

Directions to the Department of State in Harrisburg

From Route 81:

Take the Cameron Street Exit.
Follow Cameron Street.
Turn right onto Herr Street.
Turn left onto Seventh Street.
Turn right onto North Street.
Turn left onto Commonwealth Ave.
OR
Go south on Front Street.
Turn left onto Forster Street.
Turn right onto Seventh Street.
Turn right onto North Street.
Turn left onto Commonwealth Ave.
to fountain on right.
The North Office Building is to the right when facing the fountain.

From Route 83:

Take the Second Street Exit.
Follow Second Street.
Turn right onto Forster Street.
Turn right onto Seventh Street.
Turn right onto North Street.
Turn left onto Commonwealth Ave.
The North Office Building is to the right when facing the fountain.

From Route 76 (The Turnpike):

Take Exit 19. Follow signs for Harrisburg and directions from Route 83 above.
OR
Take Exit 16. Follow signs for Harrisburg and Route 81 North. Follow the directions above for Route 81.

PARKING:

Automobile parking opportunities are conveniently located within a two block radius of the State Capitol.

*If you need accommodations due to a disability, please call (717) 787-5280

787-2121

Questions

Questions concerning apostilles or certifications may be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation by calling (717) 787-5280, by email: bcel@pados.dos.state.pa.us or by writing:

Department of State
Bureau of Commissions, Elections & Legislation
303 North Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The department can only answer questions concerning the apostille/certification process that pertain to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

If you would like information concerning apostilles, certifications or documentation in any other state or jurisdiction, please contact the appropriate agency for your needs, i.e. foreign consulates, adoption agencies, schools.

For more information, visit us through the Pennsylvania homepage at www.state.pa.us or visit the Department of State directly at www.dos.state.pa.us



A Helpful Guide to Understanding Certifications & Apostilles in Pennsylvania

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of State

Tom Ridge, Governor
Kim Pizzingrilli, Secretary of the Commonwealth

What is an Apostille or Certification?

An apostille is used by foreign governments to assess the authenticity of an official signature. It is only recognized by countries who have signed the Convention of the Hague. For those countries who are not signatories, the Department of State attaches a certification.

When the Department of State certifies a document with an apostille, the department verifies that the person who signed the document is a Pennsylvania official and the Secretary of the Commonwealth has given "full faith and credit" to the official's seal and signature.

A certification performs the same duty as an apostille, however, its appearance and places of use are different.

Although the documents serve the same purpose, substituting one for the other will delay the use of your documents. It is essential that you inform the Department of State as to where the documents are to be used.

Common uses of an Apostille or Certification

For adoptions, international business transactions, foreign study, dual citizenship, patents, and for documents used in international relations.

How do I obtain an Apostille or Certification?

1. Your documents must be signed and sealed by a Pennsylvania notary public or the Pennsylvania official who is the custodian of the record.
2. Mail your documents to the Department of State along with a cover letter that includes your name and full mailing address.
3. Identify in the cover letter the country where the documents will be used.
4. Enclose a **personal check, money order or cashier's check made payable to "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania"** in the amount of \$15 per document per separate signature. Checks and money orders must be issued by a U.S. institution. **Cash cannot be accepted by mail or in person.**
5. Photocopies of notarized or certified documents **may not** be certified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
6. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your documents. If you wish the order to be returned by a courier service, you must enclose a prepaid air bill with your order.
7. Mail your request to:
Pennsylvania Department of State
Bureau of Commissions,
Elections and Legislation
Room 303 North Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Checklist to ensure that your documents are accepted:



- Documents must only be signed and sealed by the proper Pennsylvania official.
- The correct fee must be enclosed.
- The country where the documents will be used must be identified.
- County documents must be signed by the clerk in charge of the county office. Documents will not be accepted if they are signed by an assistant or deputy clerk.
- Death certificates must be signed by the state registrar. Death certificates will not be accepted if they are signed by a local registrar.
- Photocopies of notarized or certified documents **may not** be certified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.