

SIGNING AND RECORDING YOUR DEED

Step 1: Sign the Deed

- The signature line(s) on the deed are at the bottom of the first page.

Step 2: Have the Document(s) Notarized

- You do not need to sign in the presence of a notary, but you must appear before the notary in person to acknowledge your signature.
- Some notaries insist that your deed must be signed in their presence and will refuse to notarize an existing signature. This is incorrect for this type of notarization (“Acknowledgment”). You can refer them to the below excerpt from the *National Notary Association Notary Handbook* Page 10. (They might be thinking of a “Jurat,” which is another type of notarization *that requires signing at the time of notarizing.*)

Acknowledgment

The form most frequently completed by the notary public is the certificate of acknowledgment. The certificate of acknowledgment must be in the form set forth in Civil Code section 1189. In the certificate of acknowledgment, the notary public certifies:

- That the signer personally appeared before the notary public on the date indicated in the county indicated;
- To the identity of the signer; and
- That the signer acknowledged executing the document.

- If the notary insists on using their own notary form, simply replace the notary page we created with their completed form.
- Free notary services are often found at your local bank or credit union, through AAA, or most real estate agents. FedEx Office or the UPS store provide the service for a fee. An internet search for “mobile notaries” will provide more options, all at a cost, though.

Step 3: Sign any County Forms

- The Preliminary Change of Ownership Report is attached to the deed. Either or both of you sign at the bottom of the second (mostly blank) page where noted.
- If your county requires any additional forms, we will have included it with your deed. Sign and date any of these forms where noted.

Step 4: Pay the Recording Fee

- You will need a check with your name, address, and check number pre-printed on the check (no temporary or starter checks).
- Make the check payable to, “County Recorder of <County>.” Sign and date the check.
- Leave the amount blank, but in the memo line, write, “Not to exceed \$225.” Recording fees are around \$30 with an additional \$75 for non-primary residences. In an abundance of caution, we use \$225 because that is the statutory maximum for recording fees in California. If you are concerned about sending a blank check out, please watch the following video: <https://bit.ly/3ubMLiG>.
- You can pay for multiple recordings for a single county with one check and send it all in together.

Step 5: Record the Document(s)

- Mail the deed, all forms, and the check to your County Recorder. Mailing addresses for all County Recorder office in California can be found at <https://bit.ly/2SlqlgU>.
- You can send multiple deeds, forms, and checks together if it is all going to the same county.