

Registering a Copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office

An application for copyright registration contains three essential elements: a completed application form, a nonrefundable filing fee, and a nonreturnable deposit — that is, a copy or copies of the work being registered and “deposited” with the Copyright Office.

When the Copyright Office issues a registration certificate, it assigns as the effective date of registration the date it received all required elements in acceptable form, regardless of how long it took to process the application and mail the certificate of registration. The time needed to process applications varies depending on the amount of material the Office is receiving and the method of application.

You can apply to register your copyright in one of two ways.

Online Application

Online registration through the electronic Copyright Office (eCO) is the preferred way to register basic claims for literary works; visual arts works; performing arts works, including motion pictures; sound recordings; and single serials. Advantages of online filing include:

- a lower filing fee
 - \$35 for a single author who is also the sole claimant in a single work that is not made for hire
 - \$55 for all other online filings
- the fastest processing time
- online status tracking
- secure payment by credit or debit card, electronic check, or Copyright Office deposit account
- the ability to upload certain categories of deposits directly into eCO as electronic files

NOTE: You can still register online even if you intend to submit a hard-copy deposit.

Basic claims include (1) a single work; (2) multiple unpublished works if the elements are assembled in an orderly form; the combined elements bear a single title identifying the collection as a whole; the copyright claimant in all the elements and in the collection as a whole is the same; and all the elements are by the same author or, if they are by different authors, at least one of the authors has contributed copyrightable authorship to each element; and (3) multiple published works if they are all first published together in the same publication on the same date and owned by the same claimant.



To access eCO, go to the Copyright Office website at www.copyright.gov and click on *electronic Copyright Office*.

Paper Application

You can also register your copyright using fill-in forms TX (literary works); VA (visual arts works); PA (performing arts works, including motion pictures); SR (sound recordings); and SE (single serials). To access these forms, go to the Copyright Office website and click on **Forms**. On your personal computer, complete the form for the type of work you are registering, print it out, and sign and mail it with a check or money order and your deposit. Blank forms can also be printed out and completed by hand or requested by postal mail (limit of two copies of each form by mail). The fee for a basic registration using one of these forms is \$85 payable by check or money order. The higher fee compared with online registration reflects the higher labor cost to process claims submitted on paper.

Applications That Must Be Completed on Paper

Certain applications must be completed on paper and mailed to the Copyright Office with the appropriate fee and deposit. Forms for these applications include

- **Form CA** for correction or amplification of information in a registration
- **Form D-VH** for registration of vessel hull designs
- **Form MW** for registration of mask works
- **Form GAT** for registration of works in which the U.S. copyright was restored under the 1994 Uruguay Round Agreements Act
- **Form RE** for renewal of copyright claims, and
- Forms for **group submissions**.

To access these forms, go to the Copyright Office website and click on *Forms*. Complete the form for the type of work you are registering on your personal computer, print it out, and sign and mail it with a check or money order and your deposit. Blank forms can also be printed out and completed by hand or requested by postal mail (limit of two copies of each form by mail). Current registration fees for these types of applications are available on the Copyright Office website or by phone.

For Further Information

By Internet

Informational circulars, announcements, regulations, all application forms, and other materials are available from the Copyright Office website at www.copyright.gov.

By Telephone

For general information about copyright, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free). Staff members are on duty from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, eastern time, Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day. To request paper application forms or circulars, call (202) 707-9100 and leave a message.

By Regular Mail

Write to

*Library of Congress
Copyright Office—PUB
101 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20559*