



**Tennessee  
Department of State**

**Division of Business Services**

**Apostille & Authentication  
Services**

**Secretary of State**

Revised 1/10/2008

## **WHAT IS AN APOSTILLE OR AN AUTHENTICATION?**

An apostille is a certification form set out in The Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents (1961).

An apostille or an authentication certifies the authenticity of the signature, seal and position of the official who has executed, issued or certified a copy of a public document. An apostille or an authentication enables a public document issued in one country to be recognized as valid in another country.

Apostilles and authentications are often needed in adoptions, extraditions and certain business transactions.

## **WHO ISSUES AN APOSTILLE OR AN AUTHENTICATION?**

The Tennessee Department of State, Division of Business Services, issues an apostille or an authentication on behalf of the Tennessee Secretary of State with respect to documents executed, issued or certified by Tennessee County Clerks, the Tennessee State Registrar, and the Tennessee Secretary of State. The U.S. Department of State must also certify any authentication (but not apostille) issued by the Division.

## **WHAT TYPES OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS NEED APOSTILLES OR AUTHENTICATIONS?**

An apostille may be obtained to transmit public documents executed in one signatory country to another signatory country in which the documents need to be produced. The Hague Convention defines "public document" as:

1. Those originating in a court, clerk of a court, public prosecutor or process server;
2. Administrative documents;
3. Notarial acts; and
4. Official certificates placed on documents.

An authentication may be obtained to transmit similar documents to countries which have not subscribed to The Hague Convention.

NOTE: The Division of Business Services can issue an apostille or authentication only for documents bearing the signature, seal and position of a Tennessee County Clerk, Tennessee State Registrar or the Tennessee Secretary of State. A public document mentioned above must be properly executed, issued or certified by one of these individuals prior to submission to the Division for issuance of an apostille or authentication.

**HOW DO I GET AN APOSTILLE OR AUTHENTICATION FROM THE TENNESSEE SECRETARY OF STATE?**

A request for an apostille or authentication may be made in person or through the mail (no faxes) to the Tennessee Department of State, Division of Business Services, Notary Section.

NOTE: While we make every attempt to expedite the processing of such requests, please note that multiple requests or requests submitted late in the day may require overnight processing.

A processing fee of **\$2.00** for each apostille or authentication must accompany the request. Please make checks or money orders payable to the Tennessee Secretary of State.

Along with the public document, please provide the name of the receiving country and indicate whether an apostille or an authentication is needed (if you are not certain, please check with the consulate of the receiving country or contact the U.S. Department of State's Authentications Office at the address and telephone numbers below).

The Division will provide to the customer the executed apostille or authentication attached to the public document. In the case of an executed authentication, the customer must then obtain certification of the Tennessee Secretary of State's signature by contacting the U.S. State Department at:

U.S. Department of State  
Authentications Office  
518 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, N.W.  
State Annex 1  
Washington, DC 20520  
(Tel: 202-647-5002)  
(Tel: 800-688-9889)



**COUNTER SERVICE**

Customers may obtain apostille or authentication services in person during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. (CST) Monday - Friday). The Division is located on the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of the William R. Snodgrass Tower, 312 Eighth Avenue North, Nashville, TN.

**MAILING ADDRESS**

**State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
Division of Business Services  
NTS Unit  
312 Eighth Avenue North  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Wm. R. Snodgrass Tower  
Nashville, TN 37243**

**TELEPHONE NUMBER**

For other assistance on apostilles or authentications, please contact us at:  
**(615) 741-3699**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS**

**Business.Services@state.tn.us**

**FAX NUMBER**

**(615) 741-7310**