

Can I undo a major 'oops'?

Question: I am a notary public and I was asked by my new boss to sign some legal documents for the sale of his home. I accidentally entered the wrong expiration date for my commission and need to know if I can just change the year, which is what I messed up, and initial it. Will those documents still be legal?

Has anyone else done this, or am I just a scatterbrain? I just received my commission a couple of months ago so I am new to this. Help! -- *Anonymous*

Comments

Hi,

All you need to do is line through it and put in the correct date and initial it. Never use white out or any other coverup. Just line through and initial with the correction.

Valerie

Posted by: Valerie Carter | June 23, 2006 at 12:11 PM

Valerie's comment is spot-on. Consider any changes as you would changes to a personal check - line out and initial. Longer-term, check with the Office of Secretary of State in your state for notary training. I am also a new notary, and just finished taking the training that Oregon offers (and which will, next month, be mandatory for all new notaries). I'm much more aware of what I'm doing now, and more confident doing it!

Posted by: Theresa | June 23, 2006 at 12:25 PM

I am a notary in California. You can just put a line through it and initial it. The correct expiration date should be on your stamp or seal as well, so it's not that big of an issue. As long as you initial it, you are okay!

Posted by: Executive Assistant | June 23, 2006 at 12:42 PM

I concur with all three ladies. Initialing is the key!

Posted by: Melissa | June 23, 2006 at 12:45 PM

I've been a notary for years, and yes, it still happens if the customer is speaking to me while I'm notarizing

documents and not giving it my full attention.

For quick help with notary questions, you might consider joining the National Notary Association. Your employer will find it's worth the membership for you. I've been on the road headed to a notary signing, needing an answer immediately. Just one call to NNA and a representative was on the line who answered the questions according to the requirements of my state. Check them out at nationalnotary.org. or call 1-800-876-6827. This membership can develop your notary skills in ways you'd not even imagined.

Posted by: Valeene | June 23, 2006 at 12:55 PM

Even those of us who have been a Notary for ages makes mistakes, it's called being human. I agree with Valeene about being a member of NNA. I've been a member for eight years and have taken their training. They are top of the field on answers for Notaries.

Posted by: Courtney L | June 23, 2006 at 01:01 PM

I work in the Title Industry and Valerie is correct. As long as you cross out and initial the change the county should accept it for recording if it was the mortgage that this mistake occurred on, most lenders are not real picky on the other docs that are notarized, the only problem is docs that have to be made of record the county's will a lot of times compare what is written to against the stamp. Another thing to keep in mind is to make sure your stamp is legible and is fairly dark. There is also a doc called and All Purpose Acknowledgment that can be used by notary's to correct any problems with the notary section. This is basically the same notary stamp you originally signed it just makes the changes or the clarifications. The title company your boss used should have these on hand.

Posted by: Tracy | June 23, 2006 at 01:06 PM

I am a notary also and I would just put one line through (don't scribble) the mistake and initial. The seal that you punch on the paper has the correct date anyways, not a big mistake, just an oops!

Posted by: Jocelyn | June 23, 2006 at 01:12 PM