

CONSUMER ALERT:

PLEASE READ BEFORE BUYING A NOTARY BOND

Please be advised that notary bonds may be purchased from any insurance company licensed to sell surety bonds in Wisconsin. **PRICES VARY GREATLY** – from approximately \$25 to more than \$100 – for a \$500, four-year notary bond. Some insurance companies include other products in their sales packages, such as notary stamps, extra insurance, or magazine subscriptions to their association.

Please be aware that a notary applicant does not need to “join” a notary association in order to become a notary public in Wisconsin. Additionally, a renewing notary does not need to buy a new stamp every four years, unless the current seal or stamp is worn out. If a company offers a notary stamp along with the bond, and the applicant doesn’t need a new stamp, the applicant may wish to consider other insurance companies.

You are encouraged to be wary of notary bond mailing or internet sites that offer “one-step” notary commissions. These companies may charge an applicant much more than is necessary to become a notary. Renewing notaries public may receive several mailing offering various package deals. Please read these offers carefully before considering sending any money to them!

Some insurance companies are giving misinformation to notaries public who purchase bonds from them. One particular company, which includes a notary stamp as part of a basic sales package, indicates a “Commission expiration date...” in their printed packing statement that accompanies receipt of the stamp. **THIS IS MISINFORMATION AND SHOULD BE DISREGARDED.**

Notary public applicants in Wisconsin are required to provide proof to the Department of Financial Institutions that they have purchased a bond form

an insurance company before being issued a notary commission. **THE PURCHASE OF A BOND IS ONLY ONE STEP IN THE PROCESS OF APPLYING TO BECOME A NOTARY.** The act of purchasing a bond does not qualify an applicant to be a notary or to perform notarizations. Insurance companies are not authorized to issue notary public commissions and cannot provide commission expiration dates.

In order to become a notary, an applicant is required to send an application form, the application fee, the completed bond form, and oath of office to the Department of Financial Institutions. After processing the application, the Department of Financial Institutions sends each notary applicant a certificate indicating that the applicant has been commissioned as a Wisconsin notary public, along with the expiration date of that commission. At that point, the applicant can begin notarizing. Commissions are granted shortly after all completed materials are received by the Department of Financial Institutions. So if a notary is renewing, the paperwork should be sent in a few weeks prior to the expiration date of the current commission.

The Department of Financial Institutions does not sell bonds, does not endorse any insurance or surety companies, and is not affiliated with any internet company or association that sells notary bonds or supplies.

If you have questions or would like additional information regarding bonding choices, please call the Department of Financial Institutions, Notary Section, at (608) 266-8915.