



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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Chapter 1 - Purpose and Background

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A. Purpose

Before becoming a U.S. citizen, an eligible naturalization applicant must take an oath of renunciation and allegiance (Oath of Allegiance) in a public ceremony.^[1] The applicant must establish that it is his or her intention, in good faith, to assume and discharge the obligations of the Oath of Allegiance.^[2] The applicant must also establish that his or her attitude toward the Constitution and laws of the United States makes the applicant capable of fulfilling the obligations of the oath.^[3]

B. Background

During the naturalization interview, the applicant signs the naturalization application to acknowledge his or her willingness and ability to take the Oath of Allegiance and to accept certain obligations of United States citizenship. Under certain circumstances, an applicant may qualify for a modification or waiver of the oath.^[4]

In such cases, an officer draws a line through the designated modified portions of the oath and the applicant is not required to recite the deleted portions.^[5]

Applicants must generally recite the Oath of Allegiance orally during a public ceremony. Merely signing the naturalization application and a copy of the oath does not make the applicant a U.S. citizen.

C. Legal Authorities

- [INA 310](#); [8 CFR 310.1](#) – Naturalization authority

- [INA 337](#); [8 CFR 337](#) – Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance
- [Pub. L. 106-448 \(PDF\)](#) – Waiver of Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance for Naturalization of Aliens having Certain Disabilities Act of 2000

Footnotes

[¹] See [INA 337](#). See [8 CFR 337.1\(a\)](#).

[²] See [INA 337](#). See [8 CFR 337.1\(c\)](#). Under certain circumstances, an “Affirmation of Allegiance” is the same as an Oath of Allegiance. See [8 CFR 337.1\(b\)](#).

[³] See [8 CFR 337.1\(c\)](#).

[⁴] See Chapter 3, Oath of Allegiance Modifications and Waivers [[12 USCIS-PM J.3](#)].

[⁵] See [8 CFR 337.1\(b\)](#).

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