

## **Some Background on Company and Personal Chops**

John Eastwood

Nathan KAISER

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### **The Importance of Chops**

For centuries, the Chinese have used carved stone and wooden seals (often called “chops”) for individuals, companies and officials as a means of authenticating documents. Anyone interested in the imperial artwork of China can see a wide variety of red-ink chop stamps used by past emperors to indicate the ownership and approval of various paintings. Despite the popularity of distinctive handwritten signatures in Western countries, the preparation of documents in the Chinese world led to the chop stamp as a different solution. Through to the present day, these chops are a regular part of everyday dealings in China.

While chop stamps were once hand-carved artworks with great individuality, in the modern era most chop-carving shops used computerized equipment that allows a wide selection of calligraphic styles done in a very standardized way. This standardization has, to some extent, reduced the irregularities of hand-carved chops that made them useful as security devices, but that has generally not stopped companies from using them in their daily business activities despite the growth of popularity of e-signatures and other authentication technologies. A typical contract will not only bear chop stamps at the signature line areas, but often times there will be stamps on each page or, if a very large contract, spread along the edges of sheets so as to indicate authenticity of all the pages.

### **Different Chops**

In this course of a company’s business dealings, a company may maintain a small set of chops or, if necessary, may choose to expand that set. A small set may only include the main company chop and a “representative person” chop. The company chop is usually a larger square stamp featuring the company name in Chinese and sometimes, if a foreign company, a band bearing the romanized name of the company. The representative-person chop is usually smaller and represents the signature of a high-level person with the authority to represent the company in its transactions, a chairman or president for example.

The logo for 'eiger' is located in the bottom right corner of the page. It features the word 'eiger' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are a light orange or tan color. The 'e' and 'i' have a small white dot above them, and the 'g' has a small white dot below it. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a 3D appearance as if they are floating above the page.

Some companies limit the scope of authority for departmental chop stamps, setting aside some stamps to be used exclusively for smaller contract signings, for human-resources matters, or other issues that might not necessary require getting the main chops out. Further, companies may sometime maintain a set of chops with their legal counsel to ensure that corporate transactions move more quickly or for litigation – such chops normally are under strict power-of-attorney restrictions to prevent use beyond the direct written instructions of the company.

### **Chop Handling by Companies**

Because documents that bear company chops will normally be treated as having been signed with the full authority of the company, it is absolutely essential that the chops be kept securely enough to protect against possible misuse yet flexibly enough to allow the company to function in everyday commerce. The possession of chops should be set out and kept track of carefully, as well as the lines of authority for using the chops. Safeguards should be in place to ensure the return of chops prior to the departure of personnel. Many companies provide clearly for the securing of key chops stamps at the close of each business day.

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