

NATIONAL MASTER RULING – DIGITAL SIGNATURES

JUNE 3, 2019

Q - Can the Charter application form for a new Grange be signed online by applicants by a digital signature?

RULING:

Digest 4.3.5 states: “Application for a Charter for a [Junior, Subordinate, Pomona] Grange shall be signed by the persons applying for the same, and be accompanied by a fee....”

Electronic signatures are routinely accepted in today’s business world and on government documents as legally binding just the same as original, handwritten signatures.

When the Charter application form is signed in person at an organizational or reorganizational meeting, it sometimes takes weeks or months to receive the form in the National Grange office in order to process it, prepare the charter, get the proper National officer signatures, and mail it to the Grange with the new Grange kit. An online Charter application would speed the process and enable the new Grange to get started while they are eager and excited. However, a long delay in a process unfamiliar to new members would discourage them at the start.

An electronic digital signature will be accepted as a legal signature by the National Grange on a Charter application or Reorganization application. The organizing deputy will verify that each person whose name is on the charter or reorganization application did personally sign the form either in person or digitally.

Digital signatures will also be accepted on membership applications completed online and submitted to a Community Grange, just as digital signatures are accepted for e-membership.