



**WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE**

**NATALIE E. TENNANT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

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WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE

**FORM 1 -- NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING OR COMMENT PERIOD ON A PROPOSED RULE  
(Page 1)**

AGENCY	Secretary Of State		
RULE TYPE	Legislative	AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE	No TITLE-SERIES
RULE NAME	Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization		153-45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

COMMENTS LIMITED TO  
Written

DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING

LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING

DATE WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD ENDS  
Thursday, June 26, 2014 5:00 PM

WRITTEN COMMENTS MAY BE MAILED TO  
Legislative Affairs  
WV Secretary of State  
1900 Kanawha Blvd E  
Bldg 1 Ste 157-K  
Charleston, WV 25305

BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

Yes  
Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.



Title-Series: 153-45



Rule Id: 9426



Document: 25824



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**FORM 1 -- NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING OR COMMENT PERIOD ON A PROPOSED RULE  
(Page 2)**

AGENCY	Secretary Of State		
RULE TYPE	Legislative	AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE	No TITLE-SERIES 153-
RULE NAME	Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization		45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

**PROVIDE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF YOUR PROPOSAL**

**This proposed Legislative Rule provides standards and guidelines for electronic notarization including registering as an electronic notary public, minimum technological requirements, the required elements of an electronic notarization, and causes for denial, conditioning, suspension, or revocation of an electronic notary public's registration.**

**BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.**

**Yes**  
**Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.**



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**FORM 11 -- FISCAL NOTE FOR PROPOSED RULES (Page 1)**

AGENCY	Secretary Of State		
RULE TYPE	Legislative	AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE	No TITLE-SERIES 153-
RULE NAME	Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization		45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

SUMMARIZE IN A CLEAR AND CONCISE MANNER WHAT IMPACT THIS MEASURE WILL HAVE ON COSTS AND REVENUES OF STATE GOVERNMENT.

**This rule will have no impact on the costs or revenues of state government.**

Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.



Title-Series: 153-45



Rule Id: 9426



Document: 25824



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**FORM 11 -- FISCAL NOTE FOR PROPOSED RULES (Page 2)**

AGENCY Secretary Of State  
RULE TYPE Legislative AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE No TITLE-SERIES 153-  
RULE NAME Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization 45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

FISCAL NOTE DETAIL -- SHOW OVER-ALL EFFECT IN ITEM 1 AND 2 AND, IN ITEM 3, GIVE AN EXPLANATION OF BREAKDOWN BY FISCAL YEAR, INCLUDING LONG-RANGE EFFECT.

Effect Of Proposal	Current Increase/Decrease (use ' - ')	Next Increase/Decrease (use ' - ')	Fiscal Year (Upon Full Implementation)
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST	0.00	0.00	0.00
PERSONAL SERVICES			
CURRENT EXPENSES			
REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS			
ASSETS			
OTHER			
ESTIMATED TOTAL REVENUES	0.00	0.00	0.00

Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.



Title-Series: 153-45



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**FORM 11 -- FISCAL NOTE FOR PROPOSED RULES (Page 3)**

AGENCY	Secretary Of State		
RULE TYPE	Legislative	AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE	No TITLE-SERIES 153-
RULE NAME	Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization		45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

3. EXPLANATION OF ABOVE ESTIMATES (INCLUDING LONG-RANGE EFFECT). PLEASE INCLUDE ANY INCREASE OR DECREASE IN FEES IN YOUR ESTIMATED TOTAL REVENUES.

**There are no fees associated with this rule, therefore there are no increases in revenues. No additional personnel or other costs are necessary for the implementation of this rule, and there will be no impact of the expenses of state government.**

Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.



Title-Series: 153-45



Rule Id: 9426



Document: 25824



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**FORM 11 -- FISCAL NOTE FOR PROPOSED RULES (Page 4)**

AGENCY Secretary Of State

RULE TYPE Legislative AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE No TITLE-SERIES 153-

RULE NAME Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization 45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY AREAS OF VAGUENESS, TECHNICAL DEFECTS, REASONS THE PROPOSED RULE WOULD NOT HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT, AND OR ANY SPECIAL ISSUES NOT CAPTURED ELSEWHERE ON THIS FORM.

**There are no fees associated with this rule, therefore there are no increases in revenues. No additional personnel or other costs are necessary for the implementation of this rule, and there will be no impact of the expenses of state government.**

BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.



Title-Series: 153-45



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**FORM 12 -- BRIEF SUMMARY AND STATEMENT OF CIRCUMSTANCES (Page 1)**

AGENCY	Secretary Of State		
RULE TYPE	Legislative	AMENDMENT TO EXISTING RULE	No TITLE-SERIES 153-
RULE NAME	Standards and Guidelines for Electronic Notarization		45

CITE AUTHORITY 39-4-25

SUMMARIZE IN A CLEAR AND CONCISE MANNER CONTENTS OF CHANGES IN RULE AND STATEMENT OF CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRING THE RULE.

This proposed Legislative Rule provides standards and guidelines for electronic notarization including registering as an electronic notary public, minimum technological requirements, the required elements of an electronic notarization, and causes for denial, conditioning, suspension, or revocation of an electronic notary public's registration. These standards are necessary to ensure the public trust in the electronic notarization process.

BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

Yes  
Sheryl Webb -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.



Title-Series: 153-45



Rule Id: 9426



Document: 25824

TITLE 153  
LEGISLATIVE RULE  
SECRETARY OF STATE

SERIES 45  
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC NOTARIZATION

**§153-45-1. General.**

- 1.1. Scope. -- This rule defines the requirements for electronic notarization of electronic documents.
- 1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code § 39-4-25.
- 1.3. Filing Date. --
- 1.4. Effective Date. --

**§153-45-2. Definitions.**

2.1. “Capable of independent verification” means that any interested person may confirm the validity of an electronic notarial act and an electronic notary public’s identity and authority through a publicly accessible system.

2.2. “Electronic” means relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities.

2.3. “Electronic document” means information that is created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.

2.4. “Electronic journal of notarial acts” and “electronic journal” mean a chronological electronic record of notarizations that is maintained by the notary public who performed the same notarizations.

2.5. “Electronic notarial act” and “electronic notarization” mean an official act involving an electronic document that is performed in compliance with this Rule by an electronic notary public as a security procedure.

2.6. “Electronic notarial certificate” means the part of, or attachment to, a notarized electronic document that, in the performance of an electronic notarization, is completed by the electronic notary public, bears the notary’s registered electronic signature and seal, and states the date, venue, and facts attested to or certified by the notary in the particular electronic notarization.

2.7. “Electronic notary public” and “electronic notary” mean a notary public who has registered with the Secretary of State the capability to perform electronic notarial acts.

2.8. “Electronic notary seal” and “electronic seal” mean information within a notarized electronic document that includes the electronic notary’s name, title, jurisdiction, and commission expiration date.

2.9. “Electronic signature” means an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with an electronic document and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the document.

2.10. “Registered electronic notary seal” means an electronic notary seal produced by a notary in the performance of an electronic notarial act by a means that was registered with the Secretary of State.



2.11. “Registered electronic signature” means an electronic signature produced by a notary in the performance of an electronic notarial act by a means that was registered with the Secretary of State.

2.12. “Security procedure” means a procedure employed for the purpose of verifying that an electronic signature, document, or performance is that of a specific person or for detecting changes or errors in the information in an electronic document. The term includes a procedure that requires the use of algorithms or other codes, identifying words or numbers, encryption, or callback, or other acknowledgment procedures.

### **§153-45-3. Registration with the Secretary of State.**

3.1. A notary public shall register the capability to perform electronic notarial acts with the Secretary of State before notarizing electronically.

3.2. Upon recommissioning, a notary public shall again register with the Secretary of State before notarizing electronically.

3.3. A person may apply or reapply for a notary commission and register or reregister to perform electronic notarial acts at the same time.

### **§153-45-4. Term of Registration of Electronic Notary.**

4.1. The term of registration of an electronic notary public begins on the registration starting date set by the Secretary of State and continues as long as the notary’s commission remains in effect or until registration is terminated under subsection 30.1 of this rule.

### **§153-45-5. Electronic Notarization Authorization Form.**

5.1. To register the capability to perform electronic notarial acts, a notary public shall sign and submit to the Secretary of State a form prescribed by the Secretary of State which includes the following information:

5.1.a. A description of each separate means that will be used to produce electronic signatures and electronic notary seals;

5.1.b. The names of any licensing authorities or companies issuing the means for producing the electronic signatures and seals, the source of each license, and the starting and expiration dates of each pertinent certificate, software, or process;

5.1.c. An explanation of any revocation, annulment, or other premature termination of any certificate, software, or process ever issued or registered to the applicant to produce an electronic signature or seal; and

5.1.d. A declaration that the notary public will use the means issued or authorized for issuance by the Secretary of State for producing an electronic notary seal.

### **§153-45-6. Registration of Multiple Means.**

6.1. Under section five of this rule, a notary public may register at the same, or at different times, one or more respective means for producing electronic signatures and electronic notary seals, or single elements combining the required features of both, consistent with the requirements cited elsewhere in this rule.

### **§153-45-7. Material Misstatement or Omission of Fact.**

7.1. The Secretary of State shall deny registration to any applicant submitting an electronic registration form that contains a material misstatement or omission of fact.

**§153-45-8. Confidentiality.**

8.1. Information in the registration form of an electronic notary public shall be used by the Secretary of State and designated employees only for the purpose of performing official duties, and shall not be disclosed to any person other than to:

8.1.a. A government agent acting in an official capacity and duly authorized to obtain such information;

8.1.b. A person authorized by court order; or

8.1.c. The registrant or the registrant's duly authorized agent.

**§153-45-9. Authorized Electronic Notarial Acts.**

9.1. The following notarial acts may be performed electronically:

9.1.a. Acknowledgment;

9.1.b. Jurat;

9.1.c. Signature witnessing;

9.1.d. Copy certification; and

9.1.e. Verification of fact.

**§153-45-10. Requirements for Electronic Notarial Acts.**

10.1. An electronic notary public shall perform an electronic notarization only if the principal:

10.1.a. Is in the presence of the notary at the time of notarization;

10.1.b. Is personally known to the notary or identified by the notary through satisfactory evidence;

10.1.c. Appears to understand the nature of the transaction;

10.1.d. Appears to be acting of his or her own free will;

10.1.e. Communicates directly with the notary in a language both understand; and

10.1.f. Reasonably establishes the electronic signature as his or her own.

**§153-45-11. All Notary Rules Apply.**

11.1. In performing electronic notarial acts, an electronic notary shall adhere to all applicable rules governing notarial acts provided in this rule.

**§153-45-12. Completion of Electronic Notarial Certificate.**

12.1. In performing an electronic notarial act, the notary shall properly complete an electronic notarial certificate.

12.2. A proper electronic notarial certificate shall contain:

12.2.a. Completed wording appropriate to the particular electronic notarial act, as prescribed in subsection 13.3 of this rule;

12.2.b. A registered electronic signature; and

12.2.c. A registered electronic notary seal, which shall include:

12.2.c.1. The words "Official Seal;"

12.2.c.2. The words "Electronic Notary Public";

12.2.c.3. The words "State of West Virginia;"

12.2.c.4. The notary public's name as it is spelled on the commissioning document;

12.2.c.5. The notary public's address as it is listed on the commissioning document;

12.2.c.6. The commission expiration date of the electronic notary;

12.2.c.7. An image of the West Virginia State Seal; and

12.2.c.8. The commission or registration number of the electronic notary.

12.3. The wording of an electronic notarial certificate shall be in a form that:

12.3.a. Is set forth in W.Va. State Code §39-4-16;

12.3.b. Is otherwise prescribed by the law of this state;

12.3.c. Is prescribed by a law, regulation, or custom of another jurisdiction, provided it does not require actions by the electronic notary that are unauthorized by this state; or

12.3.d. Describes the actions of the electronic notary in such a manner as to meet the requirements of the particular notarial act, as defined in section 2.6 of this rule.

12.4. A notarial certificate shall be worded and completed using only letters, characters, and a language that are read, written, and understood by the electronic notary.

12.4.a. If a notarial certificate is completed in a language other than English, and English translation must be attached or otherwise provided with the original notarial certificate.

#### **§153-45-13. Electronic Signature and Seal Attributed to Notary.**

13.1. In notarizing an electronic document, the notary shall attach to, or logically associate with, the electronic notarial certificate a registered electronic signature and a registered electronic notary seal, or a registered single element in conformance with section 6 of this rule, in such a manner that the signature and the seal, or the single element, are attributed to the notary as named on the commission.

**§153-45-14. Attributes of Registered Electronic Signature.**

14.1. A registered electronic signature shall be:

14.1.a. Unique to the electronic notary public;

14.1.b. Capable of independent verification;

14.1.c. Attached to or logically associated with an electronic notarial certificate in such a manner that any subsequent alteration of the certificate or underlying electronic document prominently displays evidence of the alteration; and

14.1.d. Attached or logically associated by a means under the electronic notary's sole control.

**§153-45-15. Signature of Registered Electronic Notary Seal.**

15.1. At all times the means for producing registered electronic notary seals, or registered single elements as described in section 6 of this rule, must be kept under the sole control of the electronic notary.

15.2. If the means for producing registered electronic notary seals, or registered single elements as described in section 6 of this rule are accessed by a username and password, the electronic notary must maintain sole control of the access information.

**§153-45-16. Employer Shall Not Use or Control Means.**

16.1. An employer of an electronic notary shall not use or control the means for producing registered electronic signatures and notary seals, or registered single elements combining the required features of both, nor upon termination of a notary's employment, retain any software, coding, disk, certificate, card, token, or program that is intended exclusively to produce a registered electronic signature, notary seal, or combined single element, whether or not the employer financially supported the employee's activities as a notary.

**§153-45-17. Non-Notarial Use.**

17.1. A registered electronic signature may be used by the electronic notary for lawful purposes other than performing electronic notarizations, provided that neither the title "notary" nor any other indication of status as a notarial officer is part of the signature.

17.2. Neither a registered electronic notary seal nor a combined single element containing the seal shall be used by the electronic notary for any purpose other than performing lawful electronic notarizations.

**§153-45-18. Maintaining Journal of Electronic Notarial Acts.**

18.1. An electronic notary public may keep, maintain, protect, and provide for lawful inspection a chronological journal of notarial acts that is either:

18.1.a. A permanently bound book with numbered pages; or

18.1.b. An electronic journal of notarial acts as described in section 20 of this rule.

18.2. An electronic notary may keep a record of electronic and nonelectronic notarial acts in the same journal.

**§153-45-19. Attributes of Electronic Journal.**

19.1. An electronic journal of notarial acts shall:

19.1.a Allow journal entries to be made, viewed, printed out, and copied only after access is obtained by a procedure that uses two factors of authentication;

19.1.b. Not allow a journal entry to be deleted or altered in content or sequence by the notary or any other person after a record of the notarization is entered and stored;

19.1.c. Have a backup system in place to provide a duplicate record of notarial acts as a precaution in the event of loss of the original record;

**§153-45-20. Rules for Electronic Journal.**

20.1. In maintaining an electronic journal of notarial acts, a notary public shall comply with the applicable prescriptions and prohibitions regarding the contents, copying, security, surrender, and disposition of a journal as set forth in sections 19 and 20 of this rule.

**§153-45-21. Form of Evidence of Authority of Electronic Notarial Act.**

21.1. On a notarized electronic document transmitted to another country or nation, electronic evidence of the authenticity of the registered electronic signature and seal of an electronic notary public of this state, if required, shall be in the form of an electronic certificate of authority signed by the Secretary of State in conformance with any current and pertinent international treaties, agreements, and conventions subscribed by the government of the United States.

21.2. The electronic certificate of authority described in Subsection (a) shall be attached to or logically associated with the electronically notarized document in such a manner that any subsequent alteration of the notarized document, or removal or alteration of the electronic certificate of authority, produces evidence of the change.

**§153-45-22. Certificate of Authority for Electronic Notarial Act.**

22.1. An electronic certificate of authority evidencing the authenticity of the registered electronic signature and seal of an electronic notary public of this state shall be in substantially the following form:

Certificate of Authority for Electronic Notarial Act  
I, (name and title of commissioning official), certify  
that (name of electronic notary public), the person named as  
Electronic Notary Public in the attached, associated, or accompanying  
electronic document, was registered as an Electronic Notary Public for the  
State of West Virginia and authorized to act as such at the time the  
document was electronically notarized. I also certify that the document  
bears no evidence of illegal or fraudulent alteration.  
To verify this Certificate of Authority for an Electronic Notarial Act, I have  
included herewith my electronic seal and signature this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_.  
(Electronic seal and signature of Secretary of State)

**§153-45-23. Change of E-Mail Address.**

23.1. Within 5 business days after the change of an electronic notary public's email address, the notary shall electronically transmit to the Secretary of State a notice of the change. The email must include the notary public's notary identification number issued by the Secretary of State.

**§153-45-24. Change of Registration Data.**

24.1. Any change or addition to the data on the electronic registration form described in section five, shall be reported within 10 days to the Secretary of State.

**§153-45-25. Change of Means of Production.**

25.1. Upon becoming aware that the status, functionality, or validity of the means for producing a registered electronic signature, notary seal, or single element combining the signature and seal, has changed, expired, terminated, or become compromised, the notary shall:

25.1.a. Immediately notify the Secretary of State;

25.1.b. Cease producing seals or signatures in electronic notarizations using that means;

25.1.c. Perform electronic notarizations only with a currently registered means or another means that has been registered within 30 days; and

25.1.d. Dispose of any software, coding, disk, certificate, card, token, or program that has been rendered defunct, in the manner described in subsection 29.1 of this rule.

25.2. Pursuant to subsection one of this section, the Secretary of State shall immediately suspend the electronic status of a notary who has no other currently registered means for producing electronic signatures or notary seals, and if such means is not registered within 30 days, electronic status shall be terminated.

**§153-45-26. Termination of Electronic Notary Registration.**

26.1. Any revocation, resignation, expiration, or other termination of the commission of a notary public immediately terminates any existing registration as an electronic notary.

26.2. A notary's decision to terminate registration as an electronic notary shall not automatically terminate the underlying commission of the notary.

26.3. A notary who terminates registration as an electronic notary shall notify the Secretary of State in writing and dispose of any pertinent software, coding, disk, certificate, card, token, or program as described in section 29 of this rule.

**§153-45-27. Disposition of Software and Hardware.**

27.1. When the commission of an electronic notary public expires or is resigned or revoked, when registration as an electronic notary terminates, or when an electronic notary dies, the notary or the notary's duly authorized representative within 30 business days shall permanently erase or expunge the software, coding, disk, certificate, card, token, or program that is intended exclusively to produce registered electronic notary seals, registered single elements combining the required features of an electronic signature and notary seal, or registered electronic signatures that indicate status as a notary.

**§153-45-28. Causes for Denial, Conditioning, Suspension, or Termination of Registration.**

28.1. The Secretary of State shall deny, condition, suspend, or terminate an electronic notary public's registration for any of the following reasons:

28.1.a. Submission of an electronic registration form containing material misstatement or omission of fact;

28.1.b. Failure to obtain or maintain the capability to perform electronic notarial acts, except as allowed in subsection 27.1 of this rule; or

28.1.c. The electronic notary's performance of official misconduct.

28.2. If the Secretary of State denies a registration for electronic notarization, the individual making application may request a hearing according to the provisions of W.Va. 153 CSR 47 to contest the decision of the Secretary of State.

28.2. Prior to conditioning, suspending, or terminating an electronic notary's registration, the Secretary of State shall provide notice to the electronic notary in the form of a short, plain statement of the basis for action, the date, time, and place of a hearing on the matter, and the name of the hearing examiner. The procedures for any hearing regarding the conditioning, suspension or termination of an electronic notary's registration must be conducted according to the procedures set forth in W.Va. 153 CSR 47.

28.3. Neither resignation nor expiration of a notary commission or of an electronic notary registration precludes or terminates an investigation by the Secretary of State into the electronic notary's conduct. The investigation may be pursued to a conclusion, whereupon it shall be made a matter of public record whether or not the finding would have been grounds for conditioning, suspension, or termination of the commission or registration of the electronic notary.