

Document Formatting Standards

DOCUMENT FORMATTING STANDARDS - STATE OF IOWA

In order to comply with national standards, Iowa has adopted Document Formatting Standards. Effective July 1, 2009, all documents presented for recording (except those listed below) MUST meet the requirements outlined in chapters 331.606A and 331.606B, Code of Iowa.

- All documents shall consist of one or more individual pages not permanently bound or in a continuous form. A page means a writing, printing, or drawing, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, occurring on one side only, and not larger than eight and one-half inches in width and fourteen inches in length. The document shall not have any attachment stapled or otherwise affixed to any page except as necessary to comply with statutory requirements. However, individual pages of a document may be stapled for presentation for recording. Labels that are firmly attached are acceptable.
- The first page of each document shall have a top margin of at least three (3) inches of vertical space from left to right which shall be reserved for the recorder's use. All other margins on the document shall be a minimum of three-fourths of one inch. Nonessential information such as page numbers or customer notations may be placed in a margin except the top margin.
- All preprinted text shall be at least eight point in size and no more than twenty characters and spaces per inch. All other text typed or computer generated, including but not limited to all names of parties to an agreement, shall be at least ten point in size and no more than sixteen characters and spaces per inch.
- Each document shall be of sufficient legibility to produce a clear reproduction.
- Each document shall be on white paper of not less than twenty-pound weight without watermarks or other visible inclusions.
- All signatures on a document shall be in black or dark blue ink and of sufficient color and clarity to ensure that the signatures are readable when the document is reproduced. All names shall be typed, printed, or stamped beneath the original signature.
- Embossed or inked stamps shall not cover or otherwise materially interfere with any part of the document.
- Each document that is presented for recording shall have the following information on the first page below the three-inch margin:
 - the name, address, and telephone number of the individual who prepared the document;
 - the name of the taxpayer and a complete mailing address for any document or instrument of conveyance;
 - a return address;
 - the title of the document;
 - all grantors' names;
 - all grantees' names;
 - any address required by statute;

- the legal description of the property and parcel identification number, if required. If insufficient space exists on the first page for all of the information previously described, the page reference of the document where the information is located shall be noted on the first page.
- Documents dated on or after July 1, 2007, may not include any personally identifiable information. Personally identifiable information is defined as an individual's Social Security number, bank account numbers, credit account numbers, or debit account numbers.

The following documents are exempt from document formatting requirements:

- A document that was signed before July 1, 2005.
- A military separation document.
- A document that executed outside of the United States.
- A certified copy of a document issued by a governmental agency, including a vital record.
- A document where one of the original parties is deceased or otherwise incapacitated.
- A document formatted to meet court requirements.
- A federal tax lien.
- A filing under the uniform commercial code, chapter 554.
- A plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey.

Recording of non-conforming documents

On or after July 1, 2005, a document that does not conform to the document formatting standards shall not be recorded except upon payment of an additional recording fee of ten dollars per document or instrument.

However, the non-standard fee may not be applied to

1. the legibility requirements;
2. the requirement to include the name of the taxpayer and a complete mailing address for any document or instrument of conveyance; and
3. the requirement that all documents have original signatures in black or dark blue ink and the names of the parties typed below their signatures.