

Authentication Office Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some answers to questions we receive frequently from the public about the Authentication Office. We provide this for informational purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice.

Subtopics:

1. [About Authentications](#) (definition, types, fees, what we will & won't authenticate)
 2. [Steps You Need to Take to Get Document Authenticated](#)
 3. [Getting Your Document To Us and From Us](#)
 4. [Documents Not Authenticated](#)
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1. About Authentications

I was told I needed to get a document authenticated. What is an authentication?

It is a legal way to prove to someone in another country that a signature is official. In North Carolina, the document is also examined to make sure the document will serve the interests of justice and is not against public policy.

Do you do different kinds of authentications?

Yes, we do the authentications in the chart below.

Kind of Authentication	Where Used	Conditions
Apostille	Foreign countries	Documents to be used in countries that have signed an international agreement called the Hague Convention.
Authentication	Foreign countries	NC Government documents for countries that have <u>not</u> signed the Hague Convention.
Authority	Foreign countries	NC Documents which are notarized in North Carolina for countries that have <u>not</u> signed the Hague Convention.

Will you authenticate my document from another state or country?

No, we can't authenticate an out-of-state document.

I have a document that is not English. Will you authenticate it?

We can only authenticate it if you also give us a certified or notarized copy of the document in English.

I have a document from the State of North Carolina that I want to get authenticated. It is old – from before 2000. Can you authenticate it for me?

No, we look to signatures of record for state officials when authenticating documents. This office does not have official signatures prior to the year 2000. The official signature certifying the document has to be from April 2000 or later.

I have a document I want authenticated. Can I do it online?

No, we don't do online authentications.

Do you have forms I can use to get my document authenticated?

Yes, we have some forms available. [Click here for the forms](#). [Click here for the required cover letter](#).

How much do I have to pay you to get my document authenticated?

Kind of Authentication	Fee for Original	Fee for Duplicate Originals
Adoption related Apostille, Authentication or Authority	\$10.00 (U.S.)	* \$5.00 (U.S.) for each duplicate original ordered at the same time as the 1 st original.** * \$10.00 for each duplicate original ordered at a different time than the 1 st original.**
Non-Adoption related Apostille, Authentication or Authority	\$10.00 (U.S.)	\$10.00 (U.S.) for each duplicate

**** If you are requesting duplicate original authentications, you need to include all original documents for processing, we don't authenticate copies of an original for duplicate purposes.**

I want a refund. Can I get one?

We will only refund your fee if:

- A. You cancel the request before we finish processing it, or
- B. We reject the request to authenticate your document.

I want to get a certified copy of a document from the Secretary of State's files. It is for use in another country. How do I do that?

If you want a copy of a document from the Corporations Division, follow these steps:

- A. Call us at 919-807-2225.
- B. Tell our employee that you want to order a certified document to be authenticated and give the employee the details.
- C. Our employee will tell you how much you need to pay.
- D. Our employee will e-mail you a copy of the invoice to either pay by check or pay online. Online payment instructions are on the invoice.
- E. Then you need to gather all these things:
 - a. A copy of the invoice
 - b. A cover sheet for Authentications ([click here for a sample cover sheet](#))
 - c. A self-address stamped return envelope or pre-paid (online) courier label
 - d. If you didn't pay the invoice online, a check in the amount listed on the invoice. You need to make the check payable to the NC Secretary of State. The check must be:
 - ✚ A certified check
 - ✚ A money order, or
 - ✚ A business or personal check which includes the address and telephone number. The check cannot be a starter or counter check.
- F. Send everything to us. You will find addresses and contact information in the next set of FAQs.
- G. We will not start processing your request until we get the complete package from you.

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2. Steps You Need to Take to Get Document Authenticated

What are the steps to get documents authenticated?

There are more steps to get a document authenticated that we can include in a Frequently Asked Question. So:

- A. If you want to get an apostille, [click here for details](#)
- B. If you want to get a document authenticated for use in a foreign country, [click here for details](#). Use the same procedure for authentication and authority.

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3. Getting Your Document to Us and from Us

I have a document I want to get authenticated. Where do I send it or can I bring it?

Here is what you need to know to send or bring your document to us:

Telephone	919-807-2140	
E-mail	authen@sosnc.com	
By US Postal Service	NC Department of the Secretary of State ATTN: Authentications PO Box 29622 Raleigh, NC 27626-0622	Pay by check in U.S. dollars made out to: NC Secretary of State
By Delivery Service	NC Department of the Secretary of State ATTN: Authentications 2 South Salisbury Street Raleigh, NC 27601	Pay by check in U.S. dollars made out to: NC Secretary of State
Hand Delivery	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday except Federal and State Holidays. NC Department of the Secretary of State ATTN: Authentications 2 South Salisbury Street Raleigh, NC 27601	Pay by check in U.S. dollars made out to: NC Secretary of State OR Exact cash

I need to get a document authenticated. Can I make an appointment to get it done?

No, we don't make appointments to authenticate documents. However, if you drop your document off early in the day, you may be able to pick it up later the same day.

I want to bring documents to your office to be authenticated. How soon can I get them back from you if I hand deliver them?

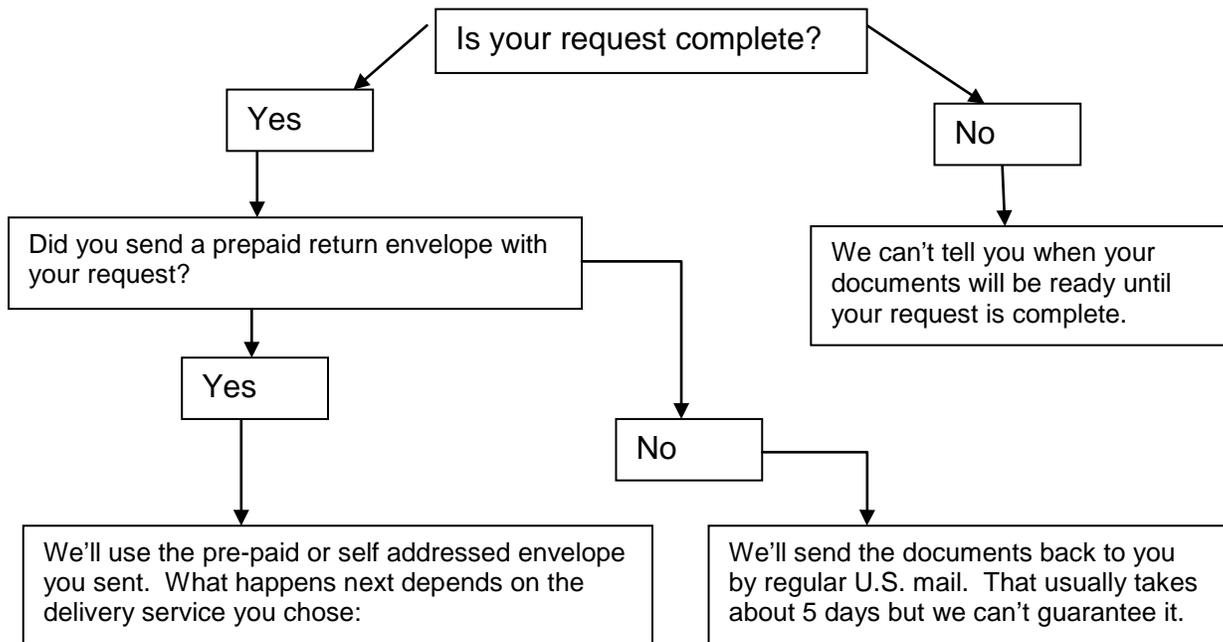
If your authentication request is complete, and you hand deliver it to our office, we do our best to make the schedule below from Monday to Friday excluding State holidays.

	COMPLETE request with less than 31 documents		COMPLETE request with more than 31 documents	
Time of Document Drop-Off	Before 10 a.m.	After 10 a.m.	Before 10 a.m.	After 10 a.m.
Day You Can Pick Them Up	Same Day	Next business day	Next business day	Next business day
Time of Day When Documents will be ready	4:30 p.m.	After 11 a.m.	After 11 a.m.	Call for status after 11 a.m.

If I send my documents to you in the mail or with a delivery service, how soon can I get them back from you?

The answer depends on:

- A. Whether your authentication request was complete,
- B. Whether you sent us a pre-paid return envelope or some kind, and
- C. What kind of pre-paid return envelope you sent us.



USPS Express or Priority Mail: We will call you when the documents are done. You'll have to arrange pickup.	FedEx or UPS <u>AIR</u>: They make regular daily air delivery pickups at our office. They will pick up the documents when they make their regular pickup.	ANY commercial delivery service <u>BY GROUND</u> delivery, including UPS & FedEx: We will call you when the documents are done. YOU will then need to call your delivery service to arrange for them to pick up your documents.
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Your charts say the request must be “complete”. What do you mean by “complete”?

That means you have to include all of these things with your authentication request:

- A. The original document(s) to be authenticated with original signatures.
- B. A cover letter ([click here for sample](#)) with:
 - a. A contact name
 - b. Daytime telephone number
 - c. The country where the document will be used
- C. The correct fee.

- D. A certified or notarized English translation of the original document if it is in a different language.
- E. A pre-paid return envelope from the US Postal Service, a commercial delivery service, or a self-address stamped envelope.

My document needs to go to another country after you authenticate it. Will you send it for me?

Yes, but ONLY if you give us a “pre-paid” (not a label with an account number) delivery service shipping label to use. We will not send your documents outside the United State using regular U.S. Mail. (See below on what a pre-paid label is.)

How can I arrange to use a courier delivery service to send and receive my documents?

1. Decide which delivery service you want to use. We can’t recommend a service to you. We can tell you that some of the delivery services we see people use are:
 - A. FedEx: www.fedex.com/us - 1-800-gofedex (1-800-463-3339)
 - B. UPS: www.ups.com – 1-800-pickups (1-800-742-5877)
 - C. USPS Express Mail or Priority Mail from your local Post Office
2. Decide what kind of delivery service pick-ups you want to use. There are 2 kinds of delivery service pick-up at our office:
 - * Ground pick-up
 - * Air pick-up

For any kind of “ground” pick-up, we’ll call you when the documents are ready. Then you’ll have to call your delivery service and get them to pick up the documents.

If you choose UPS or FedEx “air” pick-up, the pick-up happens automatically. That’s because those 2 delivery services make scheduled air pick-ups at our office every day.

3. Send us your documents, cover letter, pre-paid shipping label, envelope, payment, etc.
4. We’ll send the documents back to you. How that happens depends on you. If you don’t send a pre-paid label, we’ll use regular US mail. If you do send us a pre-paid label:
 - * If it’s a “ground” pick-up label, we’ll call you at the number you put on the cover letter. Then you have to call your delivery service and tell them to come get your documents.
 - * If it’s a FedEx or UPS “air” pick-up label, they’ll pick it up automatically when they make a scheduled trip to our office.

Either the USPS or the delivery service you chose will deliver the documents to you.

What is a pre-paid return shipping label from a courier service?

It is a shipping label printed from the vendor's (i.e., FedEx or UPS) website that has already been paid for or purchased directly from their store. The label indicates the address where it is to be sent has a barcode, tracking number and you pay for it online or in person. It must be a computer printed label. [\(Click here for samples\)](#)

How can I get a pre-paid return label (shipping label)?

Shipping Documents (label)

If you want your documents back faster than USPS regular mail, you may want to use a delivery service. To do that, you'll have to send us a pre-paid shipping label for the delivery service with your documents.

You can get a shipping label by:

Online	In person
1. Go to your delivery service's website. We've provided some of those websites below but there are others you can use.	1. Go to the physical location of the delivery service or one of its outlets.
2. Follow the directions at the website.	2. Explain what you need.
3. At most of the websites, you can pay by: * Using an account number you have Or * Making a payment with a credit card	3. Give them the information to go on the label.
4. Then print your pre-paid shipping label.	4. Pay.
5. Be sure to keep a copy or at least the number on your label.	5. They'll give you the pre-paid shipping label.
	6. Be sure to keep a copy or at least the number on your label.

Remember: If you don't give us a pre-paid shipping label, we'll return your documents by regular USPS mail.

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4. Documents Not Authenticated

My request to authenticate a document was rejected. Why?

Look at the rejection letter you got from us. The reason we rejected your document is included in the letter.

You rejected my document. I want to appeal. How do I do that?

Look at the rejection letter you got from us. The information about how to appeal is included in the letter.

To appeal, you need to:

- A. File a petition for a contested case hearing with the NC Office of Administrative Hearings. You can contact them at:
(919) 431-3000
Mailing Address: 6714 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6714
Street Address: 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh, NC 27609
<http://www.ncoah.com>
- B. You may need to pay a filing fee.
- C. You need to serve (send) a copy of the petition to:
Ann B. Wall
General Counsel
NC Department of the Secretary of State
PO Box 29622
Raleigh, NC 28762-0622

What are some of the reasons you reject requests to authenticate documents?

We reject authentication requests for different reasons. Some of the reasons are:

- A. The document is not from North Carolina.
- B. There is an issue with the notarization on the document.
- C. The document is not in English and there is no certified or notarized translation included with the documents.
- D. The document is presented for an improper purpose. For example, documents to be used in the United States can't be authenticated.

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