

How do I sign documents when I am physically unable?

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If you're mentally competent to understand what you're signing, the fact that you can't physically sign doesn't need to keep you from executing the document. Just follow the procedures we explain here.

What does it mean to execute a document?

To "execute" a document means that you sign your name to the document as a symbol of your commitment to the agreements that are in the document. Usually once you execute a document, the agreement or commitments will be legally binding. That means that you will be responsible for what you agreed to do in the document. Certain documents will have extra rules for their execution like being signed in front of a notary or witnesses.

Some examples of documents you might execute are:

- Purchase agreements for vehicles, furniture, RVs or other property
- Power of Attorney forms
- A Will
- Healthcare Directives
- A Deed
- Family contracts like a parenting plan
- Relationship contracts like a Living Together Contract or Known Donor Agreement
- Settlement agreements
- Non-disclosure agreements
- Legal contracts like real estate contracts

Can I execute a document if I'm physically unable to sign it?

Yes, if all of these are true:

- You **want** to sign the document.
- You **understand** what the document **says**.
- You **understand what the agreements obligate** you to do.
- You're **physically unable** to write your name.

If you understand the document, and the consequences of signing it, you may have alternatives to a **physical** signature.

Can a notary public help me sign?

Yes. A notary can sign for you if all these are true:

- You have a disability that keeps you from being able to sign the document.
- The notary has proof that you can't sign your name or make your mark, **and** you otherwise understand the document and the consequences of signing it.
- The notary's statement states that the notary obtained your signature under RCW 64.08.100 (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=64.08.100>).
- You **tell the notary to sign your name** for you.

I gave someone Power of Attorney. Could they sign for me?

Maybe. Your Power of Attorney form gives your agent the power to make certain decisions on your behalf, including health care decisions and financial decisions. You should review your Power of Attorney form to see if it gives your agent the power to sign for you on the form you want to sign.

I can still sign my name but it's hard to read. What should I do?

If you can still sign with a mark that you consider to be your signature, you don't need a notary. Legally, the mark **is enough**. It doesn't matter how it looks.

If it's hard to read, have the mark notarized or witnessed. Then no one can argue later that you didn't sign the document.

If your signature is now different from the last time you signed an official document (such as an election ballot, driver license, and so on), you must contact the agency in charge of the document to explain the change.

How do I sign my Will if I'm physically unable to sign?

State law at RCW 11.12.030

(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=11.12.030>) tells you exactly how to sign a Will when you are physically unable.

Example 1: You understand the Will and the consequence of signing a Will (for example, your possessions will go to certain people or organizations when you die). A stroke has paralyzed you. You tell your friend, Sue Smith, to sign your name on your Will. Sue signs your name, then her own name, **and** states that she signed your name **at your request**.

- The Will would look like this:

"Your Name, signed by Sue Smith at Your Name's request."

Example 2: You could make a mark, such as an "X," on the signature line. That is the same as a signature.

You must still have 2 people **witness you signing a Will** when you are signing it with a mark or are having someone sign for you.

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