

An Apostille, (a-pos-TEE, French for certification), is a certificate that authenticates the signature of a document. Apostilles are issued by the Secretary of State of the state where the document originated. The Apostille verifies the authenticity of a public official's signature and seal. Depending on the destination country, a document that is intended for international use may need either an Apostille or Legalization. Without these certifications, your document may not be recognized in a foreign country.

In 1961 various countries entered into the Hague Convention.

- If the COUNTRY OF DESTINATION is **NOT** a Member of the 1961 Hague Convention, Embassy Legalization must be obtained. We refer to this as a "Non-Hague Countries".
- If the COUNTRY OF DESTINATION **IS** a Hague Country, it will need to be notarized by the Secretary of the State in which the document originated. We refer to this as a "Hague Country".

If the document is to be used in a Non-Hague country, a more complex process for legalization is required. In those cases, after first being authenticated by the Department of State, the documents will require further processing at the federal level and/or may need to be presented to consulates and/or embassies.

For your convenience, below are links to Hague and Non-Hague countries. Please note that this list changes as more countries join the Hague Convention and we often update the lists on our website.

- Hague Countries: <https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/authorities1/?cid=41>
- Non-Hague Countries - <https://www.hcch.net/en/states/other-connected-states?>

There are also situations where translation is required and we have a staff of "certified translators" who can assist you.

As the authentication legalization process varies from country to country, the time and cost of obtaining an authentication can differ.

Please contact us at 215-869-2594 for more details and a quote.