

California State Board of Pharmacy Policy Statement – Digital Signatures

The Board is aware of some licensees' and applicants' desire to submit documents with digital signatures. Government Code Section 16.5 establishes authority for government agencies to accept digital signatures that meet specified conditions. "If a public entity elects to use a digital signature, that digital signature shall have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature if and only if it embodies all of the following attributes:"

- (1) It is unique to the person using it.
- (2) It is capable of verification.
- (3) It is under the sole control of the person using it.
- (4) It is linked to data in such a manner that if the data is changed, the digital signature is invalidated,
- (5) It conforms to regulations adopted by the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State has established regulations specifying acceptable technologies for acceptance of digital signatures and designates Public Key Cryptography as an acceptable technology. (Cal. Code Regs., tit.2 § 22003.)

While the Board has not established any formal rules requiring the use of digital signatures, it understands that stakeholders are interested in using digital signatures. The Board will not require any applicant or licensee to provide information using a digital signature in lieu of a wet signature; however, in the interest of meeting stakeholder requests, the Board will accept documents that are digitally signed using technology known as Public Key Cryptography consistent with the regulations established by the Secretary of State in Section 22003 as cited above.

The Board reminds licensees using digital signatures to mail the completed application or notification form along with any fees required when applicable to the Board's office, 2720 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95833.