



Pearson  
VUE

**Pennsylvania**

**Notary**

**Examination**

**Candidate  
Information Bulletin**

November 2020

# QUICK REFERENCE

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## DIVISION OF COMMISSIONS, LEGISLATION AND NOTARIES

**<http://www.dos.pa.gov/Notaries>**

210 North Office Building

Harrisburg, PA 17120

(717) 787-5280

*Hours of Operation 8:00 am – 5:00 pm M-F, Closed on Federal Holidays*

### **Contact the Division to:**

- Clarify information about appointment and commissioning
- Change your current name or address
- Confirm Board approval for examination

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## PEARSON VUE® PENNSYLVANIA NOTARY EXAMINATION

**<http://www.pearsonvue.com>**

*Attn: Regulatory Program Manager*

5601 Green Valley Dr.

Bloomington, MN 55437

(877) 883-1370

*Monday–Friday 8am–11pm; Saturday 8am–5pm; Sunday 10am–4pm (Eastern Time Zone)*

### **Go to Pearson VUE's website (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/pa/bpoa>) to:**

- Download a candidate handbook
- Schedule, cancel, or reschedule an examination

### **Accommodation Requests (<http://pearsonvue.com/accommodations>):**

- Request an accommodation for testing under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines

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# INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania Department of State has contracted with Pearson VUE to administer the Pennsylvania Notary Examination. The focus of this handbook is to describe the steps that you, the candidate, must follow to apply for and test.

## ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCESS

You must submit a completed *Notary Public Application* with supporting documentation and fees to the Department of State prior to being approved to sit for the examination.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA NOTARY EXAMINATION

In order to be eligible to take the Pennsylvania Notary examination, you must meet the following requirements for appointment and commissioning as a notary public:

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age
- Be a citizen or permanent legal resident of the United States
- Be a resident of Pennsylvania or have a place of employment or practice within this Commonwealth
- Be able to read and write English
- Have completed at least three hours of approved notary education within the six months immediately preceding your application (see below for more information)
- Have the honesty, integrity, competence and reliability to act as a notary public – this is generally the absence of a conviction of, or acceptance of Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition by, the applicant for a felony or an offense involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit
- Not be otherwise disqualified to receive a commission because of: 1) notary discipline in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any other state/jurisdiction; 2) other professional or occupational license discipline; or 3) a judgment or admission of liability in a legal proceeding for actions as a notary public.

The following persons are **NOT** eligible to hold the office of Notary Public:

- Any member of the Congress of the United States, and any person, whether an officer, a subordinate officer or agent holding any office or appointment of profit or trust under the legislative, executive, or judicial departments of the government of the United States, to which a salary, fees or perquisites are attached
- Any member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania

### NEW Mandatory Education Requirement for all applicants

– The Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts, Act 73 of 2013 (effective October 26, 2017), requires all applicants for both initial appointment and reappointment as a notary public to complete at least three hours of approved notary education within the six months immediately preceding the application for appointment or reappointment. Under the new law, the exemption previously available for notaries whose commission was in effect on July 1, 2003 is abolished. All notaries public are required to complete an approved notary education course in order to be appointed or reappointed, including those notaries previously “grandfathered” from the prior education requirement by court ruling.

### NEW Examination Requirement for applicants who do not hold a current notary commission

– The Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts (effective October 26, 2017) requires all applicants who do not hold a current commission in Pennsylvania to pass an examination. This includes applicants who have never held a notary commission and all applicants who previously held a notary commission but whose commission has expired at the time their application for appointment is received by the Department (even by one day).

To ensure uninterrupted “commissioned” status, completed applications for reappointment should be submitted to the Department of State **AT LEAST TWO TO THREE MONTHS** prior to the expiration of the current commission. Renewal applicants should allow **AT LEAST ONE MONTH** for processing after submitting a completed renewal application to the Department.

### NOTARY PUBLIC APPLICATION FEE AND PROCEDURES

Applications may be submitted electronically to the Pennsylvania Department of State via the Online Notary Public Application System (<https://www.notaries.pa.gov/Pages/OnlineApplication.aspx>) or via mail to

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – Department  
of State Bureau of Commissions, Elections  
and Legislation Division of Commissions,  
Legislation and Notaries**  
210 North Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Along with the application and required documents, all applicants must pay the \$42 application fee to the Department of State. Applications submitted through the *Online Notary Public Application System* require payment via credit and debit card. Candidates that do not possess a credit or debit card can download the application from our website at [https://www.dos.pa.gov/OtherServices/Notaries/Documents/Notary%20application%20RULONA%20compliant\\_Fillable.pdf](https://www.dos.pa.gov/OtherServices/Notaries/Documents/Notary%20application%20RULONA%20compliant_Fillable.pdf).

Applications submitted by mail must be accompanied by your certificate of education and a check or money order for \$42, made payable to "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania". The application fee is non-refundable. The Department of State is authorized to revoke the notary public commission of a notary public who issues a personal insufficient funds check to the order of any State agency or the Commonwealth.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Candidates must contact the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries regarding demographic changes, including name, address, or email changes. Changes to name, address or email may be made online at any time via <https://www.notaries.pa.gov/Pages/NotaryChangeApplication.aspx>. Candidates may contact the Division at (717) 787-5280 for other methods of updating demographic information. If the applicant has made a change to their information, they must contact the DOS so that new information is forwarded to Pearson VUE. Any change to your record is **NOT** automatically sent to Pearson VUE. If you do not do this, your information that Pearson VUE has may not match the latest information on your record.

## APPROVAL TO TEST NOTICE

When your *Notary Public Application*, application fee, education certificate, and any other requested documents have been received and evaluated for eligibility, you will receive an approval to test notice via email from Pearson VUE (not DOS).

The approval to test notice contains details about how to schedule your examination.

An approval to test notice will not be sent until a completed application and all of the requested items have been received, verified, and approved by the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries.

New applicants should allow at least four to six weeks for processing after submitting a completed application to the Department of State. If approval to test is not received within this time, contact the Division at (717) 787-5280.

The notary application has three legal questions that the applicant must respond to. If any of those questions is marked as "Yes" the applicant must provide a signed written statement and all supporting documentation.

# EXAM SCHEDULING, CANCELLATION, AND RESCHEDULING

The Exam will be given at a Pearson VUE computer-based testing facility. Once you have received your approval to test notice, please schedule your test on-line by using the Pearson VUE web reservations site at <http://www.pearsonvue.com>.

## EXAM FEE

The exam fee (\$65) can be paid by credit card, debit card, or check by submitting a voucher request through the Pearson VUE voucher store here: <https://wsr.pearsonvue.com/vouchers/pricelist/pabpoa.asp>. Exam fees are paid online at [www.pearsonvue.com](http://www.pearsonvue.com) at the conclusion of the exam scheduling process.

## CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING POLICY

If you cannot attend your Exam, you must contact Pearson VUE at least forty-eight (48) hours before the day of the exam to reschedule. If you do not attend your exam, and have not contacted Pearson VUE at least forty-eight (48) hours before the exam date, your exam fee will **NOT** be refunded and you cannot transfer the fee to another exam date. You may not give your exam date to another person.

## ABSENCE POLICY

Candidates who are late or absent from an exam may call Pearson VUE within 14 days of the exam date to request an excused absence. A case number will be assigned, and supporting documentation can be emailed to [Caseattachments@pearson.com](mailto:Caseattachments@pearson.com). For example, if you are absent because of illness of yourself or an immediate family member, you must email a copy of the original doctor's note to [Caseattachments@pearson.com](mailto:Caseattachments@pearson.com).

Acceptable excuses include:

- Illness of yourself or an immediate family member
- Death in the family
- Disabling traffic accident
- Court appearance or jury duty
- Military duty
- Weather emergency

## WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Exams may be delayed or cancelled if severe weather or a natural disaster makes the test site unsafe or impossible to reach. Candidates will be notified if the exam is cancelled and may take the exam on another day at no additional cost.

## ADA ACCOMMODATIONS

Pearson VUE complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended. The purpose of accommodations is to provide candidates with full access to the test. Accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion. Pearson VUE provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations.

Test accommodations may include things such as:

- A separate testing room
- Extra testing time
- Large print test booklet

Test accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis. All candidates who are requesting accommodations because of a disability must provide appropriate documentation of their condition and how it is expected to affect their ability to take the test under standard conditions. This may include:

- Supporting documentation from the professional who diagnosed the condition, including the credentials that qualify the professional to make this diagnosis
- A description of past accommodations the candidate has received

The steps to follow when requesting test accommodations vary, depending on your test program sponsor. To begin, go to <http://pearsonvue.com/accommodations>, and then select your test program sponsor from the alphabetized list. Candidates who have additional questions concerning test accommodations may contact the ADA Coordinator by emailing [accommodationspearsonvue@pearson.com](mailto:accommodationspearsonvue@pearson.com).

All accommodation requests **MUST** be submitted before the scheduling window closes.

## EXAM DAY

Please arrive at the test center thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled appointment time. This will give you adequate time to complete the necessary sign-in procedures. Be prepared to show identification. If you arrive more than fifteen (15) minutes late for your appointment, you may be refused admission and exam fees may be forfeited.

No personal items may be taken into the testing room. This includes all bags, books not authorized by the sponsor, notes, phones, pagers, watches and wallets.

A brief video that previews what to expect at a Pearson VUE test center is available from our website at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/test-taker/security.aspx>.

## WHAT TO BRING

You **MUST** bring the following items with you to the Examination test site:

- Two (2) forms of current (unexpired) signature-bearing identification. (One **MUST** be photo-bearing, see list below). Please note: The signature and names must match exactly to what was submitted on your application. If you come to the test site without the proper ID, you will not be allowed to take the exam and you will lose your exam fee.

**No other materials will be allowed.**

All exam questions, each form of the exam, and all other exam materials are copyrighted by and the property of Pearson VUE. Any distribution of the exam content or materials through any form of reproduction, or through oral or written communication, is strictly prohibited and punishable by law. Anyone who removes or tries to remove exam material or information from the test site will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

## ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION

Candidates must present **two (2) forms** of current signature identification. The primary identification must be government-issued and photo-bearing with a signature, and the secondary identification must contain a valid signature. Identification must be in English. Note: Candidates are not permitted to enlist another individual (proxy) to test on their behalf.

## PRIMARY ID (PHOTOGRAPH AND SIGNATURE, NOT EXPIRED)

- Government-issued Driver's License
- U.S. Dept. of State Driver's License
- U.S. Learner's Permit (plastic card only with photo and signature)
- National/State/Country ID card
- Passport
- Passport Card
- Military ID
- Military ID for spouses and dependents
- Alien Registration Card (Green Card, Permanent Resident Visa)

## SECONDARY ID (SIGNATURE, NOT EXPIRED)

- U.S. Social Security card
- Debit (ATM) card
- Any form of ID on the Primary ID list

If the ID presented has an embedded signature that is not visible (microchip), or is difficult or impossible to read, the candidate must present another form of identification from the Primary ID or Secondary ID list that contains a visible signature.

Pearson VUE does not recognize grace periods. For example, if a candidate's driver's license expired yesterday and the state allows a 30-day grace period for renewing the ID, the ID is considered to be expired.

## TESTING POLICIES

The following policies are observed at each test center:

### LATENESS

Arrive at the test center thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled examination starts. If you are late for your scheduled examination, or do not bring all of your required materials, you will **NOT** be allowed to test and your examination fee will **NOT** be returned (see *Cancellation and Rescheduling* for more details).

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cellular phones, pagers or any other electronic devices are not permitted to be used and must be turned off during testing. There is no place for storage of personal belongings at the test centers.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS/STUDY AIDS

You are not permitted to take personal belongings such as briefcases, large bags, study materials, extra books or papers into the examination room. Any such materials brought into the examination room will be collected and returned to you when you have completed the examination. Pearson VUE is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

## EATING/DRINKING/SMOKING

You are not permitted to eat, drink, or smoke during the examination.

## MISCONDUCT

If you cause a disturbance of any kind or engage in any kind of misconduct, you will be dismissed from the examination and the incident will be reported to the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries. Decisions regarding disciplinary measures are the responsibility of the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries.

## GUESTS/VISITORS

Guests, visitors, pets, interpreters, or children are not allowed at the test centers.

# THE EXAM

The Pennsylvania Notary Examination will consist of 25 scored and 5 “pretest” multiple choice questions. (Pretest questions are questions on which information is being collected for use in making future exams. Your answers to pretest questions do not affect your score. Pretest questions are mixed in with the scored questions and are not identified.) You will have 60 minutes to complete the exam, which will begin after you have accepted the terms of the Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Each examination item will consist of a question and three answer options. If you do not know the answer, you may guess or move on to the next item. However, please note that unanswered questions will be marked as incorrect. If you want to review a specific question after completing the test, you can click on "Flag for Review" to mark the question. If you click on "Flag for Review," the flag will display in yellow. At the end of the test, you may have time to review questions that you marked. Questions flagged for review will appear with a blue flag in the Review Screen. You may then go back to the flagged questions and answer them or change your response.

Pearson VUE highly encourages all test takers to review the online tutorial (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/demo>) before arriving to the test center. The tutorial will help familiarize yourself with the look, feel and navigation of a Pearson VUE computer-based test.

If you give help to someone or receive help from anyone during the exam, you will be asked to leave the room immediately. The results will not be scored and the incident will be reported to the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries. Anyone who takes or tries to take materials or information from the testing room is subject to prosecution.

All exam questions, each form of the exam, and all other exam materials are copyrighted by and the property of Pearson VUE. Any distribution of the exam content or materials through any form of reproduction, or through oral or written communication, is strictly prohibited and punishable by law. Anyone who removes or tries to remove exam material or information from the test site will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

# CONTENT OUTLINE

## CONTENT OUTLINE — NOTARY

30 total items (25 scored items; 5 pretest items)

- I. Obtaining Notary Commission (4)
  - A. Submit a Notary Public application along with evidence of course completion for approval by Pennsylvania Department of State and then pass the examination.
  - B. Purchase a \$10,000 surety bond in order to protect customer from financial loss.
  - C. Take the oath of office before the recorder of deeds and record that oath, bond, and commission within 45 days of appointment.
  - D. Provide official signature at prothonotary office within 45 days of appointment so that acts of the notary can be authenticated.
  - E. Obtain an official stamp that meets the requirements of the law in order to authenticate notarial acts performed.
  - F. Obtain a journal in order to create a public record for every notarial act performed.
- II. Performing Notarial Acts (15)
  - A. Properly identify the person and assess comprehension and willingness in order to protect against fraud.
  - B. Examine the document to be notarized to assess document completeness, determine the named signer, and assess if the notarial certificate is present or sufficient.
  - C. Advise the customer of any fees for the notarial act.
  - D. Record all relevant facts of the notarial act in the journal to create a compliant public record.
  - E. Perform the requested notarial act in order to fulfill the customer's intended purpose.
  - F. Complete, sign and affix the official stamp on the notarial certificate to evidence the notarial act.
- III. Managing Notary Commission (6)
  - A. Report change in the notary's information to the Pennsylvania Department of State in order to keep the Department informed.
  - B. Report change in the notary's status to the Pennsylvania Department of State in order to keep the Department informed.
  - C. Keep the stamp and journal in a secure location in order to maintain custody and control, and prevent loss or fraudulent use.
  - D. Keep the mandatory surety bond in full force and effect in order to protect customer from financial loss.



# SCORE REPORTING

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At the conclusion of the examination, **preliminary** exam results will be provided. The issuance of your appointment letter will verify passage of the exam and confirm the preliminary report.

## SCALED SCORE

The passing scores of the notary examinations were set by the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries (in conjunction with Pearson VUE) after a comprehensive study was completed for each examination. Raw scores are converted into scaled scores that can range from 0 to 100. To avoid misuse of score information, numeric scores are only reported to failing candidates. The scaled score that is reported to you is neither the number of questions you answered correctly nor the percentage of questions you answered correctly. With a passing score of 75, any score below 75 indicates how close the candidate came to passing, rather than the actual number or percentage of questions the candidates answered correctly.

## PASSING

After you have successfully passed the examination and upon satisfactory evidence that you have met all statutory requirements, you will be appointed as a notary public. Please allow approximately 30 days for the Division of Commissions, Legislation and Notaries to process your appointment.

To verify appointment or commission status, an applicant may search the Division's web site using the following link:

**<https://www.notaries.pa.gov/Pages/CheckStatus.aspx>**

## FAILING AND RETAKING AN EXAMINATION

To schedule a retake examination, use the web reservations on the Pearson VUE web site at **<http://www.pearsonvue.com/pa/bpoa>**. Reservations for reexamination cannot be made at the test center, and **you must wait twenty-four (24) hours from your failed examination before making your reservation.**

## DUPLICATE SCORE REPORT

If you lose your Score Report or need a duplicate Score Report, complete the *Request for Duplicate Score Report Form* and mail it to Pearson VUE or email the request to **[pearsonvuecustomerservice@pearson.com](mailto:pearsonvuecustomerservice@pearson.com)** (see Appendix A).

**DIRECTIONS:** You may use this form to ask Pearson VUE for a copy of your Examination Score Report. Please print or type all information on this form, or your request will be returned.

**SEND TO:** Pearson VUE/Pennsylvania Notary Program  
Duplicate Score Request  
5601 Green Valley Drive  
Bloomington, MN 55437

or email the request to:  
**pearsonvuecustomerservice@pearson.com**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM WITH YOUR CURRENT NAME AND ADDRESS. ALL INFORMATION MUST BE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE TO ENSURE PROPER PROCESSING.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized Client Candidate ID \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Exam \_\_\_\_\_ Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_

**IF THE ABOVE INFORMATION WAS DIFFERENT AT THE TIME YOU WERE TESTED, PLEASE INDICATE ORIGINAL INFORMATION. IF YOUR NAME HAS CHANGED, YOU MUST ATTACH A COPY OF A LEGAL DOCUMENT AUTHORIZING THE CHANGE (FOR EXAMPLE, A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE OR A DIVORCE DECREE).**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**I HEREBY AUTHORIZE PEARSON VUE TO SEND ME AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE A DUPLICATE OF MY SCORE REPORT.**

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## TEST SCHEDULES

The Exam will be given at a Pearson VUE computer-based testing facility. Once you have received your *Authorization to Test* notice, please schedule your test online by using the Pearson VUE web reservations site at: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/pa/notaries>.

Below is list of some of the cities in which you can test. However, candidates may test at any of our US test centers.

Testing Site Locations			
Allentown	Greensburg	Newtown	Warrington
Bethlehem	Harrisburg	Philadelphia	Washington
Bloomsburg	Johnstown	Pittsburgh	Wyomissing
Blue Bell	King of Prussia	Pleasant Gap	York
Chambersburg	Lancaster	Plymouth Meeting	
Erie	Media	Scranton	

## EXAMINATION AND FEES

Examination	Total Items	Scored Items	Pre-test Items	Exam Time Allotted	Exam Fee
Pennsylvania Notary Examination	30	25	5	60 minutes	\$65