

Copyright Registration TOOLKIT

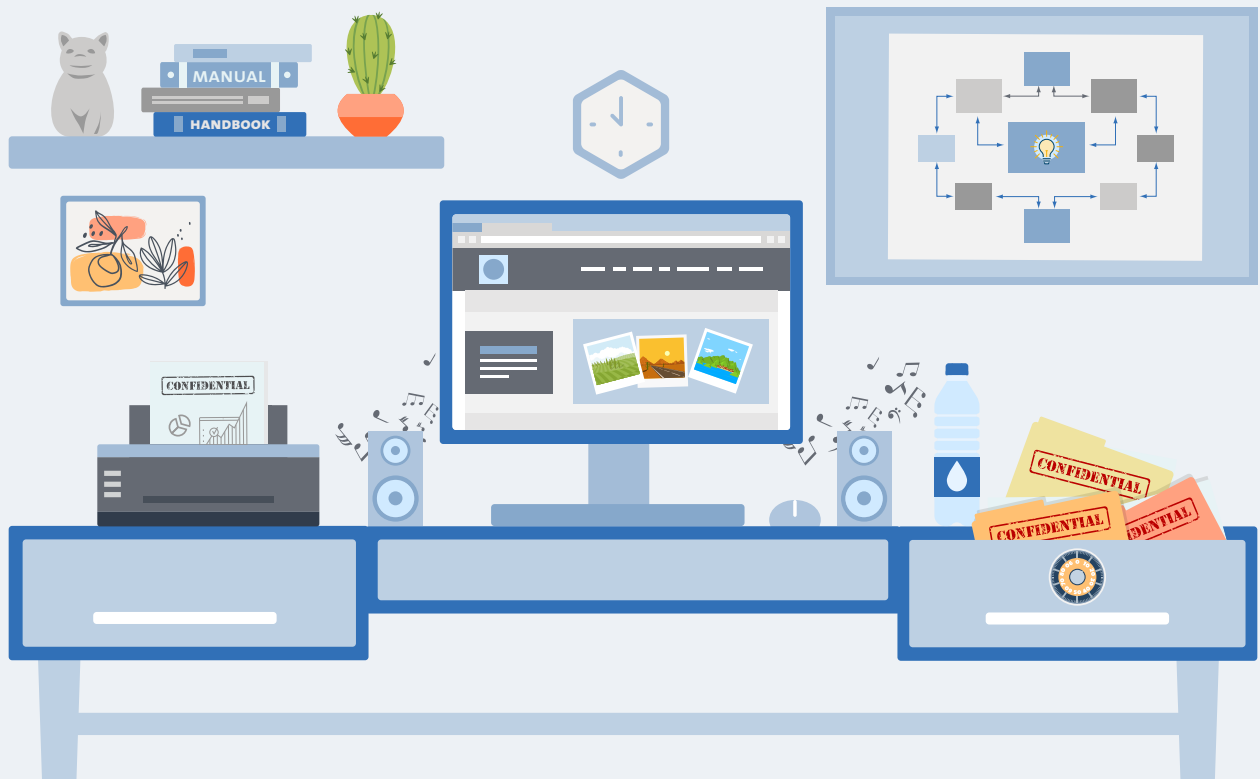


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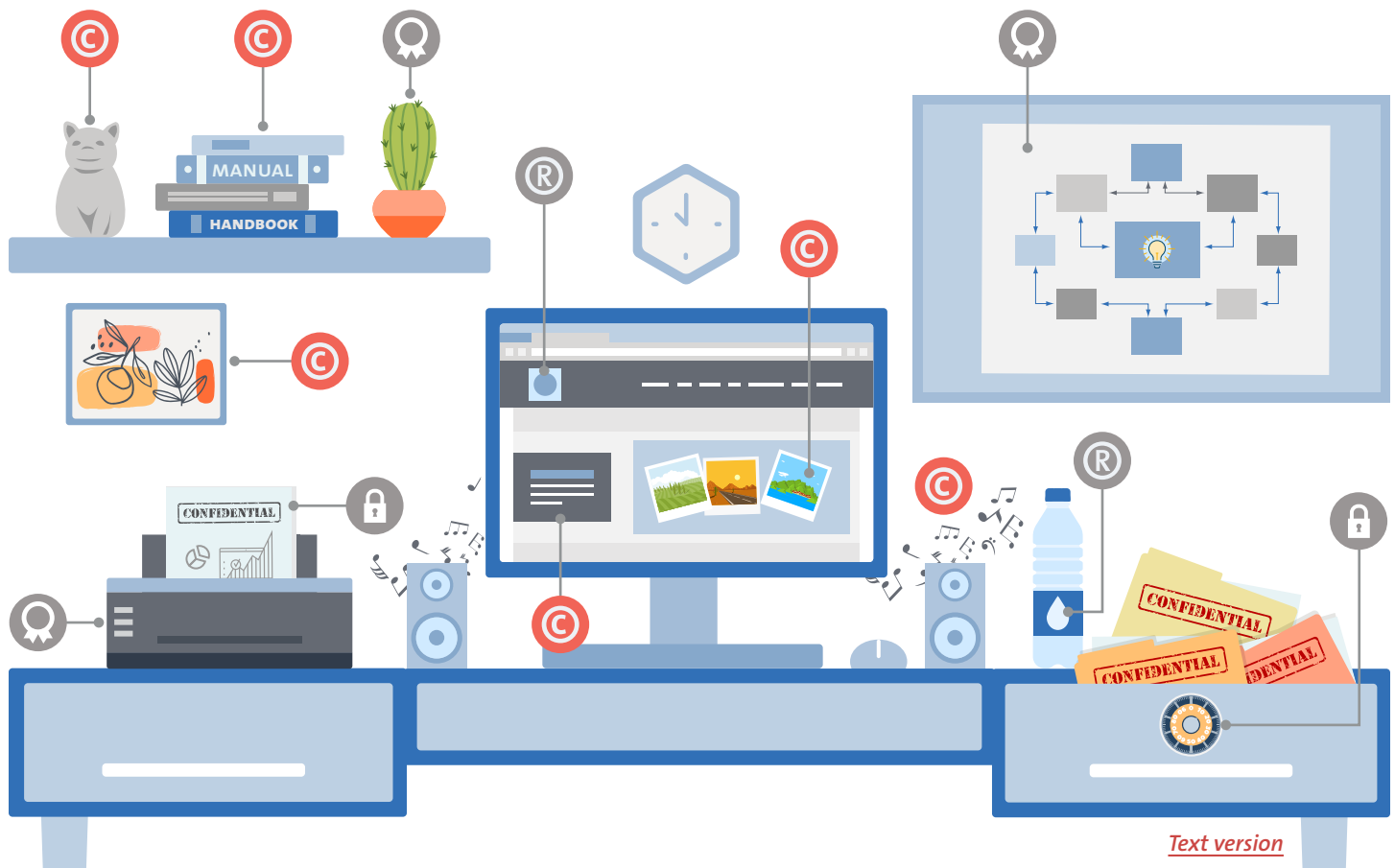


1. Learning the Essentials

How are copyrights different from patents, trademarks, or trade secrets?

Copyright provides legal protection for **creative works, such as books, drawings, photographs, songs, and movies**. Creative materials for businesses might include videos, computer programs, artwork in advertising content, product manuals and labels, technical drawings, or blogs. A copyright-protected creative work is different from a patented invention, a trademarked brand, or a trade secret.

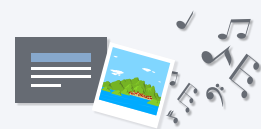
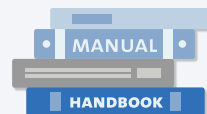
Visualize how these types of **intellectual property** differ:



Text version

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright law protects original creative works, like books, songs, sculptures, paintings, website content, and photographs.



LEARN MORE ABOUT PATENTS, TRADEMARKS, AND TRADE SECRETS FROM THE [U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE](#).

PATENTS

Patent law protects new processes and inventions, such as printers. Certain designs and plants may also be protected.



TRADEMARKS

Trademark law protects brand names, slogans, and other source identifiers. Examples include a logo featured on a website and a water bottle.



TRADE SECRETS

Trade secret law protects valuable commercial information that is kept secret, such as data, formulas, recipes, manufacturing processes, and customer lists.











Copyright Basics

Copyright is an automatic form of protection provided by the [laws of the United States](#) to the authors of **original works of authorship** fixed in a tangible form of expression. Let's break that down.

A work is **fixed** when it's captured (either by an author or with their permission) in a sufficiently permanent medium, meaning it can be perceived, reproduced, or communicated for more than a short time. Taking a photograph, writing a story on paper, or creating digital artwork for your logo are all examples of creative materials being fixed.

Section 102(a) of the [Copyright Act](#) provides categories of works that are **copyrightable subject matter**.

	Literary works		Pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works
	Musical works, including any accompanying words		Motion pictures and other audiovisual works
	Dramatic works, including any accompanying music		Sound recordings
	Pantomimes and choreographic works		Architectural works

Find more information about each type of work on our [Registration](#) webpage.

Copyrightable subject matter also includes compilations, collective works, and derivative works. These types of works are a subset of the categories listed above rather than separate categories. Copyright law defines them:

COMPILATION

A **compilation** is the creative selection, coordination, or arrangement of preexisting materials or data to form a new original work of authorship.

For example, a directory of services for a particular region is a compilation.

COLLECTIVE WORK

A **collective work** is a type of compilation that involves several independent contributions.

For example, a newspaper containing multiple articles, illustrations, and photographs is a collective work.

DERIVATIVE WORK

A **derivative work** lawfully recasts, transforms, or adapts a preexisting work's copyrightable elements.

For example, a musical based on a novel is a derivative work.

On the other hand, section 102(b) of the Copyright Act gives us examples of material that are *not* copyrightable subject matter:

- ✗ Ideas
- ✗ Procedures
- ✗ Processes
- ✗ Systems
- ✗ Methods of operation
- ✗ Concepts
- ✗ Principles
- ✗ Discoveries

You may express your ideas in writing or drawings and claim copyright in your descriptions, but be aware that copyright will not protect the idea itself.

Now that you have a fixed work, remember that it must be **original**. Copyright protects only original works of authorship. In copyright, originality means that a work is independently created and sufficiently creative.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULARS:
 MULTIPLE WORKS ([CIRCULAR 34](#)), COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION FOR DERIVATIVE WORKS ([CIRCULAR 14](#))

The phrase **independently created** means that you created the work without copying from other works. Novelty is not required (in contrast to patents). And it's okay if a work closely resembles other works, so long as the similarity is merely coincidental and not a result of copying. To be **sufficiently creative**, a work must be at least minimally creative. Creative expression cannot be mechanical, routine, or typical, but the slightest amount of creative expression will do.

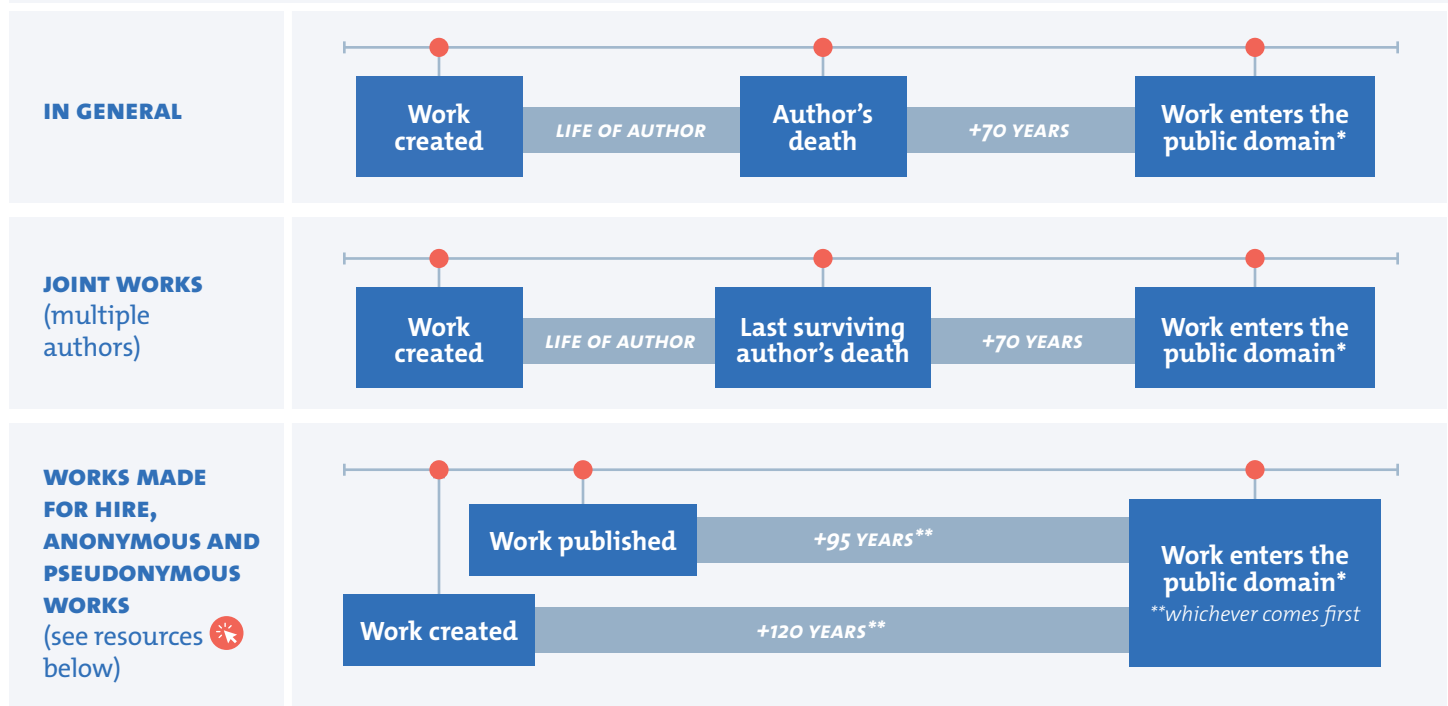


FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULARS:
COPYRIGHT BASICS ([CIRCULAR 1](#)), WORKS NOT PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT ([CIRCULAR 33](#))

Owning a Copyright vs. Registering a Copyright

In the United States, copyright protection begins when you fix your original work of authorship in a tangible medium. But how long do you own a copyright? The term of copyright primarily depends on when a work was created and who created it.

Copyright duration for works created on or after January 1, 1978



**Generally, a copyright-protected work enters the public domain in the United States when its full copyright term has expired.*

Text version

A copyright owner can take steps to enhance copyright protection—the most important of which is **registering the work**. Registration can be made at any time and is an important step to take if you need to enforce your exclusive rights through litigation.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CONCEPTS ABOVE, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULARS AND VIDEOS: DURATION OF COPYRIGHT ([CIRCULAR 15A](#)), WORKS MADE FOR HIRE ([CIRCULAR 30](#)), PSEUDONYMS ([CIRCULAR 32](#)), LEARNING ENGINE SERIES: "[WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN?](#)," "[COPYRIGHT HOLDER'S EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS](#)"

Benefits of Copyright Registration

Registering a work with the Copyright Office is not required for copyright protection. It does, however, provide several advantages. You will:



Establish a public record of your copyright claim, including key facts.



Establish a legal presumption of copyright validity, if you timely register.*



Provide contact information to prospective licensees for obtaining permission to use your work.

Other benefits are related to enforcement of the exclusive rights provided by copyright. With a registration, you can:



File an infringement lawsuit in federal court.**



File a claim before the [Copyright Claims Board \(CCB\)](#)***



Ask for statutory damages, attorneys' fees, and costs, if timely registered.****



Record it with [U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#), which can take action on your behalf to stop the importation of infringing copies.

*You must register your work before or within five years of its first publication date.

**You must have a completed registration from the Copyright Office to file an infringement lawsuit in federal court.

***Unlike the requirement for federal court, you may file a CCB claim if you have either (1) registered the work at issue or (2) submitted an application to register your work.

****You must register before infringement of the work occurred or within three months of your work's first publication date.



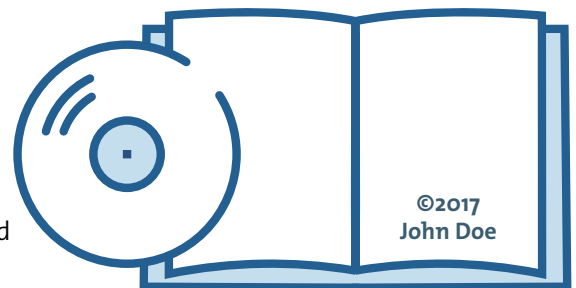
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO: LEARNING ENGINE SERIES: [“COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION”](#)

Using the Copyright Notice ©

Applying a copyright notice to a work has not been required since March 1, 1989, but it may still provide practical and legal benefits. Notice typically consists of

- the copyright symbol © (or for phonorecords, the symbol Ⓒ), the word “copyright,” or the abbreviation “copr.”;
- the name of the copyright owner; and
- the year of first publication.

The use of a copyright notice is the responsibility of the copyright owner and does not require permission from, or registration with, the Copyright Office. Placing a copyright notice on a work is *not* a substitute for registration.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULAR: [COPYRIGHT NOTICE \(CIRCULAR 3\)](#)

2. Understanding the Process



Learn About Each Stage in the Registration Process



1. Application

During this initial stage, you file your application. A copyright registration application must include a completed application form, a nonrefundable filing fee, and the requisite deposit copy or copies of the work you are registering.

As you will see in [section 3](#), “Preparing to File Your Application,” different types of applications are available depending on the type and number of works you plan to submit, and you might want to research the best option for you. Different applications have different filing fees. Review our [Fees](#) webpage and *Copyright Office Fees* ([Circular 4](#)) for more insight.

The Office strongly encourages you to use the online application whenever possible. You will typically pay lower filing fees, have multiple payment options, experience faster processing times, and be able to see the status of your application in the online system. You might also consider a preregistration, which is covered on our [Preregistration](#) webpage.

For information about how to file your application, see [section 4](#), “Filing Your Application.”



2. Examination

During this stage, an application is assigned to a registration specialist, who is responsible for reviewing copyright applications. The specialist will examine the submitted materials to determine whether the work constitutes copyrightable subject matter and if you have met other legal and formal requirements set forth in the Copyright Act, the Copyright Office regulations, and the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*. See [section 5](#), “Moving Through the Process,” for more information.



3. Registration Decision

If your work is copyrightable and your application meets all of the legal and formal requirements for registration, the registration specialist will approve your registration, and a certificate will be mailed to the mailing address you provided on the application. For more information about your certificate, see [section 6](#), “After You Have a Registration.”

The Office may communicate with you via the email address you provided to clarify details on your application. If you do not respond, your application will be closed. A closed application does not mean your work cannot be registered, but you will have to apply again using a new application, deposit, and appropriate fee.

If your work is *not* copyrightable or if your application does *not* meet the legal and formal requirements, or if the Office attempts to communicate with you but no resolution is reached, the registration specialist will refuse your registration. If you disagree with the Office’s refusal to register your entire work or a specific element of your work, you then have the option to appeal the decision within the Copyright Office.



4. Appeals Process

If you disagree with the Office’s decision to refuse registration for your work, you have the option to submit a first request for reconsideration along with the required fee. This request is reviewed by an impartial attorney in the Office’s Registration Program who takes a fresh look at whether the work meets the statutory requirements for copyright registration. The Registration Program will decide to either uphold or reverse the refusal to register and notify you in writing.

If you disagree with the Office’s refusal to register a work after reviewing a first request for reconsideration, you may submit a second request for reconsideration for an additional fee. This request is reviewed by the Office’s Review Board, which consists

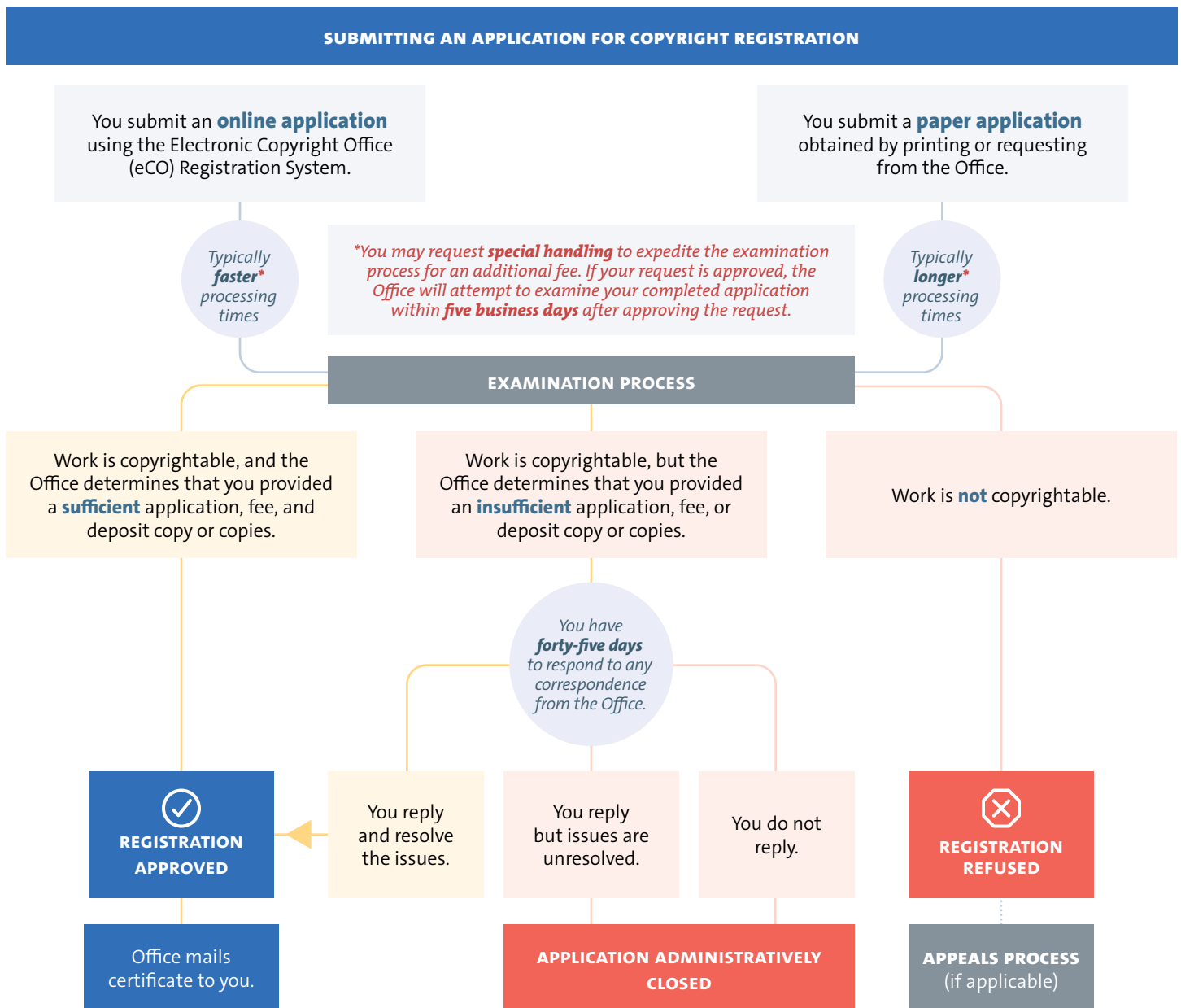
of three senior-level staff members who will take a fresh look at whether the work is subject to copyright protection under the law. The Office does not hear oral arguments in support of a first request or second request for reconsideration. A decision issued by the Review Board is considered the final agency action in the appeals process.

Should you still disagree with the Office's refusal to register your work, you may appeal that decision by filing a lawsuit in federal court.

At a Glance: Copyright Registration

The Office strongly encourages you to submit your work for registration in a timely manner. See [section 1](#) under "Benefits of Copyright Registration" for more context on what **timely** means.

This chart illustrates the steps in the registration process and how long each step could potentially take.



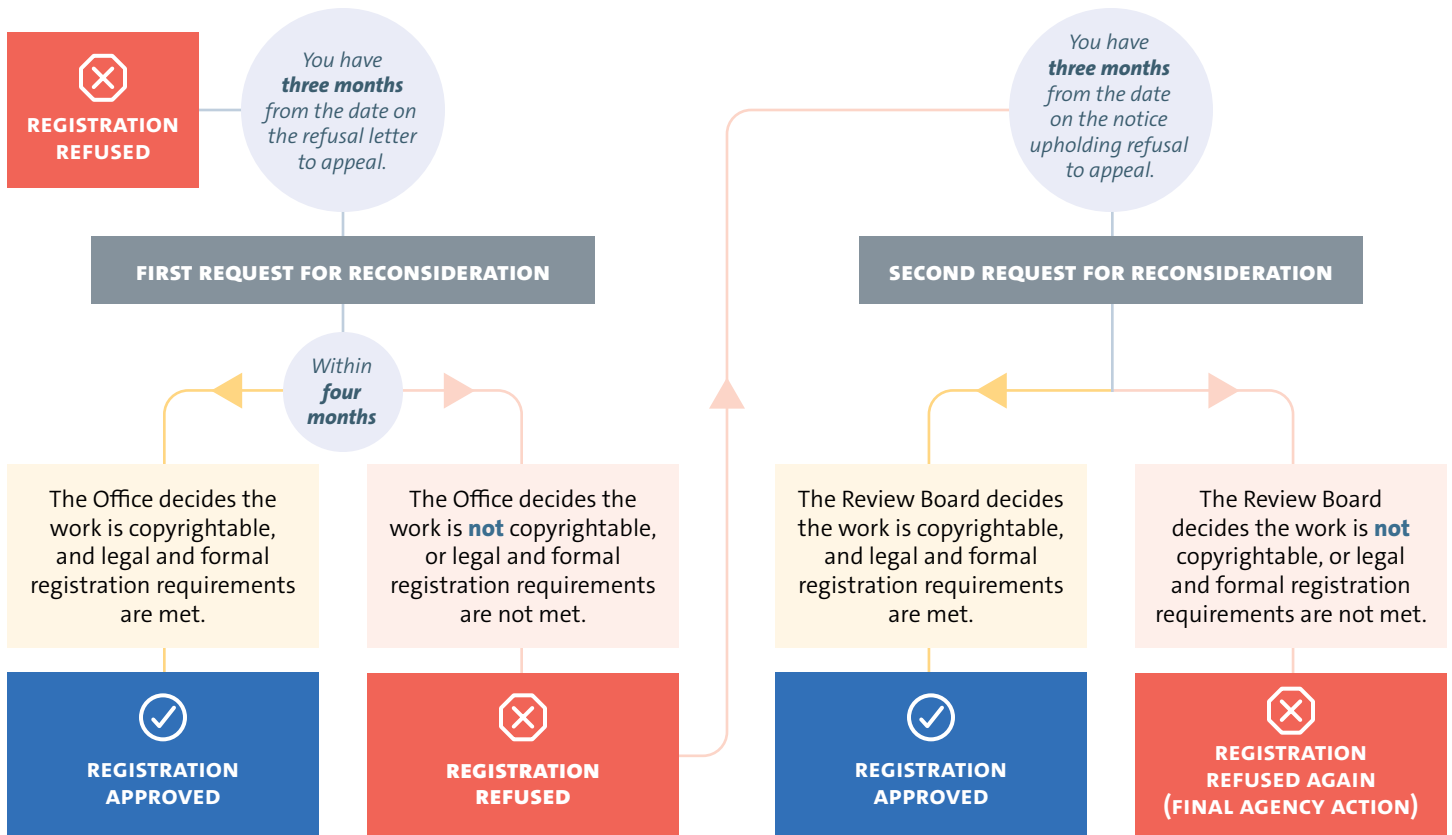
Text version

The Office may refuse a copyright registration for various reasons, including when the work submitted does not constitute copyrightable subject matter or when other formal and legal requirements have not been met. If the Office refuses your application, you may choose to begin the voluntary appeals process illustrated on the next page.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULAR: *SPECIAL HANDLING* ([CIRCULAR 10](#))

APPEALS PROCESS



Text version



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULAR: [REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION \(CIRCULAR 20\)](#)

Do I Need an Attorney?

The Copyright Office does not require that you be represented by an attorney when submitting a copyright registration application. You may file it yourself, or you may work with an attorney if you prefer.

Our [website](#) contains all the information you need to submit your registration, but if you cannot find what you need online, our Public Information Office is here to help Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time, except federal holidays. Staff members can conduct a walk through and help you with navigating the registration process, such as selecting the appropriate application and deposit. However, Office staff cannot offer legal advice, so you are encouraged to check with your own attorney if you have specific legal questions. See [section 4](#) for resources available to you when you file your copyright registration application.

Educational materials produced by the Copyright Office, including this toolkit, are not substitutes for legal guidance.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION PROCESS ON OUR [REGISTRATION](#) WEBPAGE AND THROUGH THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: [COPYRIGHT FAQs](#), [COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION \(CIRCULAR 2\)](#), [LIMITATIONS ON INFORMATION AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE \(CIRCULAR 17\)](#), LEARNING ENGINE SERIES: ["WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?"](#)

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in Copyright Records

All information you provide on your application will be available to the public, and some of it will be on the internet. Why? Federal law and regulations mandate the collection of some PII, and the [Copyright Act](#) requires the Office to preserve collected information as part of the public record. PII includes individuals' names, dates of birth, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses. Carefully consider the information you provide when you complete an application for registration.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PRIVACY DURING THE COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION PROCESS, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULAR: [PRIVACY: PUBLIC COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION RECORDS \(CIRCULAR 18\)](#)

3. Preparing to File Your Application

So you've created an original work and determined that copyright registration is the next step for you. A registration application contains three essential elements:

- Application form
- Nonrefundable fee
- Nonreturnable copy of the work, known as a “deposit”

The date the Office receives all three is the effective date of registration, which is discussed in detail in [section 6](#) under “Important Information about Your Certificate.”



Give Yourself a Head Start by Answering These Questions

Researching common application problems, including which application to use and eligibility requirements, could save you valuable time and money.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK DO YOU WANT TO REGISTER?

You might refer to your work as a blog, a jingle, or a logo. These terms fall under the categories of copyrightable subject matter discussed in [section 1](#) under “Copyright Basics.” For example, a blog is a literary work, a jingle is a performing arts work, and a logo’s artwork is a visual arts work. Depending on the type of work you want to register, the Office has [designated webpages](#) where you can preview the relevant application options for literary works, performing and visual arts works, digital content, motion pictures, and photographs.

IS YOUR WORK PUBLISHED OR UNPUBLISHED ACCORDING TO THE LEGAL DEFINITION?

The publication status of your work has important consequences, including the length of copyright for certain works, as mentioned in [section 1](#) under “Copyright Basics,” and the type of application you may be eligible to file, as discussed below.

Copyright law defines **publication** as the distribution of copies of a work to the public or the offering to distribute copies to a group of persons for purposes of further distribution, public performance, or public display. Distribution may occur by **sale, rental, lease, or lending**.

For example, when you sell a product with a label containing your logo that consists of copyrightable artwork, the artwork is considered published.




If an actual distribution has not occurred or if copies are given to a restricted nonpublic group, such as family or friends, the work is considered unpublished. A work is also likely unpublished if it is simply performed or put on display—for example, if you display your original sculpture on your front lawn.

HOW MANY WORKS DO YOU WANT TO REGISTER?

Generally, a copyright registration covers **one work**, and you must prepare a separate application for each work you want to register. Most people will find that the Single or Standard Application meets their registration needs.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TYPES OF WORKS AND WHAT PUBLICATION MIGHT MEAN IN DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES, CHECK OUT OUR WEBPAGE: [ENGAGE YOUR CREATIVITY](#)

	SINGLE	STANDARD*
 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	One work by one individual author who is the sole owner of the work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ No joint authors ✗ No works made for hire ✗ No collective works or compilations ✗ No material created or owned by others 	Any type of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By one individual author ✓ By joint authors ✓ Works made for hire ✓ Collective works and compilations ✓ Attributed material by others
 FEE	\$45	\$65 (online) or \$125 (paper)
 FORM	Online (eCO) only	Online (eCO) or paper

[Text version](#)





**For most works, using the Standard Application is appropriate. Eligibility requirements are stricter for the Single Application, and you can learn more in our circular: [Using the Single Application \(Circular 11\)](#).*

The Office also has several **group registration options**, which are exceptions to the one-work-per-application rule. To be eligible, your works must meet the requirements for the specific application you intend to use. For example, some application types listed below are specifically for published versus unpublished works. This is another reason it's important to determine the publication status of your work.



CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO TUTORIALS FOR THE SINGLE APPLICATION AND STANDARD APPLICATION ON YOUTUBE: [“SINGLE APPLICATION: TUTORIAL,”](#) [“STANDARD APPLICATION: TUTORIAL”](#)

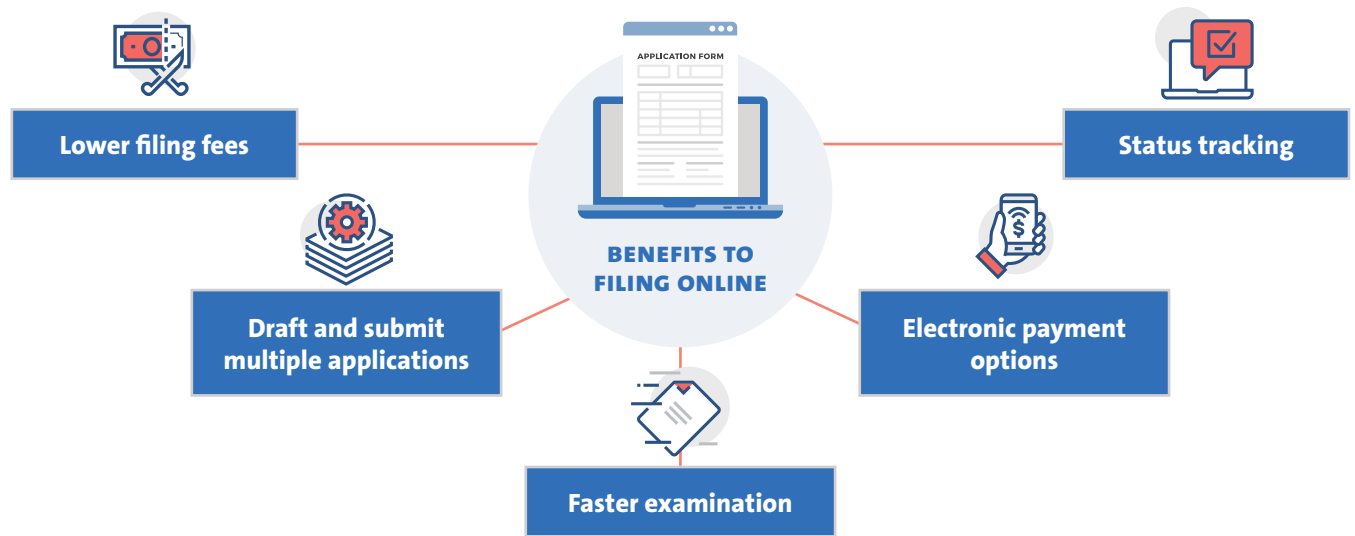
You can file multiple works on these applications. Pay special attention to which options are for unpublished versus published works.

	WRITERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Registration of Short Online Literary Works (GRTX): You can register up to 50 short online literary works (first published online, with 50 to 17,500 words) for a single fee.
	PHOTOGRAPHERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Registration of Unpublished Photographs (GRUPH): You can register up to 750 unpublished photographs for a single fee. • Group Registration of Published Photographs (GRPPH): You can register up to 750 published photographs for a single fee.
	MUSICIANS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Registration of Works on an Album of Music (GRAM): You can use one option to register up to twenty <i>musical works</i> published on the same album, either physical or electronic. You can use a second option to register up to twenty <i>sound recordings</i> and any photographs, artwork, or liner notes published on the same album.
	ALL CREATORS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Registration of Unpublished Works (GRUW): You can register up to ten unpublished works—of the same type—for a single fee.

This list is not comprehensive.

WHY SHOULD YOU SUBMIT YOUR REGISTRATION APPLICATION ONLINE?

In general, the Office strongly encourages you to file your application online using the Electronic Copyright Office (eCO) Registration System. To access eCO, you will need to establish a user ID and password and provide contact information. There are several benefits to filing online rather than by submitting a paper application.



You can find detailed information on our current registration processing times in the “Helpful Links” section of our [Registration](#) webpage. Fees depend on the type of application you submit. Current fees, which are subject to change, are on the [Office’s website](#) and in *Copyright Office Fees* ([Circular 4](#)).

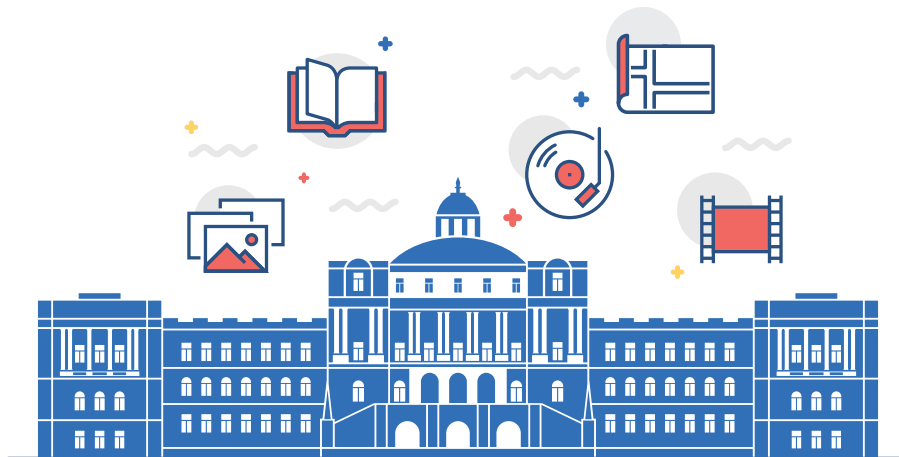
To obtain information about paper application forms, please reach out to our Public Information Office using our [online contact form](#).

HOW WILL YOU SUBMIT A COPY OF YOUR WORK?

You must submit a deposit with your copyright registration application. The term **deposit** refers to a copy of the work for which you are seeking copyright registration. It does not refer to the filing fee, which is also required.

If your work is published, you may have to submit more than one copy and in a specific format, known generally as the **best edition**.

If you are not required to submit a physical deposit, the Office strongly encourages you to upload the deposit in digital form in an [acceptable file type](#) (not on a flash drive or disc). The maximum size for each uploaded file is 500 MB.



The law defines best edition as the edition “the [Library of Congress](#) determines to be most suitable for its purposes.” A basic example is a book with a hard cover rather than a soft cover. The Copyright Office is located within the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULARS AND VIDEO: [COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION \(CIRCULAR 2\)](#), [BEST EDITION OF PUBLISHED COPYRIGHTED WORKS FOR THE COLLECTIONS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS \(CIRCULAR 7B\)](#), [“SUBMITTING YOUR WORK TO THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE: TUTORIAL”](#)

4. Filing Your Application

You've done your research on types of works, publication status, application options, and corresponding registration requirements for deposits and fees. Now what? It's time to submit your application!

An author, the owner of all exclusive rights in the work, or the owner of one or more (but less than all) of the exclusive rights in the work can submit a copyright registration application. The same is true for an authorized agent of any of these parties.

Some forms and sections of certain applications are more complicated than others. We've created several resources to help you while you're filing for copyright registration.



eCO Tutorials

Our [video tutorials](#) explain how to use eCO to register different types of works on various application options. For example, you can watch a twenty-five-minute video on how to submit a Group of Short Online Literary Works (GRTX) application and get a better understanding of the application's specific eligibility requirements. We also have shorter videos, including a ten-minute video covering the Standard Application mentioned in [section 3](#) under "How Many Works Do You Want to Register?"



eCO FAQs and Help Text

Our [Online Registration Help \(eCO FAQs\)](#) webpage is accessible before and while you file an application. While in eCO, you can click on hyperlinked text for an explanation of the information asked for in a specific section of the application. For example, the hyperlink for "YYYY" on the Publication/Completion screen in eCO leads to a webpage explanation of what is meant by the work's "Year of Completion (Year of Creation)."

Publication/Completion

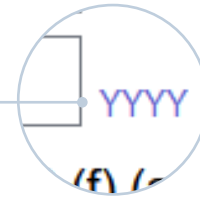
<< Back
Continue >>
Save For Later

Has this work been published?: v

* Year of Completion (Year of Creation): •

If you have **Preregistered** your work under 17 U.S.C 408 (f) (and received a Preregistration number beginning with the PRE prefix), give the Preregistration number here. Click [here](#) for further information about Preregistration.

Preregistration Number:



[View an example of the explanation provided when you click on "YYYY."](#)



Walk Throughs

A **walk through** is a Copyright Office service during which a staff member in the Public Information Office assists an applicant in navigating the online registration application by explaining the application screens in eCO and the types of information required. You may schedule a thirty-minute walk through for one application during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time. Request a walk through using our [online form](#) or by calling (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll-free). The Office will respond within three business days to schedule your appointment.



Technical Assistance

If you need to reset your eCO password or if you experience technical problems with your application, please call our technical help desk at (202) 707-3002 or email them at CSDTech@copyright.gov. If you submit an electronic deposit, please allow up to one hour before receiving an automated email confirming your upload.

5. Moving Through the Process

Examination

After the Copyright Office receives your registration materials, including a completed application, deposits, and the appropriate fee, a registration specialist is assigned to review your submission. As discussed in [section 2](#) under “Learn About Each Stage in the Registration Process,” the specialist will examine your submitted materials to determine whether legal and formal requirements for registration have been met.



The Office Considers Several Questions

Learn more about how specialists arrive at the answers to some important questions and help you create an accurate public record of your copyright.

■ IS THE WORK COPYRIGHTABLE SUBJECT MATTER?

An early step in the examination process is evaluating whether the submitted work is created by a human being and subject matter that falls under one or more categories listed in [section 1](#) under “Copyright Basics,” including compilations and derivative works.

■ IS THE WORK ORIGINAL?

As discussed in [section 1](#) under “Copyright Basics,” originality requires independent creation and sufficient creativity.

Independent Creation

The Office will generally accept an applicant’s representation that the authors named in the application independently created the work unless it’s implausible or contradicted by other information. For example, a specialist may consider information in the registration materials, including the application, deposit copy or copies, any communications between the applicant and the Office relating to the registration, and any other materials that have been submitted to the Office. Information in the Office’s records or known by specialists may also be considered. If it’s determined that the work was not independently created, the specialist may correspond with you or may refuse to register the claim. Learn more about communications with the Office on [the next page](#).

Sufficient Creativity

A work must possess a minimal degree of creativity, but even though the standard is low, it must be met. Examples of material that is not sufficiently creative include facts, words, short phrases, lists of ingredients or contents, single tones or chords, standard shapes, familiar designs, typeface, format and layout, or colors alone.

In General

It’s important to remember that originality is determined on a case-by-case basis. The Office generally does not compare works that have been previously registered or were refused registration. Just because a particular work was registered in the past doesn’t necessarily mean that similar types of works will be registered. Also, certain factors will *never* be considered in the examination of originality, including the following:

- ✗ Novelty or ingenuity
- ✗ Aesthetic value, artistic merit, or intrinsic quality
- ✗ Symbolic meaning and impression
- ✗ Materials used to create the work
- ✗ Commercial appeal or success
- ✗ The overall look and feel of the work
- ✗ The author’s inspiration and intent
- ✗ The author’s skill, experience, and artistic judgment
- ✗ The time, effort, or expense required to create the work
- ✗ Design alternatives


DOES THE APPLICATION CONTAIN BASIC INFORMATION REQUIRED BY COPYRIGHT LAW?

Section 409 of the [Copyright Act](#) includes information that's required on an application, such as

- the name and address of the copyright claimant (copyright owner),*
- the year the work was completed (date of creation), and
- if published, the year, date, and nation of first publication.

**Remember: The claimant address will appear in the [Copyright Public Records System](#). If you have privacy or safety concerns with providing your home address, you may instead provide a business address, post office box, or an address for a third party who is authorized to receive correspondence on your behalf.*

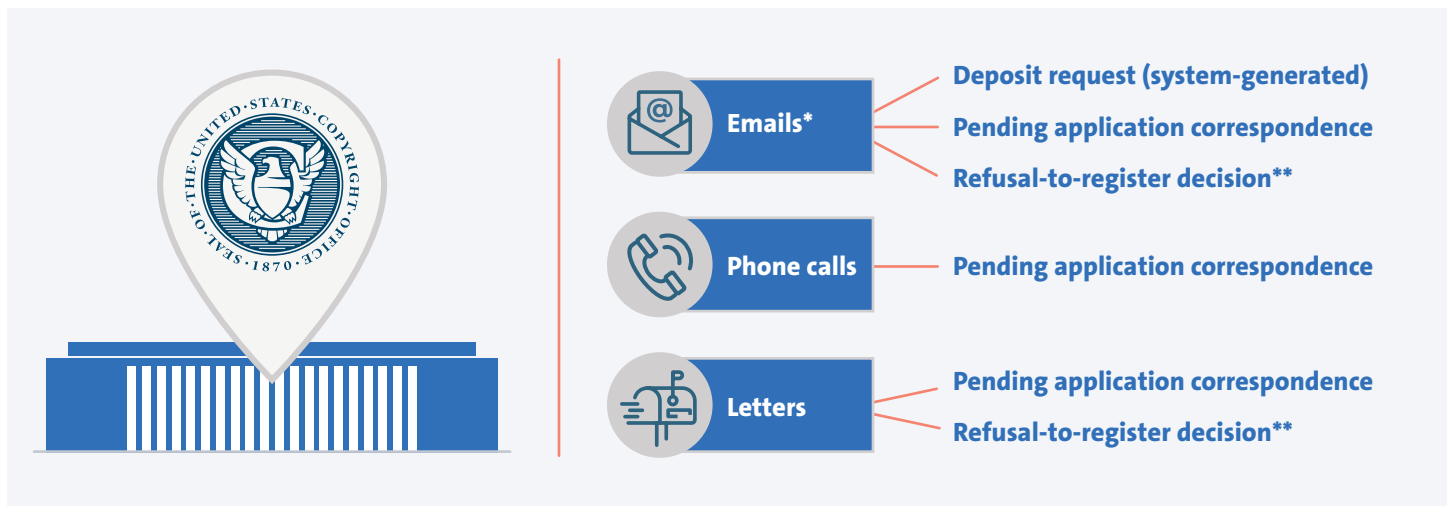
The Office does not ordinarily conduct factual investigations to confirm the truth of facts or statements provided in the application. Any person submitting an application must certify that the information provided in the application is correct to the best of their knowledge. Knowingly submitting false or inaccurate information on an application is a crime punishable under section 506 of the [Copyright Act](#). However, the Office may communicate with an applicant if the application appears to contain inaccurate or erroneous information.

 SOME OFFICE RESOURCES OUTLINE COMMON REGISTRATION ISSUES, PROVIDE FILING TIPS, AND ANSWER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS TO HELP ENSURE A TIMELIER EXAMINATION PROCESS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WANT TO SUBMIT A GROUP REGISTRATION FOR SHORT ONLINE LITERARY WORKS (GRTX), CHECK OUT OUR DEDICATED WEBPAGE AND FAQS HANDOUT: [GRTX WEBPAGE](#), [GRTX FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)

Communicating with the Office

Receiving a registration-related email, phone call, or letter during the registration process is not necessarily a bad thing! Often, a specialist will work with you to resolve issues with the goal of creating an accurate public record of your claims to copyright. This is an important benefit of copyright registration, as discussed in [section 1](#) under “Benefits of Copyright Registration.”

The Office will only use **official channels of communication** during the registration process, as illustrated here:



**If an email address is provided on the application, email will be the Office's primary method of communication.*

***A refusal letter contains the specialist's decision to refuse to register a work and will be sent via email. Physical refusal letters are not mailed unless an email address was not provided on the application.*

The Office will note deadlines to reply but will not issue reminders. You must reply by the deadline provided or the Office will close your application. If you experience extraordinary circumstances that cause you to miss a deadline, you may request that the Office reopen your application by using our [online form](#).

Be aware of scams. If you are not sure whether an email you receive is really from the U.S. Copyright Office, you can check with our Public Information Office.

 FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT OUR CIRCULAR: [DEADLINES FOR REPLYING TO COPYRIGHT OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE \(CIRCULAR 19\)](#)

Application Status and Other Forms

To check the status of a pending application, complete and submit our [status request form](#). If you need to request a change or add a file to a pending application, you can do so using our [contact form](#). The Office will provide additional instructions as needed.

If you receive a refusal to register letter and you wish to request reconsideration of this decision, follow the instructions provided in the letter to start that process. See [section 2](#) under “Copyright Registration Process” and “At a Glance: Copyright Registration” for more information on the voluntary appeals process.

6. After You Have a Registration

Congratulations! You received a copyright registration from the Copyright Office. You may have already received (or will soon be receiving) your official certificate of registration.

Important Information about Your Certificate

Two important dates appear on your registration certificate:

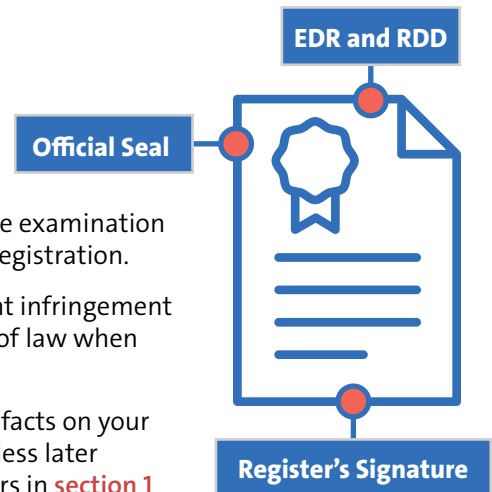
- **Effective date of registration (EDR).** The EDR is the date the Office received your application, deposits, and fee.
- **Registration decision date (RDD).** The RDD is the date the Office completed the examination process and determined the application, deposits, and fee are acceptable for registration.

Both the EDR and RDD are important dates should you ever be a party in a copyright infringement lawsuit or proceeding. Specifically, the EDR and RDD would be reviewed by a court of law when determining whether and when a registration was made.

If you register your work before or within five years of its first publication date, the facts on your certificate and the validity of your copyright are presumed true by courts of law unless later shown to be false. Learn more about this benefit of copyright registration and others in [section 1](#) under “Benefits of Copyright Registration.”

Misplaced your certificate or need another copy? Contact the Office by mail or at copycerts@copyright.gov to request additional certificates, which will have the seal and signature of the Register of Copyrights and are as legally valid as your original certificate.

Be aware of scams. If you are not sure whether your registration certificate is authentic, contact our Public Information Office.



LEARN MORE ABOUT REQUESTING ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRATION IN OUR CIRCULAR: [OBTAINING ACCESS TO AND COPIES OF COPYRIGHT OFFICE RECORDS AND DEPOSITS \(CIRCULAR 6\)](#)

Supplementary Registration

If you notice an error in your registration or you wish to clarify information, you may file a supplementary application. A supplementary registration does not cancel or replace the original registration or the registration number, nor does it change or remove the information contained in the original registration. Instead, it augments the information in the original registration.

In general, a supplementary registration has some limitations. For example:

- Do *not* use a supplementary registration to correct minor errors such as typos or adding articles “a,” “an,” or “the.”
- Do use a supplementary registration if you want to correct information in the original registration that was incorrect at the time that registration was made.



LEARN MORE ABOUT WHEN SUBMITTING A SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTRATION IS APPROPRIATE AND HOW TO SUBMIT ONE IN OUR CIRCULAR AND VIDEO: [SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTRATION \(CIRCULAR 8\)](#), [“SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTRATION: TUTORIAL”](#)

Copyright Enforcement at the Office

In general, copyright infringement occurs when a copyright-protected work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or used to prepare a derivative work without a copyright owner's permission. The **Copyright Claims Board (CCB)**, located within the Copyright Office, provides a voluntary, virtual forum to resolve copyright disputes up to \$30,000 in total damages. It is intended to be a streamlined, less expensive alternative to federal court, making it an accessible option for all copyright owners.

In federal courts, you normally need a registration or a refused application from the Office before you can file a copyright infringement lawsuit. To bring a claim with the CCB, you must either

- have a registration from the Office for the work or works at issue, or
- have submitted an application to register the work or works.

If your application is later refused, the CCB will dismiss the claim without prejudice (meaning that you can then file it in federal court).



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CCB ON ITS WEBSITE AND THROUGH THESE RESOURCES: [CCB FAQs](#), [CCB HANDBOOK](#), LEARNING ENGINE SERIES: [“THE COPYRIGHT CLAIMS BOARD”](#)

Some Final Good News

Once a registration is completed, there is no need to renew it at a later date. You don't have to take any actions or pay fees to keep your registration in the Copyright Office's records. Your creative work does not enter the public domain until its full copyright term has expired, and your registration record can serve as proof of this information.

Interested in Learning More?

INVITE THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE TO SPEAK AT YOUR EVENT

The Copyright Office is happy to send our employees to speak at your event on a variety of topics, including copyright basics, how to register your work, the Copyright Office, the CCB, copyright information for specific creators (such as photographers, musicians, writers, etc.), and more. Submit a request using our [online speaker request form](#).

ATTEND AN UPCOMING OR RECORDED OFFICE EVENT

While we can help you plan a tailored webinar, it's also possible we have an upcoming webinar that addresses your questions or concerns. Check out our [Events](#) webpage for more information and to sign up for our copyright events email list. You can also find links to recordings of past events.

BROWSE OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Our [YouTube channel](#) contains a variety of videos, including our Learning Engine series, which introduces copyright concepts and the Copyright Office to those who may be new to the topic or want to learn more. While several videos have been included throughout this toolkit, there are many more to explore!



Resource Guide



WEBPAGE
HIGHLIGHTS



COPYRIGHT
LAW



CONNECT
WITH US

	RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION
	Engage Your Creativity copyright.gov/engage/	Designed for specific creators—musicians, photographers, writers, and visual and graphic artists. Each page contains information and resources to help you engage your creativity.
	Circulars copyright.gov/circs/	Published by the Copyright Office to provide up-to-date and authoritative information on copyright concepts and Office procedures to a general audience.
	Copyright Public Records Portal copyright.gov/public-records/	Your starting point for finding copyright records held by the Copyright Office. You can search our online records and view educational videos about our searching services.
	Registration Portal copyright.gov/registration/	Your starting point for all things related to copyright registration, including the Electronic Copyright Office (eCO) Registration System.
	Tutorials copyright.gov/help/tutorials.html	Video tutorials related to the Office's services, including navigating eCO. These can also be found on the Copyright Office's YouTube channel, along with our Learning Engine video series.
	Copyright in Spanish El derecho de autor en español copyright.gov/espanol/	<p>Our Public Information Office has staff available to help you in Spanish, including by phone and email. You can also review our circulars and other educational materials in Spanish.</p> <p>Nuestra Oficina de Información Pública cuenta con personal disponible para ayudarlo en español, incluso por teléfono y correo electrónico. También puede revisar nuestras circulares y otros materiales educativos en español.</p>
	Copyright Law and Policy copyright.gov/title37/ copyright.gov/comp3/ copyright.gov/policy/	<p>The Copyright Office offers many law and policy resources.</p> <p>Copyright Office regulations span a wide range of topics and provide the public with a well-functioning copyright system.</p> <p>The <i>Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices, Third Edition</i>, is the administrative manual explaining the Office's many practices and procedures.</p> <p>The Copyright Office frequently issues policy studies and reports on important copyright issues, such as artificial intelligence. You can learn more about active studies and explore previous reports.</p>
	Subscriptions copyright.gov/subscribe	You can subscribe to our official blog, <i>Copyright: Creativity at Work</i> , and sign up for NewsNet, a digital newsletter that includes alerts on new Copyright Office announcements.

Copyright

United States Copyright Office

United States Copyright Office
Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20559-6000

(202) 707-3000 or
1 (877) 476-0778 (toll-free)

copyright.gov



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