



Avoid these 7 Common Mistakes when Submitting Documentation for Entity Validation

We are sharing some of the most common reasons entity validation documents are not approved. View our downloadable **guide and checklist**, linked in [this FAQ](#). For additional examples of why some documents fail and how to avoid that, review [this article](#).

Reason #1: You didn't state the reason for your request in the text box of your ticket.

Instead of only writing "see attached" or "the system didn't find me," say what specifically needs to change and what you're submitting each document for. Here are some examples:

- "The system didn't find me, so please add my name and address (ACME Building Supplies, 123 Main St. Anywhere, CA 90210)."
- "I'm just renewing. My information hasn't changed, even though the system didn't show it exactly right. I attached the document proving my correct name and address to be validated."
- "My state and date of incorporation that I entered are correct, but the system isn't accepting them. I'm including my sole proprietor certified tax return as proof that the date I started my business is May 1, 2020, and the state is Ohio."

Reason #2: You attached the correct document, like a bank statement or utility bill, but it's too old.

As a rule, if your document is one that is generated on a monthly or annual basis, like a bank or utility statement, you must provide one from the last 5 years.

However, if your document is a one-time, foundational document like articles of incorporation, you can use it no matter how old it is if the information hasn't changed since the entity was established. Some articles of incorporation have an address; if yours doesn't or it's out of date, attach a secondary document. If you include a secondary document, make sure the address is current and is your physical address. Also, make sure your legal business name and any doing-business-as information are correct and exactly the same on all your documents.

Reason #3: You attached documents with incorrect information.

Don't provide documents that don't match what you entered as your business information. For example:

- Don't enter into the text box that you want your legal name updated to "ACME Company," but provide a business license that shows your name as "ACME, Inc."
- Don't enter an address with a suite number but provide a utility bill that omits your suite number.

Instead, make sure what you entered and your documentation match **exactly**.

Reason #4: You attached documents demonstrating your physical address using a P.O. box.

These will be rejected every time. Please save yourself time by not including attachments listing P.O. boxes or mail services. P.O. boxes and mail service addresses (e.g., UPS Store) are not considered physical address locations by the federal government. You can request to change your legal business name or physical address if needed, but you must use a physical address.

Reason #5: You attached non-English-language originals without also attaching a certified English translation.

Do not send documents that don't have a formal, typed, complete translation certified by the person providing translation. Instead:

- Include a separate document that translates the original content line by line (unless your government's custom is to provide certified translation in-line with the document text).
- Ensure the document includes a statement of certification by the translator (see our [guide](#)).

Reason #6: You attached your original application or typed document, or screenshots of a form where you entered data on a website.

Original applications, word processing documents, screenshots of website forms, and other unofficial artifacts will be rejected (exception: State Secretary of State current business registry screenshots).

Do not include original forms or applications you submitted to a local, state, federal, or national authority (this includes tax applications like Form W-9). These will never be accepted. Only processed applications and forms can be considered. Do not include screenshots or exports of any **federal** website record, including IRS.gov, cage.dla.mil, current SAM.gov registration, etc. Lastly, Dun and Bradstreet or DUNS Number screenshots are never accepted.

Instead, attach:

- A screenshot or printout of your business's record in your **state's** business registry from an official state website, such as your secretary of state's site. Note: these screenshots must show the record of the search and the URL and not a form that you are filling out on the website that has not been submitted.
- Processed applications, evidenced by seals, signatures, and stamps from the processing authorities.

Reason #7: You attached poor quality documents.

Instead of handwritten documents, low contrast scans, and documents with obscured or cut-off information, provide documents with clear, visible key information as well as any seals, signatures, or stamps. Neatly redact sensitive information that is not relevant to your entity validation.



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