

# Architect's Professional Seal

## Application of MAA Digital Signature on Electronic Documents

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### Summary

Manual seals and stamps will not be issued after December 31, 2020. However, Architects who possess a physical seal/stamp issued by the MAA, are permitted to continue to use same for a period of time – manually sealing, signing and dating hard copy printed documents that are issued solely in that format. The date and signature of the architect on the physical seal must also be applied manually.

Effective January 1, 2021, a digital signature issued by the MAA, through Notarius, is mandatory for all members when working in electronic format – and no other option, outside of the digital signature, is permitted for documents issued in electronic format (ie. transmitting pdf copies of documentation).

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### BACKGROUND

The practice of architecture cannot be performed competently, nor within the requirements of the Act and Bylaws, without the Member maintaining supervisory control over the provision of services. In order for a Member to be “responsible” for architectural services, he/she must be actively involved in the planning or supervision (ie. directing and controlling the project). Refer to the MAA Regulatory Practice Bulletin A.1a regarding Application of Seal (revised December, 2015).

The use and application of an electronic seal, with manually applied signatures, had been permitted in a certain manner with respect to the above requirements for some time; but the increased use of electronic documents, together with a move towards electronic submissions to Authorities Having Jurisdiction, has driven the need for a revised approach.

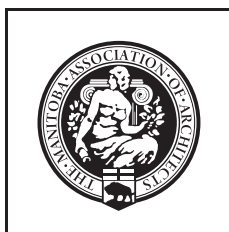
Modern legislation (The Electronic Commerce and Information Act) is in place in Manitoba, which makes electronic documents as enforceable as printed documents and allows for digital production and delivery of architectural

instruments of service. These modern concepts related to electronic documents and transactions can be applied, to enable “electronic signature, seal and delivery”, provided that adequate measures are in place to ensure:

- the security and verification of electronic documents; and
- the regulation of use and revocation of an architect's seal.

Considering the evolution of architectural practice in Manitoba and other jurisdictions, the MAA Council moved forward in 2020 with a recommendation to implement Digital Signatures as the only acceptable way to sign and seal electronic documents as of January 1, 2021.

(Note: An electronic impression of the seal alone is not secure, and any such document is vulnerable to being modified and used by others without the issuing Member's knowledge or authorization. It is important for the protection of the public, that the seal applied by a registered member of the MAA is reliable. Therefore, the Digital Signature is required for documents that are authenticated electronically.)



## REGULATORY

Practice Bulletin

**A.1b**

Revised January, 2021  
(Original-December, 2002)

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## TERMINOLOGY

### **Digital Signature/Digital Signing Certificate:**

Cryptographically protected information in which the veracity of the certificate details are certified by a Certificate Authority.

**MAA Digital Signature:** Digital Signatures that include additional information regarding the professional affiliation of the architect which is cryptographically asserted and controlled by the MAA.

**Electronic Impression, Electronic Seal, or Image of a Stamp:** The visual representation of a physical seal resulting from scanning (or creating) an imprint of the seal that may also contain the visual image of the hand-written signature of an architect, the date and the time.

## PROCEDURE TO CREATE ELECTRONIC ORIGINALS

1. If you choose to create an electronic original, or in the context of a digital submission, you **must** apply the Digital Signature that has been provided/authorized by the MAA to the documents (a visual electronic impression of your seal and signature, along with a standard label that clearly identifies the document has been digitally signed, will also need to appear). The Digital Signature is applied to the document package once you are satisfied that it is in accordance with the requirements of the MAA Regulatory Practice Bulletin A.1a regarding Application of Seal, and it is ready to be signed.

No other form of 'Signature' (outside the digital signature issued to you by the MAA) is valid or acceptable for use in conjunction with the professional seal or stamp that has been issued and is to be used on electronic documents relative to the practice of architecture in Manitoba.

2. If you possess a physical seal, you may scan it for this purpose. The scanned version should be an exact replica of the manual seal issued to

you. You will otherwise use the electronic image of the seal which is provided at the same time as your digital signature is authorized (or was otherwise provided through the MAA office).

With the MAA Digital Signature, you will have access to a Software *ConsignO Desktop*, allowing you to apply your MAA Digital Signature on documents. Members are however free to use any tools that enable them to meet the requirement in the guidelines.

Although the MAA Digital Signature is not applied until the package of documentation is finalized and ready for signature, an electronic impression of the seal and signature must be carried on each relevant drawing, along with a standard label indicating 'MAA Digital Signature Applied' (added with or near the electronic seal and signature).

(\*Note: Electronic impressions of seals shall not be used for the purpose of authenticating original documents; and must not be confused with digital signatures or seals.)

3. If the Digital Signature is applied to a reduced size drawing, the electronic impression of the seal and signature, and required label, may be scaled down, provided that it is still clear and legible.
4. You are responsible for exercising the same responsible control over the use of both your Digital Signature and electronic and manual versions of your seal. Your MAA digital signature password, which enables use of the Digital Signature, must NOT be disclosed to anyone at any time.
5. If you cease to be a registered member of the MAA (or your ability to practice architecture in Manitoba is suspended in some other manner), and are in possession of a manual seal, it must be returned to the MAA, and you must

discontinue further use of any electronic impression of the seal as well. Your Digital Signature, as it relates to use in Manitoba, will also be immediately revoked by the MAA. You must delete the electronic image of the seal from all disks, and electronic folders etc. (Note: It is not intended that the electronic seal be removed from any work previously completed and sealed, while authorized to do so.). The architect must provide written confirmation to the MAA that the electronic impression of the seal has been deleted from any and all current hard drives and will no longer be utilized.

6. Notarius has been selected by the MAA to provide the MAA Digital Signature. To obtain your MAA Digital Signature, visit:  
[www.notarius.com/MAA](http://www.notarius.com/MAA)

Note: Please refer to the attached page, for some examples and variations of the seal, signature and required standard label (MAA Digital Signature Applied) that must be included. While the scale and the position of the label may be altered to some degree, the wording must remain consistent and it must appear on each electronic drawing that has been included in the electronic submission, with or near the electronic images of the seal and signature.

# SAMPLES

Registered Architect's Seal Only (two different sample versions):



*MAA Digital Signature Applied*



JAN. 2, 2021

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Registered Architect's Seal + Architectural Corporation Stamp (one sample version):

*MAA Digital Signature Applied*



JAN. 2, 2021

*MAA Digital Signature Applied*



JAN. 5, 2021