

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND PROCEDURES (LEGALIZATION/AUTHENTICATION OF DOCUMENTS)

1. What is an authentication?

The Philippines requires documents to be authenticated before they can be accepted in the Philippines. This is also called legalization of the document.

Authentication or legalization means that a seal is placed on the document which will be recognized in the foreign country where the document will be used. It is an act which certifies the position of the official who executed, issued or certified a copy of a document.

2. How do I obtain an Authentication?

The procedures vary depending on the type of document to be authenticated.

Following are the types documents usually submitted to the Consulate General for authentication:

a. Public records such as documents originating from a State Court (ex. adoption decree) or State Agency (ex. birth, marriage or death certificates) - State documents such as documents originating from a state court or agency must be authenticated by the designated State authority for authentication of documents (usually, the Secretary of State). Some States require a prior authenticating certificate from a county clerk of court or, in the case of New York, a letter of exemplification from the Vital Records Office and an authenticating certificate from the county clerk of court.

For information on the procedures of the various States visit the U.S. Department of States webpage for authentication of documents for use abroad: http://travel.state.gov/about/info/customer/customer_312.html then click on the link on the link for the State where the document was issued.

b. Affidavits and contracts containing agreements between private parties such as Powers of Attorney, Deeds of Sale, Assignment of Rights, Deed of Extra-judicial Settlement of Properties, etc. – These types of documents need to be notarized (i.e., the party/ies executing the document must sign the document before a notary public) before they can be authenticated by the designated State authority for authentication and thereafter, by the Philippine Consulate General. Applicants are advised to contact the State authentication authority listed in the Department of State's list

(http://travel.state.gov/about/info/customer/customer_312.html) to determine what steps are necessary between the notary's seal and the Secretary of State's seal. In some states, this requires contacting the clerk of the court of the county where the notary is licensed, and obtaining an authentication of the notary's seal.

c. **Certificates** like employment certificates or corporate secretary's certificates must also be notarized and authenticated by the designated State authority for authentication before they can be authenticated by the Consulate General.

d. **Other documents** - For documents like diplomas and school transcripts (since these are not normally signed by the issuing authorities before notaries), we recommend the following procedure: The person in possession of the document can make a photocopy and prepare a written statement that may be attached to or written on the photocopy, stating that the copy is a true and correct copy of the original. The individual will then verify the statement under oath before a notary public and the notary will indicate by a jurat that he or she has administered an oath to the testator. The same procedure holds after notarization (i.e., submit the document first to the designated State authority for authentication and thereafter submit to the Consulate for Philippine authentication).

3. Can the Consulate authenticate documents issued outside its consular jurisdiction?

The Consulate General can only authenticate documents originating from the following Northeast States: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

4. Can I request for authentication service from the Consulate by mail?

Yes, after authentication by the appropriate State authority, the document can be submitted to the Consulate for Philippine authentication in person, or by mail. To request for mail service, please enclose the following with your request: (1) original document with attached authenticating certificate, (2) payment of required fee in postal money order payable to the Philippine Consulate General, New York; and a (3) self-addressed, stamped or pre-paid courier envelope. The Consulate recommends United States Postal Service express mail or any courier service which provides tracking numbers. The Consulate General is not responsible for documents lost in the mail.

5. How much is the fee?

The fee is \$25.00 per certificate of authentication.

6. Is there a shorter procedure for authenticating documents?

Yes, with regard to documents described in Question number 2, letters (b), (c) and (d) above, the person who will sign the document can opt to sign the document before a consular officer of the Consulate General or any notary public accredited with the Consulate.

For a list of accredited notaries, contact the Consulate's Legal Section at tel. no. 1.212.764. 1330 ex. 321. The document executed before a consular officer is considered legalized directly by the Consulate General. **A document notarized by an accredited notary public must still be submitted to the Consulate for authentication/ of the notary's signature.** (Note: the Consulate has accredited notaries only for the following States: New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts).

Persons signing personal documents such as the above before a consular officer are requested to bring the following:

- (1) The document to be signed;
- (2) An extra set of the document for the Consulate's files;
- (3) Proof of Identity (valid passport or any valid government-issued photo I.D.)
- (4) Two photocopies of submitted I.D. or passport (for passports, please photocopy the page with photo and personal info and facing page with holder's signature)
- (5) Payment – US\$25

7. What are the Consulate's Office Hours?

The Consulate's Office Hours are from Monday to Friday, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (excluding U.S. and Philippine holidays).

Service Hours at the Authentication/Legalization Section are, as follows:

Receiving of documents for legalization/authentication: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Pick-up time for legalized/authenticated documents:

- If your document was filed before 11:00 am – release is at 2:00 pm
- If your document was filed between 11:00 am to 3:00 – release is at 4:00 pm
- And if your document was filed after 3:00 pm – release is at 2:00 pm the next working day.

The Consulate General endeavors to have documents released as soon as they are signed and processed. Your document can be released earlier depending on the number of service requests received during the day. END