
INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
NOTARIES PUBLIC

APPOINTMENTS OF
NOTARIES PUBLIC OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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A. GENERAL

FOREWORD

Public Notaries have an important role to play in the proper completion of legal documents in the Northwest Territories.

The services of a Notary Public are required for the completion of various documents. It is of the utmost importance that Notaries comply with the statutory requirements regarding the administration of oaths and the taking of affidavits.

A Notary Public may administer oaths and take and receive affidavits, statutory declarations and affirmations. In addition, a Notary Public can certify true copies of documents and sign documents leaving the Northwest Territories.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The Minister of Justice, under section 79 of the *Evidence Act*, appoints Notaries Public.

In order to be appointed a Notary Public, an individual must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
- Reside in the Northwest Territories
- Pass the examination, which shows that they are qualified
- Satisfy the Commissioner that their appointment is necessary for public convenience

Section 80(b) of the *Evidence Act* says that appointments are for a three-year period. The only exception is for lawyers. Section 79(2) allows a commission to be limited in terms of area, duration or purpose, so not all appointments have to be for three years. By section 86, an appointment can be revoked at any time.

Appointments made for three years expire at midnight on the last day of the third year from when they are made. For example, an appointment made on June 20, 2000 will expire at midnight on June 19, 2003. An individual may apply to renew their appointment by sending a completed application, examination and fee to the Office of the Administrator.

Section 138 of the *Criminal Code of Canada* makes it an offence to sign a document as being sworn or declared before you when it was not. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for two years.

INFORMATION FOR LAWYERS

Lawyers must apply to be appointed Notaries Public. Being entitled to practice law in the NWT does not automatically make a lawyer a Notary Public. However, lawyers who are members of the NWT bar are exempt from the Notary Public exam.

A lawyer's appointment as a Notary Public expires at the point when they are no longer entitled to practice law in the Northwest Territories.

Articling students must write the Notary Public exam and are appointed for a three-year term. If an articling student becomes entitled to practice law in the NWT and wishes to renew his or her appointment, he or she must apply for a renewal.

B. DEFINITIONS

An **affidavit** is a sworn or written declaration made before a competent authority (like a Notary Public)

An **affirmation** is a solemn declaration by a person who declines to take an oath

The **declarant** is the person who makes the declaration

A **declaration** is an open or formal announcement

The **deponent** is the person who is swearing to or affirming the truth of the contents of the documents

A **jurat** is the part of the document that is completed by the Notary Public; it should include where, when and before whom it was sworn

An **oath** is a formal declaration or attestation in support of a pledge or promise

A **statutory declaration** is a solemn declaration made by a person unable to take an oath; it should be in the form and manner provided for by the *Evidence Act*

AFFIDAVITS

An affidavit is a document containing a statement that is verified by an oath or by affirmation of the person making the statement.

An affidavit must be authorized by either a statute or regulation. This means that the statute or regulation says an affidavit should be used.

Affidavits are often used in court cases.

Example of an Affidavit Verified by Oath

<u>Affidavit of Jane Doe</u>
I, Jane Doe, of the City of Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, make an Oath and say:
1. That ...
2. That ...
3. That ...
_____ (Signature of Jane Doe)
Sworn before me at the City of Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, this ____ day of ____, 20__.
_____ (Notary Public's Signature) A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories.
_____ (Notary Public's stamp or printed name) My Notary Public Appointment Expires on _____.

Example of an Affidavit Verified by Affirmation

Affidavit of Jane Doe

I, Jane Doe, of the City of Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories,
solemnly affirm and declare:

1. That ...
2. That ...
3. That ...

(Signature of Jane Doe)

I certify that Jane Doe satisfied me that
she was a person entitled to affirm.
Affirmed before me at the City of
Yellowknife, in the Northwest
Territories, this ____ day of ____, 20__.

(Notary Public's Signature)

A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories.

(Notary Public's stamp or printed name)

My Notary Public Appointment Expires on _____.

STATUTORY DECLARATIONS

A statutory declaration is a document containing a statement that is verified when the person making the statement solemnly declares that it is true.

A statutory declaration is made pursuant to the *Canada Evidence Act*. It is used in situations where statutes and regulations do not mention or do not allow the use of an affidavit.

Statutory declarations are often used in court cases.

Example of a Statutory Declaration

<u>Declaration of John Doe</u>
I, John Doe, of the City of Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, do solemnly declare as follows:
1.
2.
3.
and I make this solemn declaration consciously believing it to be the true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath.
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> (Signature of John Doe)
Declared before me at the City of Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, this ____ day of ____, 20__.
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0; margin-right: auto;"/> (Notary Public's Signature) A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories.
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0; margin-right: auto;"/> (Notary Public's stamp or printed name) My Notary Public Appointment Expires on _____.

JURATS

The jurat is the part of the oath, affirmation or declaration that must be completed by the Notary Public.

A jurat should include:

- The date of swearing, affirming or declaring;
- The place where the document was sworn, affirmed or declared;
- The name of the Notary Public before whom the document was sworn, affirmed or declared.

The jurat should also state whether the person swore an oath, affirmed or declared that the document was true.

- In the case of an oath, it should include the words “**Sworn before me**”
- In the case of an affirmation, it should include the words “**Affirmed before me**”
- In the case of a declaration, it should include the words “**Declared before me**”

C. HOW TO ADMINISTER AN AFFIDAVIT OR STATUTORY DECLARATION

Affidavits and statutory declarations are used for the purpose of establishing legal rights or authenticating documents.

A person administering an oath, affirmation or solemn declaration may be called into court to establish that it was properly administered. If the proper procedure is not followed, the document might not be legally valid. As a result, **it is imperative to follow the proper procedure in all occasions.**

It is also important to satisfy yourself that the person swearing the affidavit or statutory declaration understands their duty to tell the truth.

AFFIDAVITS

The manner of administering an oath for an affidavit can be found in sections 21(a), 21(b) and section 22 of the NWT *Evidence Act*.

A) SWORN USING AN OATH

Process of Swearing an Affidavit Using an Oath

- Make sure the wording in the introduction of the affidavit states, **“make an oath and say”**.
- Establish the identity of the person. If you do not personally know the person, ask if they are the one named in the affidavit and ask for identification (driver’s license, etc.).
- Have the person read the affidavit. If the affidavit is already signed, ask the person to sign it again in front of you.
- Hand the person a bible or a New Testament (Old Testament if the person is of the Jewish faith).
- Address the person as follows:
“Do you swear that the contents of this your affidavit are true, so help you God?”
- The person responds, **“I do”**.
- You must then complete the jurat (see pages ????).

B) BY AFFIRMATION

An affirmation is to be used if the person objects to being sworn. The person must state the reasons for not wanting to be sworn and they must be one of the following:

- (a) Conscientious scruples;
- (b) Religious belief;
- (c) Taking an oath would have no effect on his/her conscience.

The manner of administering an affirmation for an affidavit can be found in section 23(3) of the NWT *Evidence Act*.

By section 23(4) of the NWT *Evidence Act*, an affirmation has the same force and effect as swearing an oath.

Process of Affirming an Affidavit

- Make sure that the introduction of the affidavit states, “**solemnly affirm and declare**”.
- Establish the identity of the person. If you do not personally know the person, ask if they are the one named in the affidavit and ask for identification (driver’s license, etc.).
- Have the person read the affidavit. If the affidavit is already signed, ask the person to sign it again in front of you.
- Address the person as follows:
 - “**Do you solemnly affirm and declare that the contents of your affidavit are true?**”
 - The person responds by saying, “**I do**”.
 - You must certify that the person satisfied you that he or she was entitled to affirm by inserting the following:
“**I certify that _____ satisfied me that he/she was a person entitled to affirm.**”
 - You must then complete the jurat.

Process of Solemnly Declaring a Statutory Declaration

- Establish the identity of the person. If you do not personally know the person, ask if they are the one named in the affidavit and ask for identification (driver's license, etc.).
- Have the person read the affidavit. If the affidavit is already signed, ask the person to sign it again in front of you.
- Hand the person a bible or a New Testament (Old Testament if the person is of the Jewish faith).
- Address the person as follows:
“Do you make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and know that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath?”
- The person responds, **“I do”**.
- You must then complete the jurat.

D. THE PROPER COMPLETION OF JURATS

The jurat is the part of a document that is completed by the Notary Public.

AFFIDAVITS

A) SWORN USING AN OATH

Example of a Jurat for an Affidavit by Oath

<p>Sworn before me at the City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Signature of Notary Public) A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Name must be printed or stamped above)</p> <p>My Notary Public Appointment expires _____</p>

B) BY AFFIRMATION

Example of a Jurat for an Affidavit by Affirmation

<p>Affirmed before me at the City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.</p> <p>_____ (Signature of the Notary Public) A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories</p> <p>_____ (Name must be printed or stamped above)</p> <p>My Notary Public A Appointment expires _____</p>
--

STATUTORY DECLARATION

Example of a Jurat for a Statutory Declaration

<p>Declared before me at the City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.</p> <p>I certify that Jane Doe satisfied me that she was a person entitled to affirm.</p> <p>_____ (Signature of the Notary Public) A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories</p> <p>_____ (Name must be printed or stamped above)</p> <p>My Notary Public Appointment expires _____</p>
--

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A) WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL SWEARING IS BLIND OR ILLITERATE

If the person making the affidavit or statutory declaration is blind or illiterate, you must (in addition to the normal procedure of swearing, declaring or affirming):

- Read the document, or ask someone else to read the document;
- Ask the person if he/she understood what was read to him or her; and
- Amend the jurat in a manner similar to the example below.

Example of Amended Jurat for an Individual who is Blind or Illiterate

<p>As _____ is blind/Illiterate (Name of deponent or declarant)</p> <p>(a) This affidavit/statutory declaration was read to him/her in my presence,</p> <p>(b) She/He seemed to understand it, and</p> <p>(c) She/He made his/her signature (or mark) in my presence.</p>

**B) WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL SWEARING IS HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRED
BUT CAPABLE OF READING**

If the individual swearing the document is hearing or speech impaired but capable of reading, the Notary Public should (in addition to the normal procedure of swearing, declaring or affirming):

- Ask the individual to read the document;
- Ask the person if he/she understood what they read; and
- Amend the jurat in a manner similar to the example below.

Example of Jurat where the Person Swearing is Hearing or Speech Impaired

Sworn/Affirmed/Declared before me at the
City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the
Northwest Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.

by the above named _____, who
(name of deponent/declarant)

**being hearing/speech impaired but capable of reading, read
over the above written instrument and when he/she
appeared perfectly to understand it, signed his/her name in
my presence.**

C) WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL SWEARING IS HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRED AND INCAPABLE OF READING

In the case of an individual who is hearing or speech impaired and incapable of reading:

1. A person competent to interpret the contents of the affidavit or statutory declaration in a sign language that is known to both the impaired individual and the interpreter must be sworn using the following oath:

“Do you swear that you well understand _____ (the type of sign language), that you will well and truly interpret the contents of this affidavit/statutory declaration to _____ (name of person) and that you will well and truly interpret to him/her the oath/affirmation/solemn declaration about to be administered to him/her, so help you god.”

Note: In the case of an affirmation or solemn declaration, “**so help you god**” is **omitted**.

2. The Notary Public then administers the oath, affirmation or declaration in English, and the interpreter repeats it in sign language to the individual swearing the document.
3. The individual should then say “I do” using sign language and the interpreter should translate this to the Notary Public.
4. The jurat must be amended by the Notary Public.

Example of Amended Jurat where the Individual Swearing is Hearing or Speech Impaired and Incapable of Reading

Sworn/Affirmed/Declared before me at the
City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest
Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.

through the interpretation of _____
(Name of Interpreter)
of the city/community/hamlet/town of _____
(residence of interpreter)
in the province/territory of _____ ,
(residence of interpreter)
said _____ Having Been First Sworn Truly And
(name of interpreter)
faithfully to interpret the contents of this
affidavit/affirmation/declaration to the deponent/declarant, and
truly and faithfully, to interpret the oath/affirmation/declaration
about to be administered to them.

D) WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL SWEARING IS VERY YOUNG OR OLD IN AGE

If the person making the affidavit or statutory declaration is very young or very old, their ability to understand the significance of their oath, affirmation or declaration may be at issue. In these cases, the Notary Public must:

- Read the document, or ask someone else to read the document;
- Ask the person if he/she understood what was read to him or her; and
- Amend the jurat in a manner similar to the example below.

Example of Amended Jurat when the Capacity of the Individual Swearing is an Issue

<p>As _____ is _____ years of age, (Name of deponent or declarant)</p> <p>This affidavit was read to them in my presence;</p> <p>I have satisfied myself that _____ (Name of deponent or declarant)</p> <p>understands the nature of oath and the duty of speaking the truth.</p>

E) WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL SWEARING ONLY SPEAKS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

If the person making the affidavit or statutory declaration does not understand English:

1. A person competent to interpret the contents of the affidavit or statutory declaration must be sworn using the following oath:

“Do you swear that you well understand _____ (the language of the person), that you will well and truly interpret the contents of this affidavit/statutory declaration to _____ (name of person) and that you will well and truly interpret to him/her the oath/affirmation/solemn declaration about to be administered to him/her, so help you god.”

Note: In the case of an affirmation or solemn declaration, “so help you god” is omitted.

2. The Notary Public then administers the oath, affirmation or declaration in English, and the interpreter repeats it to the individual swearing the document in the language that the individual speaks.
3. The individual should then say “I do” in that language. The interpreter should translate this to the Notary Public.
4. The jurat must be amended by the Notary Public.

Example of Jurat when the Individual Swearing does not Speak English

Sworn/Affirmed/Declared before me at the
City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest
Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.

through the interpretation of _____
(Name of Interpreter)

of the city/community/hamlet/town of _____
(residence of interpreter)

in the province/territory of _____ ,
(residence of interpreter)

said _____ **having been first sworn truly and**
(name of interpreter)

**faithfully to interpret the contents of this
affidavit/affirmation/declaration to the deponent/declarant, and
truly and faithfully, to interpret the oath/affirmation/declaration
about to be administered to them.**

ALTERATIONS

If there are any alterations, cross-outs or erasures on an affidavit or statutory declaration (including the jurat) the Notary Public must:

- Place a check mark at the beginning and end of each change;
- Have the deponent or declarant initial on either side of each change. If the individual has already initialed, the Notary Public should have the individual do it again in their presence.

Example of Alteration Made on John Doe's Affidavit

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>J.D.</i> ✓ forth day of February ✓ <i>J.D.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">I did on the fifth day of January, 2000</p>
--

RESWEARING, REAFFIRMING OR REDECLARING

An affidavit may require reswearing, reaffirming or redeclaring, although this is rare. Any affidavit can be resworn as long as it has not been used, but a second jurat must be completed. **This second jurat must have the word “resworn”, “reaffirmed” or “redeclared”:**

Example of Resworn/Reaffirmed/Redeclared Jurat

<p>Resworn/reaffirmed/redeclared before me at the City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.</p>

EXHIBITS

Often, an affidavit will contain other documents or copies of documents that are attached as exhibits.

When there are exhibits, each should be marked as follows:

Example of a Marked Exhibit

<p>“This is exhibit (A, B, #1, #2 etc.), referred to in the affidavit/statutory declaration of _____ sworn/affirmed/declared (Name of deponent or declarant) before me this ____ day of ____ 20____.</p> <p>_____ (Signature of Notary Public) A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories</p>

Whenever possible, this should be on a blank part of the exhibit or on the back of it.

TWO OR MORE DEPENDENTS OR DECLARANTS

In the case where an affidavit or statutory declaration is being sworn by more than one individual, the word “severally” should be placed at the beginning of the jurat:

Example of Jurat when there are Two or More Individuals Swearing

<p>Severally sworn/affirmed/declared before me at the City/Community/Hamlet/Town of _____ in the Northwest Territories this ____ day of ____, 20__.</p>

WHAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE JURAT

You **must** sign the document and legibly print or stamp your name as well as the complete date your appointment expires. Also, be sure to write “Notary Public in and for the NWT”.

Remember, the expiry date is always one day before and three years after the date your certificate was issued.

Remember that section 82(2) of the NWT *Evidence Act* makes it an offence to omit the expiry of your commission. A guilty individual can be fined.

E. DOCUMENTS FOR USE OUTSIDE THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

When an affidavit or statutory declaration is sworn or affirmed outside the Northwest Territories, a Notary Public must administer it.

Section 67(f) of the NWT *Evidence Act* says that any document sworn or affirmed outside the Northwest Territories must have a notarial seal. **If there is no seal, the document could be returned or rejected.**

Each province has their own laws regarding affidavits and statutory declarations, so it is prudent to stamp your notarial seal through at least the first two pages.

F. AUTHENTICATION LETTERS FOR DOCUMENTS BOUND FOR A CONSULATE OR EMBASSY

Whenever a notary public affixes his or her seal onto a document bound for a consulate or embassy, his or her seal **must be authenticated by the Administrator of the Commissioner for Oaths/Notary Public Program**, regardless of the Notary's position.

In order to properly authenticate a document and seal, the Administrator of the Commissioner for Oaths/Notary Public program must have:

- The original copy of ALL documents going to the embassy or consulate;
- A specimen of the Notary Public's seal.

It is the **notary public's responsibility** to provide the Administrator with a specimen of his or her seal.

G. CERTIFYING TRUE COPIES OF DOCUMENTS

A notary public may certify true copies of documents.

The Notary Public must see the original document and the copy before certifying the copy as being true. The Notary Public must be satisfied that the copy is in fact a true copy of the original document.

Example of a Certification Claiming that a Copied Document is a True Copy of the Original
(TO BE WRITTEN ON THE DOCUMENT)

I certify that this photocopy is a true and faithful copy of the original, and that it has been carefully examined by me, compared with the said original, and found to agree with it word for word and figure for figure.

(Notary Public's Signature)

A Notary Public in and for the Northwest Territories

(Notary Public's Name)

(Date)

My Notary Public Appointment Expires _____

H. SITUATIONS WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL SWEARING IS ABSENT

Under no circumstances may a document be sworn when the individual swearing it is not present.

I. RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE NWT *EVIDENCE ACT*

- **Section 1** gives definitions of words used in the Act
- **Sections 20-23** give procedural details regarding oaths and affirmations
- **Sections 65-71** give information regarding oaths, affidavits, affirmations and statutory declarations and their role in court proceedings
- **Sections 73-78** give information about Commissioners for Oaths
- **Sections 79-85** give information about Notaries Public
- **Section 86** gives information about the revocation of appointments

J. PERSONS WHO BY VIRTUE OF THEIR OFFICE CAN ADMINISTER OATHS, AFFIDAVITS, AFFIRMATIONS OR STATUTORY DECLARATIONS FOR USE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

Section 65(1) of the Northwest Territories *Evidence Act* allows the following groups to administer oaths, affidavits, affirmations or statutory declarations:

- (a) a judge of the Supreme Court, territorial judge or justice of the peace in the Northwest Territories within his or her jurisdiction;
- (b) the clerk or deputy clerk of the Court;
- (c) a commissioner for taking oaths within the Territories;
- (d) a notary public appointed for the Territories;
- (e) a barrister or solicitor duly admitted and entitled to practice as such in the Territories;
- (f) a sheriff; or
- (g) a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

K. HOW TO APPLY

- Request the Notary Public instruction booklet, application and examination from our office.
- Read the relevant parts of the Northwest Territories *Evidence Act*, which can be obtained online at <http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/PDF/ACTS/Evidence.pdf> or from Canarctic Graphics.
- Complete the Notary Public application and examination.
- You must answer every question correctly in order for your application to be accepted.

RETURN TO OUR OFFICE:

- The completed application and examination.
- A cheque or money order, for \$75.00, payable to the *Government of the Northwest Territories*. Be sure it is filled out correctly.

- It takes from 3 to 5 weeks for applications to be processed.

IF YOUR APPLICATION IS APPROVED:

- Our office will send your Certificate of Appointment to your place of work.

EXPIRY DATE:

- Your appointment will expire three years and one day before the appointment date shown on your certificate.
- To renew your appointment, you must send a completed application, examination and fee of \$75.00 to our office.
- You are responsible for renewing your appointment before it expires. You will not receive a renewal notice.

L. CHANGE OF NAME

If you change your name, you may elect to:

1. Keep your signature the same as it was before your name change. In this case, your appointment will not have to be altered.
2. Change your signature so it is the same as your new name. In this case, you will need to notify the Administrator of the Commissioner for Oaths/Notary Public Program so a new appointment can be issued. You must mail or fax the Administrator a copy of:
 - A document that shows proof of a change in name (e.g. marriage license);
 - Your current Notary Public appointment certificate; and
 - A letter that clearly states that you wish to change the name on your appointment certificate.

M. INDIVIDUALS LEAVING THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

If you are leaving the Northwest Territories permanently, you have two options:

1. You may keep your appointment. In this case, please give the Office of the Administrator your new mailing address and employment information.
2. You may ask our office to revoke your appointment. In this case, please notify the Office of the Administrator so the official records can be kept up-to-date.

N. CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT OR ADDRESS

In order to keep the official records current, changes in employment or address during the period that an appointment is held must be reported to:

Postal Address

Legal Registries
Department of Justice
Government of the Northwest
Territories
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Canada

Phone: (867) 920-8987

Toll Free: (877) 743-3302

Courier Address

Legal Registries
Department of Justice
Government of the Northwest Territories
1st Floor, Stuart M. Hodgson Building
5009-49th Street
Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2L9
Canada

Fax: (867) 873-0243

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