

A Funny thing happened on the way to Notary
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The Seller for one of my escrows came in for her 1:00 pm notary appointment. She had already signed everything else, she was just very uncomfortable with giving me the executed Grant Deed until the Buyer's and the Lender's money was deposited into escrow and we were really ready to close.

I asked for and received her California Driver License was confronted with the following problem:

She had a brand new California Driver License. The sequential Identification number was fine. The picture looked like her, the name and address information was correct. The physical description was relatively accurate (we never lie about weight - do we?). The term was fine (effective 1-1-2004 the California DMV now issues 5 year original licenses and 5 years for renewals). The expiration date was on the anniversary of her birth date. There was however, one problem. The signature area was on its face blocked out and looked like a big black rectangle.

The Seller indicated that she had just received this new license and was told that due to the significant concern for privacy this is how the new California Licenses were being issued. She indicated that the signature was apparently able to be viewed by passing the Driver License under a portable hand scanner.

Needles to say there was immediate silence in the signing room as I gathered my thoughts and tried to determine what to do. The Seller could see that I was concerned and perplexed about the situation. I tried to explain the duties and obligations of a notary and what I knew to be acceptable documentation for notary purposes.

At this point the Seller indicated that she did have her old Driver License, which expired last month and would that help? With a big sigh of relief, I thankfully said yes. She presented her old identification and I happily completed my notary function and she went on her merry way.

Never to let sleeping dogs lie, I then set out to determine if the State was going into the Hand Scanner business in an attempt to help offset their budget problems and this was going to be a common occurrence or if this was merely an anomaly.

I called the DMV and could not get through. I called the publisher of the I.D. Checking Guide and asked them (since I had just received the 2005 Updated version of their reference book). They did not know anything about this. They said they would check it out and call me back.

I called the Auto Club ~ DVM section and decided the 30+/- minute wait was not worth it. I again and again and again called the DMV and finally got through to a human being and after punching the correct buttons to speak to a live English speaking person. Then, after transferring to several different departments, I ended up with a very delightful woman in the Issuance Department who gave the following explanation:

The DMV is not selling scanners. The referenced California Driver License should never have gone out to the recipient. They have quality control people who are supposed to be checking all of the various legally required sections of the Driver License and reject any Driver Licenses with any problem sections. The referenced license was not valid and the holder should be instructed to return it to her local DMV location where they would punch a hole in it and process (hopefully for free) a new California Driver License so be sent to her is about 3-4 weeks.