



Diocese of Joliet Guideline for Use of Electronic Signatures

Electronic signatures, in which a person types in their name in lieu of hand-signing, are legally acceptable for use on forms submitted to agencies of the diocese or to parishes. However, it is important that the person providing the signature indicate permission or acceptance by not only verifying that this is their legal signature, but by indicating they understand that the electronic signature is valid, enforceable and admissible in a legal proceeding.

The following language should appear on all electronically signed forms used by agencies of the diocese and parishes:

“The parties agree that this document may be electronically signed and that the electronic signatures appearing on this document are the same as handwritten signatures for the purposes of validity, enforceability and admissibility.”

Related to this,

- Agencies and parishes using **any form containing sensitive information**, such as scanned signatures, dates of birth, social security, account or credit card numbers, or insurance policy identifiers, should be advised that electronic transmission of documents via email is not encrypted, and therefore not secure. Agencies and parishes must inform those transmitting such documents that if the person is concerned about the security of his/her sensitive information, the form should be printed and surface mailed, faxed or hand-delivered. Sample language:

“Transmission via email is not encrypted, so if you are concerned about the security of your sensitive information, please print and fax this form, surface mail it or hand deliver it.”

- Agencies or parishes can assure encryption of documents either by purchasing encryption software or by using a web-based service that encrypts information for security purposes.