

# Copyright Registration of Contributions to Periodicals

This circular is an introduction to the U.S. Copyright Office's group registration accommodation for contributions to periodicals. It covers

- Eligibility Requirements
- Registration Procedure
- Comparison of Other Registration Options

For more information, see **chapter 1100**, section 1115 of the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Copyright Office provides several exceptions to the general rule of registering one work per application, one of which is known as group registration of contributions to periodicals. For the purposes of this accommodation, a periodical is a collective work that is issued or intended to be issued on an established schedule in successive issues that are intended to be continued indefinitely. In general, each issue bears the same title, as well as numerical or chronological designations. A contribution is a separate and independent work that has been published in a periodical. Contributions to periodicals include articles, photographs, or illustrations that are published in a newspaper, magazine, or journal.

Contributions that are published only in electronic form can only be registered under this accommodation if the publication meets the Office's definition of a periodical. For example, contributions to an electronic newsletter containing multiple articles that is distributed to email subscribers as a fixed and self-contained work on an established schedule and is intended to be continued indefinitely would qualify. An email newsletter containing a single article or essay would not qualify for this option, because it is not a collective work.

**NOTE:** As a general rule, websites are not considered periodicals for the purpose of registration, as they are typically updated on a continual basis; are rarely distributed in successive issues that can be recognized as discrete, self-contained collective works; and rarely contain numerical or chronological designations that distinguish one update from the next.

Multiple contributions to periodicals may be registered using one application, filing fee, and deposit when they meet certain requirements set forth by Office regulations. Otherwise, each work will need to be registered separately with individual applications, filing fees, and deposits.

## Eligibility for Group Registration

To take advantage of group registration of contributions to periodicals, the following conditions must be met:

- All the contributions in the group are created by the same individual.
- The contributions are not made for hire.
- The copyright claimant is the same person or entity for all contributions.
- Each work is first published as a contribution to a periodical.
- Each contribution is published within a twelve-month period (e.g. January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015, or April 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017).
- For works first published before March 1, 1989, each work bears a separate copyright notice with the copyright owner's name, abbreviation, or designation. The name that appears in each notice must be the same.

Contributions that do not satisfy these requirements cannot be registered using this group registration option.

## Copyright Registration

To register claims to copyright in contributions to periodicals, you must submit the following to the Copyright Office: (1) a completed group registration form; (2) a nonrefundable filing fee; and (3) the required deposit copies of your works. For general information about registration, see *Copyright Registration* (**Circular 2**).

**NOTE:** Copyright Office fees are subject to change. For current fees, see *Copyright Office Fees* (**Circular 4**), available on the Office's website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov) or call the Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free).

To register a group of contributions to periodicals, you must complete an online application and upload your deposit through the Office's online registration system. If you submit a paper application, the application will be refused, and your effective date of registration will not be established until the Office receives a completed application through the online registration system together with the filing fee and deposit copies.

In exceptional circumstances, the Office may waive the online filing requirement. You may submit a request to waive the online filing requirement in writing. It should explain why you are unable to use the online application and should be sent to:

Associate Register of Copyrights and Director of Registration Policy and Practice  
Registration Program  
U.S. Copyright Office  
101 Independence Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20559

After you begin the registration by clicking the phrase “Register a Group Claim,” you will select either “Contributions to Periodicals TX” (for literary works) or “Contributions to Periodicals VA” (for visual arts works) as the type of work you are registering. You should select the category that is most appropriate for the type of authorship that appears in the majority of the contributions in the group. Examples of literary works include articles, news stories, columns, features, reviews, editorials, essays, quizzes, puzzles, or advertising copy. Examples of visual arts works include photographs, drawings, illustrations, cartoons, comic strips, prints, art reproductions, charts, diagrams, maps, or pictorial advertisements.

When you complete the online application, you will be required to identify each contribution included in the group, including the date of publication for each contribution and the periodical in which it was first published.

### ***Timing of Registration***

The Office encourages you to submit your claims on a quarterly basis instead of an annual or semi-annual basis. A contribution to a periodical must be registered in a timely manner to seek statutory damages and attorneys’ fees in an infringement action. Specifically, an author may seek these remedies if the contribution was registered before the infringement began or within three months after first publication of the work. By submitting a claim on a quarterly basis, authors preserve their ability to seek statutory damages and attorneys’ fees for any infringements that occur after the effective date of registration as well as any infringements that occur within three months after publication of each work in the group.

### ***Identifying the Works***

- List the contributions in chronological order.
- Works may be published in different periodicals and on different dates.
- There is no limit on the total number of contributions that may be submitted, although you must include at least two contributions to use this option.

### ***Titles:***

- Provide a title for each contribution within the group that matches the title on the deposit copy.
- If the contribution was published without a title, provide a descriptive title that identifies the general subject matter of the work.
- If the contributions were published as part of a series, such as an advice column, editorial column, or cartoon strip, provide the title for that series using the “Series Title” field.

### ***Periodical:***

- Provide the title of the periodical where the contribution was first published.
- Provide the volume, number, issue date, and ISSN number (if any) for each periodical.
- Provide the page number(s), if any, where the contribution appeared within the periodical.

### ***Date of Publication:***

- Provide the precise date of first publication (month, day, and year) for the periodical.

### **Note to Copyright Office Field**

The “Note to Copyright Office” field is an optional area of the online application where you can provide additional information regarding the works being registered.

### **Deposit Requirements**

To register your contributions to a periodical as a group, you must upload an electronic copy of each contribution as it appeared in the periodical of first publication. This deposit should be a complete copy of the work being registered, meaning that the deposit is legible, is assembled in orderly form, is labeled with the title of the contribution, and includes everything to be covered by registration.

You may submit one of the following:

- The entire issue of the periodical where the contribution was first published.
- The entire section of the newspaper where it was first published.
- The specific pages from the periodical where the contribution was first published.

Each individual contribution must be contained in its own separate electronic file in one of the formats identified on the Office’s [list of acceptable file types](#). The Office prefers you upload the contributions to the electronic registration system in a .zip file containing all the files. The file size for each uploaded file must not exceed 500 megabytes.

If you are unable to comply with the deposit requirement, you may request special relief. For more information on special relief, see [chapter 1500](#), section 1508.8 of the *Compendium*.

### **Contributions That Do Not Satisfy the Group Registration Requirements**

Contributions to periodicals that do not qualify for this registration accommodation may qualify for multiple work registration under other categories.

Photographers who are unable to register their works as contributions to a periodical may be able to use the group registration option for published or unpublished photographs. For guidance on this group registration option, see *Copyright Registration of Photographs* ([Circular 42](#)).

If the contributions have not yet been published, it may be possible to register them as a collection of unpublished works. For a discussion of this option, see *Multiple Works* ([Circular 34](#)).

The table below provides a comparison of registration accommodations. Alternatively, you may register a particular article, photograph, illustration, or other contribution on an individual basis.

<i>Registration Requirements</i>	<i>Group Registration of Published or Unpublished Photographs</i>	<i>Group Registration of Contributions to Periodicals</i>	<i>Group Registration of Unpublished Works</i>
<i>Type of work</i>	Each work must be a photograph	Each work must be a visual arts or literary work	The application may be used for any type of work; however, each work in the group must be the same type
<i>Application requirements</i>	The applicant must use the online application	The applicant must use the online application	The applicant must use the online application
<i>Number of photographs in the application</i>	The applicant may include up to 750 photographs in the group	No limit on the number of works that may be included in the application	The applicant may include up to ten works in the group
<i>Author</i>	All the photographs must be taken by the same author	All the works must be created by the same author	All the works must be created by the same author or authors
<i>Claimant</i>	The claimant for all the photographs must be the same person or organization	The claimant for all the works must be the same person or organization	All of the authors must be listed as copyright claimant
<i>Work made for hire</i>	The photographs may be created as works made for hire	The works cannot be created as works made for hire	The works may be created as works made for hire
<i>Publication</i>	All the photographs in the group must be either published or unpublished. Unpublished and published works may not be combined on the same application.	All the works must be published	All the works must be unpublished

<i>Registration Requirements</i>	<i>Group Registration of Published or Unpublished Photographs</i>	<i>Group Registration of Contributions to Periodicals</i>	<i>Group Registration of Unpublished Works</i>
<i>Publication within a twelve-month period</i>	<p>Published photographs: All the photographs must be published within the same calendar year (e.g., January through December 2011; February through June 2012; September through October 2013, etc.)</p> <p>Unpublished photographs: n/a</p>	All the works must be published within a twelve-month period (e.g., January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010; February 1, 2011 through January 31, 2012; September 15, 2013 through September 14, 2014, etc.)	n/a
<i>Medium of publication</i>	<p>Published photographs: The photographs may be first published in any medium</p> <p>Unpublished photographs: n/a</p>	All the works must be first published as a contribution to a periodical	n/a
<i>Copyright notice</i>	<p>Published photographs: If the photographs were published before March 1, 1989, each photograph must bear an appropriate copyright notice</p> <p>Unpublished photographs: n/a</p>	If the works were published before March 1, 1989, each work must bear an appropriate copyright notice	n/a

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**NOTE**

1. This circular is intended as an overview to registering a group of contributions to periodicals. The authoritative source for U.S. copyright law is the Copyright Act, codified in Title 17 of the *United States Code*. Copyright Office regulations are codified in Title 37 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Copyright Office practices and procedures are summarized in the third edition of the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*, cited as the *Compendium*. The copyright law, regulations, and the *Compendium* are available on the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

## **For Further Information**

### ***By Internet***

The copyright law, the *Compendium*, electronic registration, application forms, regulations, and related materials are available on the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

### ***By Email***

To send an email inquiry, click the *Contact Us* link on the Copyright Office website.

### ***By Telephone***

For general information, 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. To request application forms or circulars by postal mail, call (202) 707-9100 or 1-877-476-0778 and leave a recorded message.

### ***By Regular Mail***

Write to

Library of Congress  
U.S. Copyright Office  
Outreach and Education Section  
101 Independence Avenue, SE #6304  
Washington, DC 20559-6304

