

Standards for Permanent Instruments Recorded by Hard Copy

[17VAC15-61](#)

Statutory Authority: §§ [42.1-8](#) and [42.1-82](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes: Derived from Virginia Register [Volume 32, Issue 24](#), eff. August 25, 2016.

17VAC15-61-10. Statement of applicability; definitions.

These standards shall apply to all written instruments, plats, and other drawings submitted, recorded, or filed for permanent retention in the circuit courts of the Commonwealth. The following words and terms, when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Written instrument" means a writing required by law to be recorded and retained permanently in the clerk's office of the circuit courts of the Commonwealth, excluding wills as set forth in 17VAC15-61-60.

"Plat" means a drawing that shows one or more geometric relationships expressed by a bearing and a distance.

"Other drawing" means any drawing that does not show a geometric relationship expressed by a bearing and a distance.

17VAC15-61-20. Permanent recording and filing medium.

A. Written instruments.

1. Documents submitted, recorded, or filed on paper shall be on paper that is:
 - a. Acid free,
 - b. Uniformly white,
 - c. Opaque,
 - d. Smooth in finish,
 - e. Unglazed, and
 - f. Free of visible watermarks and background logos.
2. Paper size shall be:
 - a. No smaller than 8-1/2 x 11 inches, and
 - b. No larger than 8-1/2 x 14 inches.
3. Required minimum paper weight is 20 pounds.
4. Negative (white on black background) copies and carbon copies are not acceptable.

B. Plats and other drawings.

1. Plats and other drawings shall be inscribed on either translucent or opaque paper, polyester, or linen.
2. The background quality for opaque paper shall be:
 - a. Uniformly white,
 - b. Smooth in finish,
 - c. Unglazed, and
 - d. Free of visible watermarks or background logos.
3. The size for plats and other drawings shall be:
 - a. No smaller than 8-1/2 x 11 inches, and
 - b. No larger than 18 x 24 inches.
4. Only the original or first generation unreduced black-line or blue-line copy of the original plat or other drawing that meets the standards provided in this section, 17VAC15-61-30.B., and 17VAC15-61-40.B. and has the original wet or electronically printed stamp and the original signature of the preparer shall be accepted for recordation.

17VAC15-61-30. Inscription quality.

A. Written instruments.

1. All inscriptions shall be:
 - a. Black;
 - b. Solid, where "solid" means the lines forming each letter do not have blank or light spots;
 - c. Dense, where "dense" means each letter or line is dark;
 - d. Uniform, where "uniform" means the entire letter or line is the same darkness;
 - e. Sharp, where "sharp" means the demarcation between each letter or line and the background is abrupt; and
 - f. Unglazed, where "unglazed" means inscriptions are nonreflective.
2. All signatures shall be original and in dark blue or black ink.
3. Printing size shall be the equivalent of nine-point or larger.
4. Typing shall be elite (12 characters per inch) or pica (10 characters per inch) or larger.
5. The font shall be the equivalent of a normal Arial or Courier.

B. Plats and other drawings.

1. Inscriptions shall be in ink or electrostatic process that produces a permanent image.
2. Color of original inscription shall be black or dark blue.
3. All inscriptions shall be:
 - a. Solid, where "solid" means the lines forming each letter do not have blank or light spots;
 - b. Dense, where "dense" means each letter or line is dark;
 - c. Uniform, where "uniform" means the entire letter or line is the same darkness;
 - d. Sharp, where "sharp" means the demarcation between each letter or line and the background is abrupt; and
 - e. Unglazed, where "unglazed" means inscriptions are nonreflective.
4. Lettering shall be no smaller than .09 inch (2.29 millimeters).
5. All signatures shall be:
 - a. Original, and
 - b. In dark blue or black ink.
6. No ghost lines shall be used.
7. All shading and screening shall be eliminated over written data.

17VAC15-61-40. Format.

A. Written instruments.

1. The top margin shall be no smaller than 1-1/4 inch.
2. The bottom, left, and right margins shall be no smaller than 3/4 inch.
3. All instruments shall be single sided.

B. Plats and other drawings.

1. Margins shall be no smaller than 1/4 inch on all edges.
2. All plats shall be single sided.
3. All pages of a multi-sheet plat shall be the same size.

17VAC15-61-50. Clerk's recording inscription.

Recordation inscriptions shall be by the circuit court clerk's printed certificate, stamping, typing, or handwriting and shall conform to the standards provided in 17VAC15-61-20, 17VAC15-61-30, and 17VAC15-61-40 that are applicable to the submitted instrument.

17VAC15-61-60. Exclusions.

The standards provided in 17VAC15-61-20, 17VAC15-61-30, and 17VAC15-61-40 do not apply to wills.