



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

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.

Survey maps are routinely signed in different colored ink. Blue ink has become very common for signatures of property owners, notaries, and other county/city official signatures.

Notaries use stamps with a variety of different colors, rarely ever in black. When a notary orders their new stamp they can choose whatever color they want. There is no requirement in state law, that we know of, to restrict the color of their notary stamp. This creates a conflict with WAC 332-130-050 when it comes to survey maps.

Colors other than black are a problem because they often don't show up clearly on the scanned image. Once the map image is scanned it becomes the permanent record. If signatures or a notary seal is missing or illegible this may be a problem for the requesting party.

Because of the problem with colored ink the Recording Office is often tasked with having to reject the survey map for 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 (not ball point or gel pens!) that it may be acceptable for recording as long as the ink is dark enough to produce a legible image when scanned. This position does NOT constitute an approval of the use of colored ink, and it does NOT change the law, but it merely reflects an acknowledgement that the DNR does not have the ability to control the actions of non-surveyors. Since some counties may not have the personnel and equipment to get a good scan from colors, other than black, it is up to the recording office to make the decision. Please remember that per RCW 58.09.050(1)(b)(iii) "The auditor shall reject for recording any maps not suitable for producing legible prints through scanning, microfilming, or other standard copying procedures."

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 surveyors 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 plso@dnr.wa.gov.