



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State
Nellie M. Gorbea, *Secretary of State*

April 3, 2020

Re: Remote Online Notarization Temporarily Authorized

Dear Notary Public,

The COVID-19 public health crisis has had a significant impact on the ability of notaries public to safely fulfill the duties of their commission. While we have seen tremendous creativity in response to these challenging times, we understand that there are real limitations to what services a commissioned notary public can currently provide while honoring social distancing recommendations.

For that reason, we have collaborated with the Governor's office to temporarily authorize the performance of Remote Online Notarization (RON) for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency in RI.

Using Remote Online Notarization provides an opportunity for you to serve your customers remotely, allowing both parties to stay at home while properly executing important legal documents. In implementing this temporary authorization, we have diligently researched best practices in jurisdictions all over the country to ensure RON is as valid and secure as traditional notarial services.

To perform a Remote Online Notarization, you must have or apply for a valid notary public commission with our Notary Public Division, indicate to the Division that you wish to become a remote notary, and use an approved solution provider. It is important that you also adhere to all aspects of the proper performance of each notarial act just as if the signer was physically in your presence.

For your convenience, we have created a guidance document that outlines the main aspects of Remote Online Notarization and provides step-by-step instructions on how the process works. I enclose a copy of that document and the updated Standards of Conduct authorizing RON for your review.

My Business Services and Notary Public Divisions are here to answer any questions you may have. Please contact us at (401) 222-3040 or notaries@sos.ri.gov should you need additional assistance. I hope this makes it easier for you to weather the economic challenges we are facing. Please let us know what else you might need so that we can continue to make government work for you.

With warm regards and wishes of good health,

Nellie M. Gorbea
Secretary of State

Enclosures:

1. *Standards of Conduct for Notaries Public in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, amended and restated April 3, 2020*
2. *Rhode Island Remote Online Notarization Temporary Performance Guide*