

## IRM PROCEDURAL UPDATE

**DATE: 11/02/2016**

**NUMBER: wi-03-1116-1627**

**SUBJECT: Electronic Apostille**

**AFFECTED IRM(s)/SUBSECTION(s): 3.21.263.5.3.4.2.1**

**CHANGE(s):**

**IRM 3.21.263.5.3.4.2.1(6) revised to describe electronic apostilles.**

6. Notarized documents can be notarized by a U.S. notary, U.S. State Department, U.S. Consul, or U.S. Embassy employee or foreign notaries. Documents notarized by foreign notaries authorized under the Hague Apostille Convention must have an apostille attached. See Figure 3.21.263-6.

Some countries issue electronic apostilles that follow the format of Figure 3.21.263-6. The seal displayed in the letterhead logo can be considered the apostille seal or stamp. These apostilles usually have a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) web address which is usually listed at the bottom of the apostille. For example, the URL for the Republic of Colombia is [www.cancilleria.gov.co/apostilla](http://www.cancilleria.gov.co/apostilla). Consider these electronic apostilles valid for the attached document.

If the document originates in a country that is not a party to the convention, applicants should have the document certified by the foreign authority that issued it. See IRM 3.21.263.4.6 for instances when notarized documents are acceptable.

Notarized documents:

- Have a stamp and usually a raised seal. Documents notarized by U.S. notaries may or may not have a signature but a stamp or a raised seal will be present. Consider notaries from a U.S. possession as U.S. notaries. U.S. possessions include Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and Guam.
- Require no additional authentication
- Have commissions considered valid (current or unexpired) if valid at the time that the document was notarized
- May be a notarized cover letter indicating that the attached supporting ID has been certified. The cover letter must specify what is being notarized. Accept the cover letter as the notice of notarization for the individual applicant.

**CAUTION:** Photocopies or faxes of notarized documents are not acceptable. Faxes or E-mail copies cannot be notarized

**NOTE:** A notary notarizes a copy of a document to attest that they saw the original document. If the U.S. notary uses black ink, it may be difficult to distinguish copies from originals. If this is the only issue in doubt for the ID, accept the U. S. notarized document as valid.

**EXCEPTION:** If a copy of a visa is not notarized but is accompanied by a copy of a notarized passport with the same number, accept as valid.

**REMINDER:** Do **NOT** accept documents notarized by a foreign notary whose country is not authorized under the Hague Apostille Convention. See Figure 3.21.263-7 for a list of Hague Apostille Convention members. Documents issued by countries not listed in the Hague Apostille Convention must be certified by the foreign authority that issued it.

[Text Only Link](#)

APOSTILLE  
(Hague Convention of 5 October 1961/Convention de La Haye du 5 Octobre 1961)

1. Country: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
Pays: Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord

This public document/Le présent acte public

2. has been signed by **Edward Redwood**  
a été signé par .....

3. acting in the capacity of **Notary Public**  
agissant en qualité de .....

4. bears the seal/stamp of **THE SAID NOTARY PUBLIC**  
est revêtu du sceau/timbre de .....

Certified/Attesté

5. at London/a Londres 6. the/le **4 JAN 2005**

7. by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs/  
par le Secrétaire d'Etat Principal de Sa Majesté aux Affaires Etrangères et du Commonwealth.

8. Number/sous N° **G 477845**

9. Stamp:  
timbre: 

10. Signature **J. Eucalyptus**

*J. Eucalyptus*  
.....  
For the Secretary of State/Pour le Secrétaire d'Etat

**Figure 3.21.263-6**

**Example of Apostille**

<b>Hague Apostille Convention Members</b>			
Albania	Dominica	Liechtenstein	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Andorra	Dominican Republic	Lithuania	Samoa

Antigua and Barbuda	Ecuador	Luxembourg	San Marino
Argentina	El Salvador	Malawi	São Tome and Príncipe
Armenia	Estonia	Malta	Serbia
Australia	Fiji	Marshal Islands	Seychelles
Austria	Finland	Mauritius	Slovakia
Azerbaijan	France	Mexico	Slovenia
Bahamas	Georgia	Moldova, Republic of	South Africa
Barbados	Germany	Monaco	Spain
Belarus	Greece	Mongolia	Sri Lanka
Belgium	Grenada	Montenegro	Suriname
Belize	Honduras	Namibia	Swaziland
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Hungary	Netherlands	Sweden
Botswana	Iceland	New Zealand	Switzerland
Brunei Darussalem	India	Niue	The Former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) of Macedonia
Bulgaria	Ireland	Norway	Tonga
Cape Verde	Israel	Oman	Trinidad and Tobago
China, People's Republic of	Italy	Panama	Turkey
Colombia	Japan	Peru	Ukraine
Cook Islands	Kazakhstan	Poland	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Costa Rica	Korea, Republic of	Portugal	United States and its territories
Croatia	Kyrgyzstan	Romania	Vanuatu
Cyprus	Latvia	Russian Federation	Venezuela
Czech Republic	Lesotho	Saint Kitts and Nevis	
Denmark	Liberia	Saint Lucia	

**Figure 3.21.263-7a**

**Hague Apostille Convention Members**