

Pennsylvania Notary Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

Scored questions \$65 Exam fee	Time limit Pennsylvania Department... Governing body	Passing score
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Exam Logistics (memorize the numbers)

- Exam required: Yes — you must pass an examination to be commissioned.
- Provider: Pearson VUE (the Department's exam vendor).
- Fee: \$65 per test (pay again for each retake).
- Deadline to pass: 6 months from the date you're authorized to sit for the exam.

What a Notary Is

A notary public is a public officer commissioned by the state who acts as an impartial witness to signings and works to deter fraud. Neutrality is the recurring exam theme — most rules trace back to it.

Acknowledgment vs. Jurat (high-yield contrast)

- Acknowledgment: signer declares the signature is genuine and made willingly. No oath. Signer need NOT sign in the notary's presence.
- Jurat: signer MUST sign in the notary's presence AND take an oath or affirmation that the statements are true. Used for affidavits / sworn statements.
- Memory hook: Jurat = swear (oath + sign in front of you); Acknowledgment = just confirms it's their willing signature.

Identifying the Signer

Positively identify every signer by personal knowledge OR satisfactory evidence such as a current government-issued ID. No valid ID and no personal knowledge -> you cannot proceed.

Must-Refuse Triggers (any one = decline)

- Signer appears coerced.
- Signer doesn't understand the transaction.
- Signer can't be properly identified.
- Signer is not physically present (physical presence is mandatory).

Prohibited Acts

- No self-interest: never notarize a document you're a party to or have a direct financial/beneficial interest in.
- No absent signers: signer must be physically present at the moment of notarization.
- Non-attorney notaries: may not give legal advice, take fees for legal advice, or prepare legal documents for others.

Journal — What to Record Every Time

- Date and time of the act
- Type of act
- Type of document
- Name and address of each signer

- Identification method used

Official Seal — Required Contents

- Notary's name
- The words "Notary Public"
- The commissioning state
- The commission expiration date

Seal & Journal Security

Keep both the seal and journal under your exclusive control — never let anyone else use them. This is a common exam distractor (delegating your seal is always wrong).

Official sources

- Pennsylvania Department of State — Notary Examination Requirement:
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dos/programs/notaries/examination-requirement>
- Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation — Notaries — Application Information: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dos/programs/notaries/application-information>
- Pearson VUE — Pennsylvania Notary — OnVUE Online Testing:
<https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/pa/notaries/onvue.html>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/practice/exams/government/pa-notary