts are a minefield. Overlooking the required signature under oath by an authorized person at the school can set off an explosion, destroying your apostille application.</p>	<p><b>6- Private School Mix-up:</b> For private schools, the rules are very different. Documents can be notarized as true copies by notaries. But mixing up the rules for public and private schools can sign your application's death warrant.</p> <p><b>7-Adhering to the Hague Convention:</b> Most of the world's nations are signatories to the 1961 Hague Convention on Apostilles. The regulations concerning apostilles for non-member countries of the Hague Convention are considerably different.</p> <p><b>8-The Detail Devil:</b> Overlooking small details can abruptly end your apostille dreams. Double-check everything. An errant stroke of a pen or a missed date—such trivial oversights can prove deadly.</p> <p><b>9-The Deadline Slayer:</b> Missing deadlines can swiftly behead your apostille ambitions. Know how long the apostille process takes before you make plans.</p> <p><b>10-Self-Made Sabotage:</b> Dismissing professional help can be like digging your application's grave with your own hands. Don't let pride be your downfall.</p> <p><b>11-The Carnage of Confusion:</b> The apostille process is a dense forest of varying rules for different document types. Venturing without a guide can lead to a document massacre.</p>
--	--



## Notarial Errors: The Leading Cause of Rejected Florida Apostilles

Notaries public in Florida are governed by [Florida Statutes Chapter 117](#), outlining the rules they must follow. While most notaries are conscientious professionals, some are inadequately trained, and even competent notaries can occasionally make mistakes. The Florida Department of State will reject any document with errors in the notarial act. By being aware of these common notarial mistakes, you can avoid delays and ensure a successful Florida Apostille process.

- [Improper Notarial Acts](#)

A significant 80% of documents submitted to Florida Document Specialists for apostille contain notarization errors that must be corrected prior to presentation to the department of state. This alarming statistic can be considerably reduced if Florida notaries take the time to refresh their knowledge of their responsibilities and proper procedures.

Florida notaries are authorized to perform oaths and acknowledgements and certify certain photocopies. Each of these notarial acts [requires specific language](#) mandated by statute. However, some notaries use improper or obsolete language or fail to recognize improper notarial language on pre-printed forms.

It is unlawful for a Florida notary to copy or notarize a vital record such as a birth or death certificate. The same rule applies to other recordable documents such as divorce decrees, corporate articles, LLC documents, and many others. Every day, dozens of apostille applications are rejected for this reason alone.

The average notary does not work with apostilles. In fact, most notaries do not even know what an apostille is. Using a notary who does not specialize in apostille work is like making spaghetti sauce with death-cap mushrooms.

- [Outdated Notarial Language](#)

In January 2020, coinciding with the legalization of remote online notarization (RON), Florida [modified the language](#) that notaries must use in their oaths, acknowledgements, and true copy affidavits.

However, some notaries didn't get the memo and continue to use outdated language. The Florida Department of State will not issue an apostille if the 2020 changes are not part of the notarial language on your documents.

- [Failing to Check Mark Required Boxes or Record Required Information](#)

Proper notarial language must specify whether the notarization took place in the notary's physical presence or was performed online. If the proper box is not checked, the notarial act is invalid. The phrase "personally appeared" in the notarial language is not the same thing as "physical presence", because you can personally appear on video before an online notary.

- [No Venue Statement](#)

The venue stating the location of the notary public at the time of the notarization in the format, "State of Florida, County of \_\_\_\_." Remember, if applying for a Florida apostille, the document must be notarized by a **Florida** notary public. Documents notarized in other states must be apostilled in those states or re-notarized in Florida to obtain a Florida apostille.

- [Notarial Language Not in English](#)

A Florida notary may notarize a foreign language document, but the notarial language must be in English.

- [Types of Identification](#)

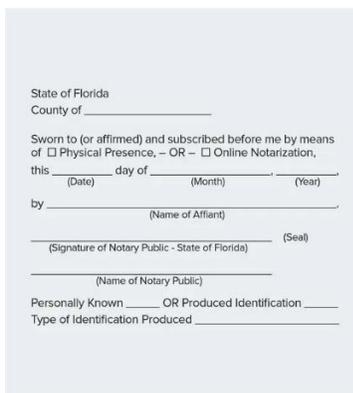
Correct identification must be shown to the notary unless the notary personally knows the individual signing. If the appropriate sections in the notarial block aren't checked off, and the type of identification isn't documented, the notarial act is rendered invalid. Furthermore, notaries are only allowed to accept specific documents as valid forms of identification.

- [Online Notarization by Non-Certified Notaries](#)

Some notaries perform their version of “remote online notarization” in Florida without proper authorization. These documents are worthless and will be rejected by the Florida Department of State if submitted for apostille. Only certified Florida online notaries may perform notarizations using audio/video technology.

- [Governor's Reference Manual for Florida Notaries](#)

It is crucial for Florida notaries to periodically review the [Governor's Reference Manual for Notaries](#) to maintain proficiency in current laws and procedures. This manual serves as a comprehensive guide to understanding the responsibilities and duties of a notary public and ensuring adherence to the state's legal requirements. Regularly reviewing the manual helps notaries stay updated on any changes in legislation or best practices, minimizing the risk of errors, omissions, or improper notarizations. By maintaining a thorough understanding of the rules and regulations, notaries can provide a higher quality of service, protect the interests of the individuals they serve, and enhance the credibility and integrity of the notarial process.



State of Florida  
County of \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of  Physical Presence, – OR –  Online Notarization, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date) (Month) (Year)

by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Affiant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida) (Seal)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Notary Public)

Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ OR Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

## Vital Records

Birth certificates are one of the most popular documents that people need an apostille for. If you need an apostille for your Florida birth certificate, it must be a current version that bears the signatures of “Ken Jones” at the bottom. Ken Jones is the current registrar of the state of Florida. The same applies to Florida death certificates.

You can [read this blog](#) of ours for additional information on how to obtain an apostille for a Florida birth certificate.

Vital records from other states or foreign countries must be apostilled by that state or country.

Remember, vital records cannot be notarized.

STATE OF FLORIDA  
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

**CERTIFICATION OF BIRTH**

STATE FILE NUMBER: 116-2015- DATE FILED: September 26, 2015

**CHILD'S INFORMATION**

NAME: BABY GIRL DOE

DATE OF BIRTH: September 25, 2015 TIME OF BIRTH (24 HOUR): 0915

SEX: FEMALE BIRTH WEIGHT: 7 LBS 1 OZ

PLACE OF BIRTH: HOSPITAL  
WAKE SLEVIC MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

CITY, COUNTY OF BIRTH: WINTER PARK, ORANGE COUNTY

**MOTHER'S INFORMATION**

NAME: DOE, Jane

DATE OF BIRTH: March 3, 1971

BIRTHPLACE: FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

**FATHER'S INFORMATION**

NAME: DOE, Arthur

DATE OF BIRTH: April 22, 1971

BIRTHPLACE: NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

DATE ISSUED: September 24, 2016

*Ken Jones*  
State Registrar

**MUST HAVE KEN JONES SIGNATURE**

802 2015

VOID IF ALTERED OR CHANGED

FL

FL

ARRANGING: [Redacted]

STATE OF FLORIDA BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

116-2015-2015

SEP 26 2015

Dead on Arrival: 11 Ways to Murder Your Apostille Application  
Florida Document Specialists (800) 255-5287

# Florida Apostilles for School Transcripts, Diplomas, and Records

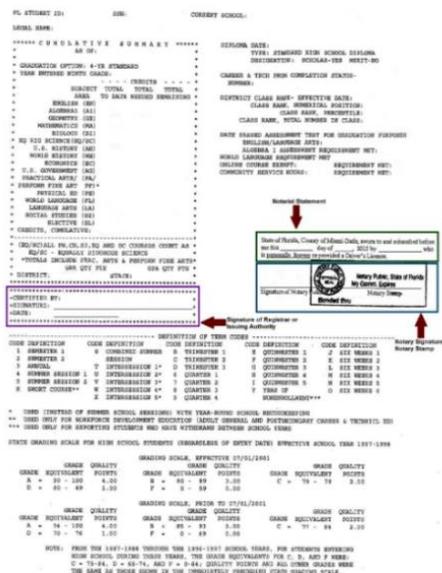
Apostille applications for Florida school records and transcripts frequently face rejection due to improper procedures followed by the school and/or the notary public. Florida notaries public are not allowed to create certified photocopies of public-school transcripts in the state, as they are considered public records. The school registrar or an authorized individual must sign the transcript or diploma while under oath in the presence of a Florida notary public. Subsequently, the notary public must sign and stamp the document using a proper jurat. Only then is the document eligible for a Florida apostille.

Out of state **public school** documents must be apostilled in the state in which they were issued.

- Private Schools

For private schools in Florida, the apostille rules differ. True-copy notarizations by Florida notaries are accepted for private school documents.

In fact, Florida notaries may make true copies of private school documents from any state (and most countries), and they will be accepted for an apostille.



Dead on Arrival: 11 Ways to Murder Your Apostille Application  
 Florida Document Specialists (800) 255-5287

## Securing Apostilles for Recordable County Documents

Documents such as divorce decrees, final judgments, court orders, deeds, wills, and others are eligible for apostille certification. However, you must first secure a certified copy of the document in question from the Clerk of the Circuit Court. This copy typically features a red or blue seal and is signed by a deputy clerk of court. This certified document should then be presented to the Florida Department of State, where an additional fee of \$10 will be applicable in addition to the standard apostille fee.

Remember, recordable documents cannot be notarized.





## Hague and Non-Hague Convention Countries

In the context of authenticating documents for use abroad, the process often varies significantly between [countries that are signatories](#) to the 1961 Hague Convention on Apostilles and [those that are not](#). The majority of the world's nations, as they have adhered to the Hague Convention, follow a streamlined procedure known as apostillization. This involves obtaining an "Apostille" — a special certificate issued by the government of the document's country of origin. The Apostille authenticates the signatures and stamps on the document, confirming its legitimacy for international use. It's designed to simplify the authentication process by providing a recognized form of validation that is accepted among all member nations.

On the other hand, for non-member countries of the Hague Convention, the authentication process is more complex and lengthier. This is commonly referred to as "authentication and legalization". It may involve multiple stages of authentication, from the local level to the national level, followed by the foreign embassy or consulate of the country where the document will be used. Each of these stages verifies the authenticity of the preceding authority's certification, ensuring that the document is, in fact, valid and can be recognized in a foreign jurisdiction. Both processes, although different in their execution, aim to establish the validity of documents for use across international borders.



## Federal Documents Considerations

Certain federal documents, like [FBI criminal background checks](#), can't be apostilled via the Florida Department of State. They must be processed through the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, there's no shortcut to speed up this process, which currently takes around 11-13 weeks. However, there are exceptions for other federal documents, like [social security benefit verification letters](#), which can be processed through the Florida Department of State. If you send documents to the wrong place, you could sentence your application to death by hard labor.

1-787 (Rev. 01-29-2015)

 U.S. Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Criminal Justice Information Services Division  
Clarksburg, WV 26306

---

DATE: 09-12-2022

JONATHAN REGINALD DOE  
1234 Nunya Business Trail, Akron, OH 44312

The Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation has completed the following fingerprint submission:

**Subject Name**  
JONATHAN REGINALD DOE

**Search Completed Result**      09-12-2022      E5912062562390762239

**A SEARCH OF THE FINGERPRINTS PROVIDED BY THIS INDIVIDUAL HAS REVEALED NO PRIOR ARREST DATA AT THE FBI. THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE FURTHER CRIMINAL HISTORY AT THE STATE OR LOCAL LEVEL.**

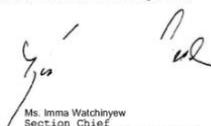
Social Security number:      XXX-XX-1234

The result of the above response is only effective for the date the submission was originally completed. For more updated information, please submit new fingerprints of the subject.

In order to protect Personally Identifiable Information, as of August 17, 2009, FBI policy has changed to no longer return the fingerprint cards. This form will serve as the FBI's official response.

This Identity History Summary (IdHS) is provided pursuant to 28 CFR 16.30-16.34 solely for you to conduct a personal review and/or obtain a change, correction, or updating of your record. **This IdHS is not provided for the purpose of licensing or employment or any other purpose enumerated in 28 CFR 20.33.**

Any questions may be addressed to the Customer Service Group at (304) 625-3390. You may also visit the Web site at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov) for further instructions.

  
Ms. Imma Wachnyew  
Section Chief  
Biometric Services Section  
Criminal Justice Information  
Services Division

Dead on Arrival: 11 Ways to Murder Your Apostille Application  
Florida Document Specialists (800) 255-5287



## Wrapping up: Trust the Experts to Guide You Through the Apostille Labyrinth

The voyage through the maze of apostille authentication can seem daunting, particularly for those not well-versed in its intricate pathways. The complicated layers of rules, time-sensitive deadlines, and the potential for error at each step may make this journey appear more like an insurmountable mountain than a navigable labyrinth.

However, with the expertise of a [seasoned apostille agent](#) at your disposal, you have a trusty bodyguard for your documents. They are well-equipped to handle the bureaucratic intricacies of the Florida and U.S. Department of State and are intimately familiar with the varying procedures required for Hague and non-Hague Convention countries. By using their services, you safeguard your documents from common pitfalls that could lead to their untimely death and ensure that your apostille acquisition is swift and successful.

No matter your needs—whether it's preparing for an international wedding, starting a teaching role abroad, transitioning into an expatriate lifestyle, or conducting international business—enlisting the services of a professional apostille agent helps you take a confident step towards a world of international opportunities. Remember, the maze of apostille authentication need not be a belly of the beast if you journey with an expert guide. Trust in their expertise and take steps toward realizing your international plans without unnecessary detours or delays.