Validating Digital Signatures

Immediately below is a brief tutorial that will demonstrate how to Validate Digital Signatures and some errors to look for.

To begin the tutorial, click anywhere on the tutorial and then double-click the Start button. After viewing the tutorial, you will find a printable version at the end of this document.

Note: Using the Adobe Scroll Bars while the tutorial is playing may end the tutorial.
Validating Digital Signatures

When you receive an electronic document that has a digital signature affixed, it is your responsibility to make sure that the signature on the document is a valid one. Instructions for validating an e-form are provided in this document.

The instructions are written with the assumption that the originator of the e-form has completed, signed and forwarded it to you for approval.

Valid Signature

- When you open a digitally signed document, you should see a message bar in the lower right corner of your screen that indicates the signatures are being verified.
- While this is occurring, the form will not be fully populated.
- The Message Bar should look like this and will appear only briefly.

- A form that has been filled out correctly, meaning dated first and then signed, will have several identifiable elements.
- The Message Ribbon will have a Green checkmark with the message: "Signed and all signatures are valid."
- The Signature will be applied and certified by the State of Illinois.

Invalid Signature

- HOWEVER, if the form was signed first and then dated, you will see a Yellow Warning icon in the Message Ribbon.
- The message states: "Signed and all signatures are valid, but with unsigned changes after the last signature."

- In order to see what those changes are, you will have to look at the Signature Panel.
- You can access the Signature Panel several ways; two are recommended.
  - Use the button located at the top of the form.
  - Or, the icon located on the side panel.
Digital Signatures

Signature Panel

- After opening the Signature Panel, you will see information similar to the following:
  - Green Checkmark icon signifying the Revisions were made by the person that originally signed the form.
  - Yellow Warning icon signifying fields were filled in after the signature was applied.
  - Pink Right-Arrow signifying there are still unsigned Signature Fields.

- The Unsigned Signature Fields, referenced above, simply refers to the Approvals section of the document.

- From the Signature Panel, click the + sign to view the Yellow Warning message, Form Fields Filled In.

- The message indicates that the form was dated after it was signed.

Remember: The date must be applied first.

IMPORTANT

- When approving an Absence Request, the fact that the Date field was populated after the signature was applied is not problematic.
- Ultimately, it is the Approver’s choice whether to accept this document or reject it.

However, if this were a Purchase Order or another document of the same or greater magnitude, changes after the signature has been applied would not be acceptable.
After completing the review, collapse the Signature Panel by clicking the small arrow in the upper right corner of the panel.

Approving the Document

- After reviewing the document, it's time to Approve it.
- Scroll to the bottom of the form and locate the Approvals section.
- Moving from right to left, click the Approve radio button, Date it, and then Sign it.
- Once you click on the appropriate Signature line, the same steps are followed as when the initiator signs the form; we won't go into all of those details again.

Note: If you are not familiar with these steps, please review the tutorial: How To: Date the E-form & Apply Your Digital Signature.

- After the first Approval, the Approvals section will look similar to the one on the right.
- Once the Supervisor's certified signature is applied, the Green Checkmark appears on the Message Ribbon again.
- The screenshot on the right shows you what the Signature Panel will look like after approval.
- Notice there is no Yellow Warning icon under the initiator's signature line; just the note field remains.
- Look at Rev. 2; that signature is also valid and the document has not been modified since this signature was applied.

Important: A lot more information is contained in the Signature Panel than is addressed here. As an Approver, you should become familiar with this information and its importance.

- You are now ready to forward the form to the next approver, if further authorization is required by your department.
- Also, a best practice would be to send a signed copy of this form to the initiator, confirming the approval status.