



Republic of the Philippines  
Supreme Court  
Office of the Court Administrator  
Manila

**OCA CIRCULAR NO. 213-2023-A**

**TO: ALL JUDGES AND CLERKS OF COURT**

**SUBJECT: CLARIFICATION ON THE ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY FOR A NOTARIAL ACT AND SUBMISSION OF SPECIMEN SIGNATURES AND INITIALS FOR VERIFICATION OF COURT DOCUMENTS**

After meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of Consular Affairs (DFA-OCA), it has come to the attention of this Office the supposed practices of Executive Judges issuing a single Certificate of Authority for a Notarial Act (CANA) referring to multiple documents, and the proliferation of spurious court documents submitted to and received by the DFA-OCA.

Section 1 Rule IX of A.M. No. 02-8-13-SC, otherwise known as the "2004 Rules on Notarial Practice", which became effective on August 1, 2004, provides that a CANA evidencing the authenticity of the official seal and signature of a notary public shall be, upon request, issued by the Executive Judge (or single-sala Regional Trial Court [RTC] Judge).

The Philippines officially became a party to the Apostille Convention on May 14, 2019, wherein the DFA-OCA became the Philippine Competent Authority under the said Convention. Under the DFA-OCA regulations in issuing an Apostille for notarized documents, the same must be certified through a CANA to be issued by the concerned Executive Judge (or single-sala RTC Judge) having jurisdiction over the notarial commission of the notary public.

Thus, acting on the letter-request dated 30 March 2023 of Assistant Secretary Henry S. Bensurto, Jr. of the DFA-OCA, and to streamline the verification procedure of notarized documents submitted to the DFA-OCA, all EXECUTIVE JUDGES/SINGLE-SALA RTC JUDGES and CLERKS OF COURT of the RTCs are hereby **DIRECTED** to comply with the following:

**I. Standardized format of the Certificate of Authority for a Notarial Act (CANA).**

The following standardized format shall indicate the notarial details (i.e., the *Document No.*, *Page No.*, *Book No.*, and *Series of [year]*) in the CANA and must be substantially complied with in the following form:

**CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY FOR A NOTARIAL ACT**

I, (name, title, jurisdiction of the Executive Judge), certify that (name of notary public), with Appointment No. \_\_\_\_, is a duly Commissioned Notary Public in and for the (City/Municipality/Province) of the Republic of the Philippines for the period (month, year) ending (month, year) and the (name/type of document) consisting of (no. of page/s), was duly entered in his/her Notarial Registry Book as Document No. \_\_; Page No. \_\_; Book No. \_\_; Series of \_\_\_\_, and purportedly sworn to and acknowledged before him as Notary Public.

This Certification is issued upon the request of (name of requestor), this (date) day of (month) (year) at (place).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Official Signature)

(seal of Executive Judge)

**II. Issuance of a single CANA per notarized document**

To ensure that every CANA is issued to only one (1) document per DFA-OCA's regulations, all Executive Judges/single-sala RTC Judges must strictly observe the issuance of one (1) CANA per document. A single CANA referring to multiple notarized documents shall not be allowed.

**III. Submission of Specimen Signatures and Initials for Purposes of Verification**

To avoid the proliferation of spurious court documents received by the DFA-OCA, all JUDGES and CLERKS OF COURT, INCLUDING THE DESIGNATED OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE, are likewise **DIRECTED** to submit a scanned copy of their specimen signatures and initials using the attached form, through the Office of Administrative Services – Office of the Court Administrator (OAS-OCA) at ocaoas.sc@judiciary.gov.ph. The physical copy thereof shall be submitted by the concerned judges and court personnel to the Records Division of OAS-OCA.

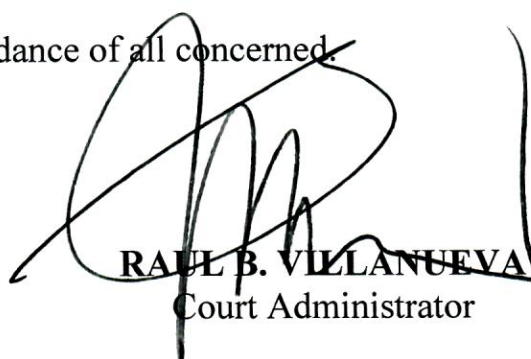
The OAS-OCA shall provide and share the specimen signatures and initials, if the latter are available, to the DFA-OCA using the prescribed form issued by the said Office.

All specimen signatures and initials submitted by the said authorized court officials shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall be solely used by the DFA-OCA for verification purposes.

In case there is/are newly appointed authorized personnel, the Office of the Clerk of Court, in case of a multiple sala, station, or the Clerk of Court of a single-sala court, shall **SUBMIT** an updated specimen signature and initial, of the said newly appointed authorized personnel, in accordance with the directive herein, within ten (10) working days from his/her assumption to duty.

For strict compliance and guidance of all concerned.

6 October 2023



**RAUL B. VILLANUEVA**  
Court Administrator

*atp*  
atp/qsc/mda



Republic of the Philippines  
Supreme Court  
Office of the Court Administrator  
Manila

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(Date signed)

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(Full printed name of the signatory)

**Full signature**

**Initial**