

California Notary Practice Questions (25)

Original practice questions written from official California sources. They are not questions from the official exam. These 25 are not on our free 20-question online test or the timed practice exam. Answer key with the official source for each answer is on the last pages.

Free online: 20-question practice test and 45-question timed practice exam at opspacket.com/notary/california/. Not affiliated with any state agency.

1. **Charging more than the fees prescribed by law can lead to a civil penalty of up to how much (in addition to discipline)?**
 - A. \$750
 - B. \$2,500
 - C. \$10,000
 - D. \$1,500
2. **A non-notary purports to notarize a deed of trust on a single-family home with up to four units. What offense is this?**
 - A. A civil penalty only
 - B. An infraction
 - C. A misdemeanor
 - D. A felony
3. **If a renewing applicant has met all requirements, when is the reappointment commission issued?**
 - A. Six months before expiration
 - B. The day after the exam
 - C. On the expiration date
 - D. 30 days before the current commission expires
4. **A California driver's license used for identification must be current or issued within how many years?**
 - A. Three years
 - B. Ten years
 - C. Five years
 - D. Two years
5. **Notaries appointed for military and naval reservations may collect what fees for services rendered within the reservation?**
 - A. Only travel fees
 - B. Half fees
 - C. Standard Section 8211 fees
 - D. None
6. **Which advertising is exempt from the Section 8219.5 notice requirement?**
 - A. A single desk plaque
 - B. A flyer
 - C. A newspaper ad
 - D. A storefront sign

7. **The notary and signer don't share a language. What does the handbook advise?**
- A. Use any certified interpreter
 - B. Use the signer's child as interpreter
 - C. Proceed using gestures
 - D. Don't use an interpreter; refer the customer to a notary who speaks their language
8. **Which of these is an acceptable identification document under Civil Code 1185(b) (4)?**
- A. A credit card with photo
 - B. A library card
 - C. A Social Security card
 - D. A driver's license issued by a Mexican public agency authorized to issue licenses
9. **How does the notary establish the identity of a subscribing witness?**
- A. By personal knowledge only
 - B. By the principal's phone call
 - C. By the oath of a credible witness who knows both the notary and the subscribing witness and presents ID
 - D. By the subscribing witness's driver's license alone
10. **In a proof of execution, who must sign the notary's journal?**
- A. Only the credible witness
 - B. The subscribing witness; the credible witness signs or the notary records their ID details
 - C. Nobody
 - D. Only the principal
11. **Within what time must prosecution for a violation of Gov. Code 8228.1 begin?**
- A. Within 10 years of the act
 - B. Within one year of the act
 - C. There is no limit
 - D. Within four years after discovery or completion of the offense, whichever is later
12. **Is there legally prescribed wording for the oath given with a jurat?**
- A. No; an acceptable form is asking if the person swears or affirms the statements are true
 - B. Yes, and both parties must raise their right hands
 - C. Yes, and it must mention God
 - D. Yes, the exact words are set by statute
13. **Can a six-hour approved course be taken in place of the three-hour refresher?**
- A. Yes, the six-hour course always satisfies the requirement
 - B. Only if the notary failed the exam
 - C. No, renewing notaries may only take the refresher
 - D. Only with written permission from the county clerk

14. **An employer's auditor wants to inspect business-related journal entries. Under what condition may the notary allow it?**
- A. Any time, without the notary present
 - B. Only with a court order
 - C. Never
 - D. In the notary's presence, limited to transactions tied to the employer's business
15. **Who appoints and commissions California notaries public?**
- A. The county clerk
 - B. The Secretary of State
 - C. The Governor
 - D. The State Bar
16. **A notary can't identify the type of a foreign-language document. What should the journal entry say?**
- A. Something like "a document in a foreign language"
 - B. Leave the document type blank
 - C. The signer's guess translated by the notary
 - D. "Unknown" and refuse the notarization
17. **A notary's employer paid for the journal. When the notary leaves the job, who keeps the journal?**
- A. The county clerk immediately
 - B. The Secretary of State
 - C. The notary
 - D. The employer
18. **Which employee ID card qualifies as identification?**
- A. One issued by a school district in another state
 - B. One issued by any private employer
 - C. One issued by a federal contractor
 - D. One issued by a California state, city, or county agency
19. **A private employer paid for an employee notary's bond and seal under an agreement. What may that employer do?**
- A. Limit the notary's services during work hours to the employer's business transactions
 - B. Keep the notary's seal when the employee leaves
 - C. Set fees above the statutory maximum
 - D. Keep the notary's journal when the employee leaves
20. **A notary who is not an attorney charges for notarizing a set of immigration forms. What is the most they may charge any individual for each set?**
- A. Any amount the customer agrees to
 - B. \$15
 - C. \$30
 - D. \$75

21. **Which elements must a California notary seal contain?**
- A. The notary's photo
 - B. The notary's home address and phone number
 - C. Only the notary's name and signature
 - D. State Seal, "Notary Public," notary's name, county of filing, expiration date, commission number, and manufacturer number
22. **Is a conviction after a plea of nolo contendere treated as a conviction when the Secretary of State considers denial or revocation?**
- A. No
 - B. Only within five years
 - C. Yes
 - D. Only for felonies
23. **Why is a rubber stamp seal nearly universal in California?**
- A. Stamps are cheaper by law
 - B. The seal must be photographically reproducible
 - C. The county clerk requires ink
 - D. Embossers are prohibited
24. **Is it prohibited for a California notary to notarize signatures on immigration documents?**
- A. Yes, always
 - B. Yes, unless the notary is an attorney
 - C. Yes, unless the notary is bilingual
 - D. No; there is no prohibition, but specific laws limit what the notary can do
25. **What happens if a new notary misses the oath-and-bond filing deadline because of mail delays?**
- A. The Secretary of State extends the deadline on request
 - B. The commission is valid but the notary pays a late fee
 - C. The commission is not valid; a new appointment is required
 - D. The county clerk grants an automatic 15-day extension

Answer key and sources

- | | | |
|----|----------|--|
| 1 | A | Overcharging is 8214.1(h); 8214.15(b) sets a penalty up to \$750.
Source: Gov. Code §§ 8214.1(h), 8214.15(b), https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 2 | D | Gov. Code 8227.3 makes it a felony.
Source: Gov. Code § 8227.3, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 3 | D | The handbook says reappointment commissions are issued 30 days before the current one expires.
Source: CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), Q&A p. 25, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 4 | C | Listed IDs must be current or issued within five years.
Source: Civil Code § 1185(b)(3); CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 9, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 5 | D | Gov. Code 8203.6 says no fees may be collected for services on the reservation.
Source: Gov. Code § 8203.6, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 6 | A | Section 8219.5(a) excepts a single desk plaque.
Source: Gov. Code § 8219.5(a), https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 7 | D | The handbook says an interpreter should not be used, as vital information could be lost.
Source: CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 23, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 8 | D | Licenses from other states or from Canadian or Mexican licensing agencies qualify if they contain the required features.
Source: Civil Code § 1185(b)(4)(B); CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 10, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 9 | C | The credible witness must be known to the notary, know the subscribing witness, and present a qualifying ID.
Source: Civil Code § 1196; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 15, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 10 | B | The subscribing witness must sign. The credible witness signs, or the notary records the credible witness's ID information.
Source: Gov. Code § 8206(a)(2)(C)–(D); CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 15, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 11 | D | Gov. Code 8228.1(b) sets four years after discovery or completion, whichever is later.
Source: Gov. Code § 8228.1(b), https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 12 | A | No wording is prescribed. Raising right hands is traditional, not required.
Source: Gov. Code § 8202; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 14, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 13 | A | The handbook says a six-hour approved course meets the education requirement for both new and renewing applicants.
Source: CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), Q&A p. 24, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 14 | D | Inspection and copying is allowed in the notary's presence for entries directly associated with the employer's business.
Source: Gov. Code § 8206(d); CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 33, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |
| 15 | B | The Secretary of State appoints notaries in the number it considers necessary.
Source: Gov. Code § 8200; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 28, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf |

16	A	The handbook gives “a document in a foreign language” as the example entry. Source: CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 23, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
17	C	The journal is the notary's exclusive property regardless of who paid for it. Source: Gov. Code § 8206(d); CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 11, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
18	D	Employee IDs from California state or local government agencies qualify. Source: Civil Code § 1185(b)(4)(E); CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 10, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
19	A	An employer with a § 8202.7 agreement may limit notarial services during ordinary employment to its business. The seal and journal still belong to the notary. Source: Gov. Code §§ 8202.7, 8202.8; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 30, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
20	B	The handbook says a notary may not charge more than \$15 per set of forms unless they are also an attorney giving professional services. Source: Gov. Code § 8223; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 20, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
21	D	Gov. Code 8207 lists the required elements. Source: Gov. Code § 8207; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 9, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
22	C	Gov. Code 8214.1(b) treats a nolo contendere conviction as a conviction. Source: Gov. Code § 8214.1(b), https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
23	B	Because the seal must reproduce photographically. An embosser may be used in addition to the stamp. Source: Gov. Code § 8207; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 8, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
24	D	The handbook says there is no prohibition on notarizing immigration documents. Source: CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 20, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf
25	C	No exceptions are made for mail or processing delays. The person may not act as a notary until newly appointed and qualified. Source: Gov. Code §§ 8212, 8213; CA Notary Public Handbook (2026), p. 8, https://notary.cdn.sos.ca.gov/forms/notary-handbook-current.pdf