California Notary - Acceptable Identification

Quick reference based on California Civil Code section 1185 and the 2026 California Notary Public Handbook.

Important: Personal knowledge of the signer alone is not sufficient. For an acknowledgment or jurat, identity must be established by satisfactory evidence.

Acceptable identification

1	**California driver's license or California identification card** issued by the DMV.
2	**U.S. passport** issued by the U.S. Department of State. A U.S. passport card is also acceptable.
3	**California state-prison inmate identification card**, when the signer is in custody in a California state prison.
4	**Inmate identification issued by a sheriff's department**, when the signer is in custody in a local detention facility.
5	**Driver's license issued by another U.S. state**, or by an authorized Canadian or Mexican public agency.
6	**Identification card issued by another U.S. state.**
7	**Valid foreign passport** from the signer's country of citizenship.
8	**Valid consular identification document** issued by a consulate from the signer's country of citizenship.
9	**U.S. military identification card** - provided it contains all information required by California law.
10	**California state, city, county, or city-and-county employee identification card.**
11	**Identification card issued by a federally recognized tribal government.**

Timing / content requirements: The qualifying ID generally must be current or issued within the last five years. For the IDs in items 5-11, California law also requires a photograph, physical description, signature, and serial or other identifying number.

If the signer does not have acceptable identification

California law also permits identity to be established through a qualifying credible witness personally known to the notary, or two qualifying credible witnesses not personally known to the notary, when the statutory requirements are met. Credible-witness procedures have additional identification, oath, eligibility, and journal requirements.

Notary journal: When paper identification is used, record the type of ID, issuing government agency, serial or identifying number, and the date of issue or expiration as required by California law.

Source: California Secretary of State, 2026 Notary Public Handbook, Identification section; California Civil Code section 1185. This quick-reference guide is informational and should be checked against current California law and Secretary of State guidance.

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