

**Frequently Asked Questions:**  
**Franklin County Probate Court Signature Standards**  
*Updated January 2025*

On January 1, 2024, the Franklin County Probate Court adopted [Loc.R. 57.5](#), regarding signatures. The following are answers to some frequently asked questions about the court’s standards for signatures based on our Local Rules and other laws.

**What is an original signature?**

For purposes of filing most documents in this court, Loc.R. 57.5(A)(1) and (2) allow three kinds of signatures to be treated as original signatures:



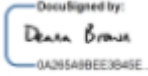
- A hand-signed signature;
- An electronic signature verified through a program such as DocuSign; and
- A typed signature in the format “/s/Signature,” but ONLY under certain circumstances, discussed below.

**What is considered a hand-signed signature?**

A hand-signed signature, sometimes called a “hand-drawn” or “wet-ink” signature, is a signature created by a person physically marking a document with a pen. The court will generally accept photocopies of hand-signed signatures (see below for a more in-depth discussion).

**What is considered an electronic signature?**

An electronic signature is any kind of signature which has been applied to a document using electronic means. Typed signatures are included, as are signatures drawn on an electronic device (such as a computer, tablet, or smartphone) using a finger, stylus, or mouse. Some examples of electronic signatures follow:

	Typed signature
	Signature drawn using a stylus, mouse, or finger
	Typed or drawn signature, surrounded by a hash code

**What is considered a VERIFIED electronic signature?**

A verified electronic signature is an electronic signature with a secure record of how the signature was created. The court does not require verified electronic signatures to be “advanced” or “qualified” signatures that are created using external proof of the signer’s identity.

Different programs used to create verified signatures may call their record by different names, such as “signature certification,” “certificate of completion,” or “verification page.” A few examples of what the record might look like follow:

DocuSign

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**Certificate Of Completion**


Envelope Id: 8DFBCE0C431A431CAB8D9C821F07F947		Status: Completed
Subject: Complete with DocuSign: Work Notice.docx		
Quarterly Reports:		
Routing #:		
FY 24 Custom Field:		
Source Envelope:		
Document Pages: 1	Signatures: 1	Envelope Originator:
Certificate Pages: 2	Initials: 0	Melanie Deschutes
AutoNav: Enabled		123 Danser Blvd
EnvelopeId Stamping: Enabled		Suite 1000
Time Zone: (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)		San Francisco, CA 90001
		melanie.deschutes@gmail.com
		IP Address: 12.202.171.35

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**Record Tracking**

Status: Original	Holder: Melanie Deschutes	Location: DocuSign
3/17/2023 5:19:06 PM	melanie.deschutes@gmail.com	

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Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp
Deana Brown brown23@dsxtr.com Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	 <small>DocuSigned by: Deana Brown 0A265A8BEE384E</small>	Sent: 3/17/2023 5:19:57 PM Viewed: 3/17/2023 5:20:21 PM Signed: 3/17/2023 5:20:44 PM
	Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style Using IP Address: 12.202.171.35	

**Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:**  
Not Offered via DocuSign


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In Person Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp
<b>Editor Delivery Events</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Timestamp</b>
<b>Agent Delivery Events</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Timestamp</b>
<b>Intermediary Delivery Events</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Timestamp</b>
<b>Certified Delivery Events</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Timestamp</b>

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Carbon Copy Events	Status	Timestamp
Melanie Deschutes melanie.deschutes@gmail.com Owner Deschutes Properties, Inc. Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	COPIED	Sent: 3/17/2023 5:19:58 PM Resent: 3/17/2023 5:20:46 PM

**Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:**  
Not Offered via DocuSign


SIGN IN

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< BACK TO SEARCH



dotloop verification certificate for:

## Real Estate Agreement

Transaction ID: 15969726 - Document ID: 191909346 - Verification Code: DL-191909346-3-1HXB - Document Pages: 1 - Signatures: 1

VIEW DOCUMENT
PRINT

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	dotloop verified 09/21/16 03:11 pm CDT ETUY-YTIV-GLYL-GTNE	<b>Barry Buyer</b> Date/Time: Sep 21, 2016 3:11 pm CDT ID: 6227201587 IP Address: 50.59.38.122 Security Level: Signed in Person Hosted by:  ESign Consumer Consent Disclosures: Accepted - <a href="#">VIEW AGREEMENT</a>
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Generated On Thu, 06 Jun 2024 10:35:48 GMT

## Certificate of Completion

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### Summary

**Document Id :** 6DdDVnbaCi  
**Document Name :** Quality Analyst Offer Letter  
**Organization :** QIK AI  
**Created on :** Thu, 06 Jun 2024 10:35:09 GMT  
**Completed on :** Thu, 06 Jun 2024 10:35:48 GMT  
**Signers :** 1  
**Document originator**  
**Name :** Mark Wood  
**Email :** [Redacted]  
**IP address :** 2409:40c2:119e:82ab:4ceae:99d:d8af:689e

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### Signer 1

<b>Name :</b> Mark Wood <b>Email :</b> [Redacted] <b>IP address :</b> 2409:40c2:119e:82ab:4ceae:99d:d8af:689e <b>Signature :</b> 	<b>Viewed on :</b> Thu, 06 Jun 2024 10:35:48 GMT <b>Signed on :</b> Thu, 06 Jun 2024 10:35:48 GMT <b>Security level :</b> Email, OTP Auth
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[Activate W](#)  
[Go to Settings](#)

**Vinesign**


Verification Complete

The document has been officially verified.

**Job Status** ✓ Signed & Verified




**Document Name** Example Document

**Sender Name** Lydia Cloud

**Document Key** 36395164-DC72-4885-8892-7C1C3071CA0A

Recipient 1	IP Address	Signature
Damon Salvatore lydiacloud+damon@filevine.com (555) 555-5555	172.25.50.133	

**Job History**

Activity	Date & Time	Recipient	Activity Details
 Document Completed <span style="background-color: #28a745; color: white; padding: 2px; border-radius: 5px; font-size: 0.8em;">Matching Hash</span>	06/01/2022 16:22 UTC	Damon Salvatore	Signed by Damon Salvatore (lydiacloud+damon@filevine.com) <b>Blockchain Block</b> VV+nQbjF1f0515dBw9bBFZuW4Gh00teQRmxBdIOeR58= <b>Document Hash</b> 4B1E9D044C908D9898E065DDC6740C05313112BC982144F6652B70FA7946D231 <b>Timestamp</b> 06/01/2022 16:22 UTC
 Document Viewed	06/01/2022 16:21 UTC	Damon Salvatore	Viewed by Damon Salvatore (lydiacloud+damon@filevine.com)
 Document Sent	06/01/2022 16:21 UTC	Damon Salvatore	Sent out via email to Damon Salvatore (lydiacloud+damon@filevine.com)

**Do I need to file the record which documents how a verified electronic signature was created?**

Yes. Without the appropriate certification or verification page, the court will not consider an electronic signature to be verified. Unverified electronic signatures will not be treated as valid original signatures. Documents with unverified electronic signatures will be returned unfiled.

**When is a signature in the format “/s/Signature” acceptable?**

Under Loc.R. 57.5(A)(2), a typed electronic signature in the format “/s/Signature” will be accepted as an original signature ONLY when the person who has signed the document submits the document through the signer’s individual e-filing account. Signatures in this format do not need extra verification.

**Do all signed documents need to have original signatures?**

Not necessarily, under Loc.R. 57.5(A)(3). In most cases, a copy of a document with an original signature will be accepted for filing. For instance, this means that a photocopy of a hand-signed document can be filed, as can a print-out of a hand-signed document that has been faxed or emailed to the filer. (Under Loc.R. 57.1, the court will generally not accept documents which are sent to the court by fax or email.)

Under both Loc.R. 57.5(A)(3) and Loc.R. 57.7(B), copies of documents with original signatures must still be legible. A document with a non-original signature that cannot easily be read may be rejected, and the filer may be requested to file a document with an original signature instead.

Additionally, even if a copy of a document with an original signature is accepted for filing, the court may request that the filer submit the originally signed document if it is not clear that the copy is authentic. Accordingly, attorneys are asked to retain documents with original signatures for one year after a case is closed.

**How do these rules apply to a person’s last will and testament?**

Pursuant to Loc.R. 57.5(A)(4), the court’s general rules about original and non-original signatures, hand-signed or electronic, **do not** apply to the will of a decedent.

To be a valid last will and testament, a person must sign their will at the end, among other requirements. See R.C. 2107.03. Ohio law does not currently allow wills to be signed electronically. If you wish to admit a decedent’s will to probate, you must apply using the original will itself, with the decedent’s original, hand-signed signature.

If an original will is not available, but you believe the will has been lost or accidentally destroyed instead of revoked, you may apply to have the decedent’s lost will admitted to probate using the process described in R.C. 2107.26 and R.C. 2107.27. A copy of the decedent’s will may be necessary to prove what the original will said.

### **Can I sign a document for someone else?**

Generally, no, you may only sign a document on your own behalf. A signature on a legal document has special significance under Civ.R. 11. However, under certain specific circumstances, a person or a court may authorize you to sign a document on behalf of someone else.

Someone with the legal authority to make decisions or act for another adult—such as the appointed guardian of an incompetent person or an agent under a power of attorney— may generally sign documents filed in this court for the other adult. In these cases, the person signing the document must indicate the source of their authority next to the signature and attach proof of their authority. For instance, someone might sign a document “Jane Doe by John Q. Public, as guardian,” attaching a copy of their Letters of Guardianship.

A minor child cannot sign many documents themselves, but a parent, guardian, or legal custodian may generally sign on their behalf. One common exception to the above is that no one has the authority to sign a waiver of notice of probate of will on behalf of a minor child who is 16 or 17 years old. See Civ.R. 4(D), 4.2(A), 73(G); Loc.R. 59.1. As above, if an adult is signing on behalf of a child, they must indicate the source of their authority, such as by signing “Jane Doe by John Q. Public, father.”

As a matter of convenience, one attorney may authorize another attorney to sign a document for the first attorney. In these cases, the signing attorney must disclose their own Supreme Court Attorney Registration Number and the fact of their authorization. Anyone who is not an attorney may not sign a document on behalf of an attorney. Loc.R. 57.5(B); Loc.R. 75.5.

If a document requires the signature of a court-appointed fiduciary, under Loc.R. 57.5(C), the fiduciary must always sign that document personally. An attorney cannot sign such a document for the fiduciary in the same way that an attorney can sign other documents, such as motions. Under Loc.R. 57.5(D), if more than one fiduciary has been appointed, all current fiduciaries must sign the document together. This requirement extends to inventories and accounts under Loc.R. 78.9(F) and Loc.R. 64.1.

### **Do these rules apply differently to e-filed and paper-filed documents?**

No, the court applies consistent standards to documents filed in paper format and filed electronically, except where specifically noted above. Unless otherwise stated, all signature standards now in place will continue to apply when all case types are e-filed.