

Did you know that one of the most common issues a Recording office experiences when recording a map has to do with colored ink?

According to WAC 332-130-050(2), states that “All signatures and writing shall be made with permanent black ink” on a survey map that is presented for recording.

Maps are routinely signed in different colored ink. In fact, blue ink has become very common for signatures of property owners, notaries, and other county/city official signatures (and even surveyors!!).

Notaries use stamps that are a variety of different colors and are rarely ever in black. When a notary has their stamp made they can choose whatever color they want. There is no requirement by law to restrict the color of their stamp. This creates a conflict with WAC 332-130-050.

Different ink colors are a problem because they don’t always show up on the scanned image. Once the map image is scanned that becomes the permanent record. If signatures or a notary seal is missing this may be a problem for the requesting party.

Because of the popularity of colored ink the Recording Office is tasked with having to reject the recording.

Legibility is the key factor when accepting signatures and colored notary seals on maps. DNR has advised Recording Offices that if a notary, property owner, or county/city official has signed a map using permanent ink (no ball point or gel pens allowed!) that it may be acceptable for recording as long as the ink is dark enough to produce a legible image when scanned.

Since all counties may not have the personnel and equipment to get a good scan from different colors it is up to the recording office to make the decision. Red ink is definitely not allowed for a signature or notary seal as it does not produce a legible scan, ever.

The requirement is still in place for surveyor’s to sign maps with permanent black ink. Again, the only time that an alternate ink color may be acceptable is for signatures that are out of the control of the surveyor.

The most important and key factor to remember when reviewing and accepting a map for recording is to make sure the ink used for the signature(s) and notary seal is dark enough and clear enough to produce a legible scan.

You can always contact the manager of the DNR Public Land Survey Office as a resource for further questions on ink and notary seal requirements at 360-902-1197 or bob.knuth@dnr.wa.gov.