

Frequently-Asked Questions Legalization/Authentication of Documents

QUESTION #1

What documents can the embassy/consulate authenticate?

ANSWER:

We can authenticate documents issued by private individuals or entities. These include affidavits, sworn statements, and **special powers of attorney** (SPA). However, kindly take note that all documents that are authenticated by a Panamanian embassy/consulate will have to undergo further notarization once they arrive in Panama.

QUESTION #2

Can the embassy/consulate authenticate a document issued by Philippine government agencies (NBI clearance, birth certificate, DTI export permit, etc.)

ANSWER:

Documents issued by Philippine state authorities cannot be authenticated by the embassy/consulate. The proper course of action is to forward them to the Office of Consular Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA-OCA) to be issued the apostille. The apostille, once affixed by DFA-OCA, will allow your document to be used legally in Panama automatically. Please bear in mind that only DFA-OCA can perform the apostille.

QUESTION #3

How long does the authentication take?

ANSWER:

One (1) to two (2) working days.

QUESTION #4

Do I need to attach anything to the document, like an ID card?

ANSWER:

Yes. We accept copies of any government-issued ID, as long as they display your signature that matches the one in your document. Bear in mind that ID cards without signature cannot be accepted.

QUESTION #5

How do I pay the processing fee?

ANSWER:

The fee of **USD 30.00** (plus a foreign currency deposit fee of Php 3.00) can be paid in cash at the embassy/consulate. You may also directly deposit the amount to our account in Bank of Commerce (BOC) under the account name “Panama Embassy” and account number: **102210001589**. Bear in mind that the fee, once deposit is confirmed by the bank, cannot be refunded.

QUESTION #6

My document is already notarized. Can I submit it for authentication?

ANSWER:

We cannot authenticate a document that is already notarized, as it is the signatory’s signature that we verify, not the notarization. It is therefore important that you sign the document in the presence of the Consul-General or a consular officer, either in person or by videoconference. If you wish to proceed with legalizing your notarized document, you must first go to the city hall that has jurisdiction over the notary public, and request for a Certificate of Authority for a Notarial Act (CANA), Once CANA is secured, proceed to DFA-OCA for the apostille.

QUESTION #7

I live outside of Metro Manila. Can I send the documents and payment by mail?

ANSWER:

We encourage users to make a personal appearance to sign their documents in front of the Consul-General or a consular officer. However, due to the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, they are allowed to sign via videoconference apps (Viber, Zoom). Afterwards, they may submit their documents via courier or by an authorized representative. As for the payment, they may deposit the fee at the nearest BOC branch and include the deposit slip along with the documents as proof of payment.

QUESTION #8

Can I have the document notarized by the embassy/consulate instead?

ANSWER:

As of the moment, not all embassies/consulates of Panama can perform notarization. In our case, we are still waiting to be issued the notarial seals from the home government, and as such, we can only offer authentication.

QUESTION #9

I want to bring my pet with me to Panama, but I need a health clearance from the Philippine government. Can I have that document authenticated at the embassy/consulate?

ANSWER:

You are referring to the “Export Permit for Dogs & Cats”, which is issued by the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture (BAI). We cannot authenticate the export permit, since it is issued by the Philippine state. Once issued by BAI, the export permit must be forwarded to DFA-OCA for apostille

QUESTION #10

My affidavit/SPA is in English. Will I need a Spanish translation/version?

ANSWER:

It depends. Usually, the Panamanian government requires a Spanish translation/version, but it's better to consult with your lawyer in Panama, if applicable. If for example your lawyer sends you both an English and Spanish drafts of an affidavit or SPA, we can authenticate both, but we will also charge separate processing fees for each version.