

Digital Signature Requirements Guide

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About

This guide provides a quick reference for digital signature requirements on Construction Documents.

- **Plans/Drawings:** Every page must be digitally signed and sealed.
- **Project Documentation:** Only the first page requires digital signature/seal.

Electronic Signature versus Digital Signature

Orange County's signature requirements comply with Florida Statutes (FS) and Florida Administrative Code (FAC), including FS 471.025, FS 481.221, and FAC 61G1-16.

- **Electronic Signature:** General form of e-signature using basic authentication methods like email or PIN.
- **Digital Signature:** A secure, certificate-based method that verifies identity using third-party Certificate Authorities (CAs).

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Electronic Signatures

Applies to: Architects/Interior Designers per FS 481.221 , and FAC 61G1-16

- Indicates agreement using electronic methods (e.g., password, email, PIN).
- Includes audit trails and time stamps.
- Can use single- or multi-factor authentication.

Electronic Signature Checklist – Architects/Interior Designers

Ensure your e-signed documents:

- Include seal (if required) and license number
- Show date/time stamp
- Are unique and verifiable within native software
- Invalidate upon document change
- Are under sole control of signer
- Include SHA authentication code

Digital Signatures

Required for Engineers, optional for Architects, per FS 471.025, and FAC 61G15-23.004

- Uses a digital certificate issued by a Certificate Authority (CA) or Trust Service Providers (TSPs) to verify identity
- Online equivalent of a notarized signature.
- Binds signature to the document via encryption
- Ensures data integrity—proof document hasn't been altered

Digital Signature Checklist for Engineers

Ensure digitally signed documents include:

- Seal (if required) and license number
- Matching name in seal and certificate viewer
- Date of signature
- CA name under "Issuer"
- Accuracy Statement (mandatory for engineers)

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Accuracy Statement Example

Professional Engineers who are digitally signing documents must include an accuracy statement; however, the seal itself is not required. If the seal is not present, additional information must be included along with the accuracy statement. Here are examples of each format from [Florida Administrative Code 61G15-23.004, F.A.C.](#).

1. When a digitally created seal is used:



This item has been digitally signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date adjacent to the seal.

Signature must be verified on any electronic copies.

2. When a digitally created seal is not used:

[NAME], State of Florida, Professional Engineer, License No. [NUMBER]

This item has been digitally signed and sealed by [NAME] on the date indicated here.

Signature must be verified on any electronic copies.

Digital Signature Components

1. **PDF Authoring Tool:** Adobe Acrobat/Reader or similar
2. **Seal Image:** Optional JPEG of wet-stamp seal
3. **Digital Certificate:** Contains signer identity and is embedded in document
4. **Unique Hash:** Algorithm-generated fingerprint tied to each signed document, encrypted with signer's private key

Signing

All digital signatures must be validated by a trusted Certificate Authority. Self-signed certificates are not accepted.

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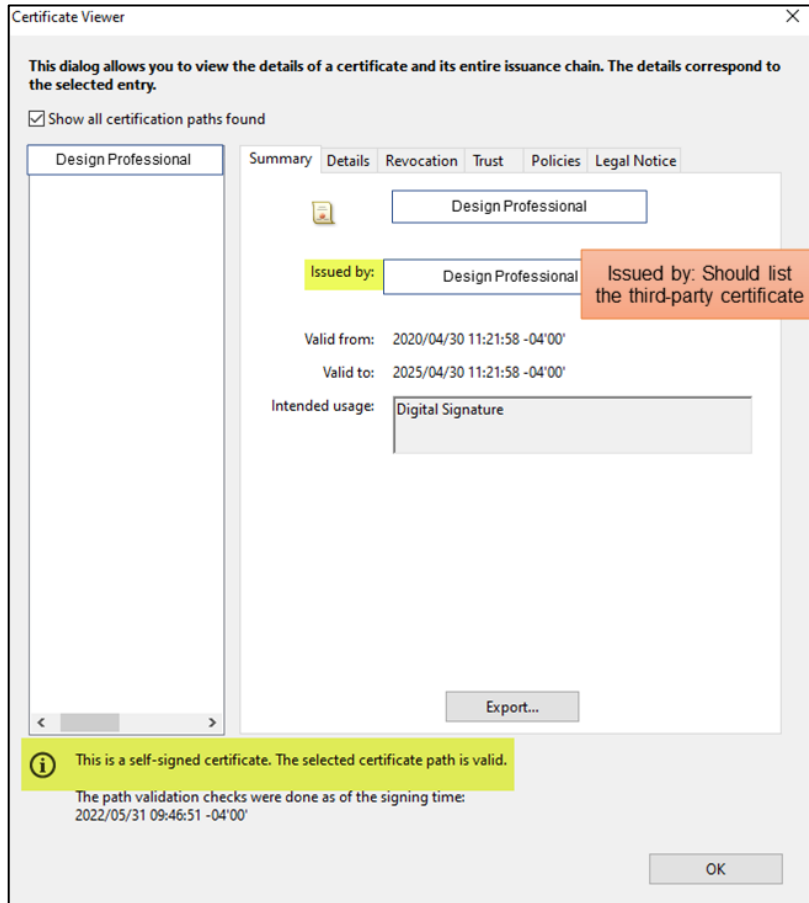
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Signing (Digital Signature Only)

The signer's identity, digital seal and signature must be validated by a third-party Certificate Authority. Self-signed documents are not accepted.



Approved Certificate Authorities

You may obtain a certificate from any valid third-party Certificate Authority. Below are some examples of the most used third-party certificate authorities. Please note, these are examples and Orange County Government does not require you to use any specific product.

Digital Signature subscriptions can be obtained from:

- [Identrust](#)
- [Entrust](#)
- [Globalsign](#)

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Electronic Signature Platform Example

DocuSign: Provides a Certificate of Completion (CoC) with a tamper-evident audit trail. This must accompany your signed documents and include matching identifiers.

Note: DocuSign is not the only available provider, and Orange County does not require any specific provider. All providers must offer validation beyond self-signing.

Testing Your Digital Signature Certificate

Before uploading:

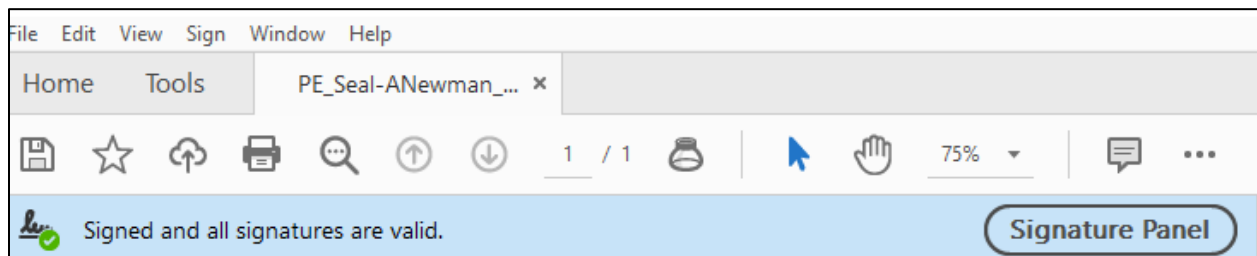
- Use Adobe Acrobat/Reader's Certificate Viewer
- Ensure signer's name matches the one on the seal (not company or CA)

Using the Digital Signature Bar in Adobe to Verify a Digital Signature

Please note, the screen shot is displaying the document in Adobe Reader Application which is free to download if needed.

When opening a signed file, look for the **blue signature bar** at the top. Clicking on the Signature Panel button will allow you to verify the necessary signature components.

Tip: If the blue bar is missing than the digital certificate embedded in the document when it is digitally signed, is missing. This would be considered invalid in this case.



Tips for customers who are handling digitally signed documents

Common causes for digital signature deficiencies:

- Do not separate or re-save pages from a digitally signed file
- Do not print to PDF after signing
- Any change to the document breaks the signature
- Only the signer should make document edits

Questions?

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