Each document presented for recording MUST include or comply with the following general requirements. Documents may be presented for recording in person, by mail or by a courier service. The following are helpful items to remember when recording:

1. The property must be located in Santa Barbara County. (Civil Code 1169)

2. The document must be authorized or required by law to be recorded. (Govt Code 27201) Documents affecting title to real property generally include grant deeds, deeds of trust, mechanic's liens, tax liens, abstract of judgment, reconveyances, assignments of deeds of trust, etc.

3. Signatures must be original unless the document is a certified copy issued by the appropriate custodian of the public record. (Govt Code 27201(b), 27279, Evidence Code 1530)

4. Include the name of the party requesting the recording and a name and address where the document can be returned. (Govt Code 27361.6)

5. The document must be properly acknowledged, unless exempt. Since January 2008, acknowledgments taken in California require the “all-purpose acknowledgement.” (Govt Code 27201, 27289, 27285, 27287, 27288, Civil Code 1189)

6. The Assessor’s Parcel Number is required on all Deeds and Notices of Completion by local Ordinance.

7. The notary seal must be legible for a microfilm reproduction. (Govt Code 8207)

8. When recording documents affecting a change in the ownership of real property, include a completed Preliminary Change of Ownership Report or pay a $20.00 surcharge. When recording Deeds in which no transfer tax is being paid, include a completed and signed (under penalty of perjury) Documentary Transfer Tax Affidavit. Both of these forms are available on our website.

9. Standard page size is 8-1/2” by 11”; other page sizes incur additional recording fees. As for spacing or margin requirements, the first page of the document must reserve a minimum of 2-1/2” down from the top of the page, of which the left 3-1/2” across is used by the party requesting recording to enter name and address to which the document is to be returned following recording. The remainder of this space is reserved for use by the Registrar-Recorder to enter the official recording information. With regard to the vertical sides of the page, a minimum of 1/2” must be left blank on each side of the document. If the first page of a document does not comply with these legal requirements, attach a separate page to the front of the document which meets these spacing criteria and which includes the title or titles of the document. (Govt Code 27361.6, 27324)

10. Documents must be clearly legible in order to produce a readable and reproducible photographic record. This pertains to the document text, notary seals, certificates and other attachments, such as legal descriptions. (Govt Code 27361.7)

11. Include the recording fees and any additional surcharges and taxes. We have our full recording fee schedule available on our website www.sbcrecorder.com. Payment can be made by cash, personal check, cashier’s check, money order or credit card. Make checks payable to: Santa Barbara County Clerk Recorder. Mail to: P.O. Box 159, Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101-0159.

If you have any questions regarding the recording process, you may call (805) 568-2250 and ask to speak to a document examiner. The Recorder’s Office is prohibited by law from providing you with legal advice. We can only provide you with the recording requirements for a recordable document. We recommend you contact a legal advisor for assistance when preparing documents to be recorded.