

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. (See below.)

Here are the options for registering your copyright, beginning with the fastest and most cost-effective method.

OPTION 1: Online Registration

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 of \$35
- 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 using eCO and save money even if you will submit a hard-copy deposit.

Basic claims include (1) a single work; (2) multiple unpublished works if they are all by the same author(s) and owned by the same claimant; and (3) multiple published works if they are all first published together in the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*.



OPTION 2: Registration with Fill-In Form CO

The next best option for registering basic claims is the fill-in Form CO. Simply complete Form CO on your personal computer, print it out, and mail it along with a check or money order and your deposit. The fee for a basic registration on Form CO is \$50. To access Form CO, go to the Copyright Office website and click on *Forms*.

OPTION 3: Registration with Paper Forms

Paper versions of Form TX (literary works); Form VA (visual arts works); Form PA (performing arts works, including motion pictures); Form SR (sound recordings); and Form SE (single serials) are still available. The fee for a basic registration using one of these forms is \$65 payable by check or money order. Form CON (continuation sheet for applications) is also still available on paper. These paper forms are not accessible on the Copyright Office website; however, staff will send them to you by postal mail upon request. Remember that online registration through eCO and fill-in Form CO (see above) can be used for the categories of works applicable to Forms TX, VA, PA, SR, and SE.

Types of 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 D-VH for registration of vessel hull designs
- Form MW for registration of mask works
- Form GATT 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, including Form GR/PPh (published photographs); Form GR/CP (contributions to periodicals); Form SE/Group (serials); and Form G/DN (daily newspapers and newsletters).

To access these forms, go to the Copyright Office website and click on *Forms* or call the Copyright Office. Informational circulars about these types of applications and current registration fees are available on the Copyright Office website or by phone.

For Further Information

By Internet

Circulars, announcements, regulations, certain application forms, and other materials are available from the Copyright Office website at www.copyright.gov. To send an email communication, click on *Contact Us* at the bottom of the home page.

By Telephone

For general information about copyright, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000. 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. If you want to request paper application forms or circulars, call the Forms and Publications Hotline at (202) 707-9100 and leave a recorded message.

By Regular Mail

Write to

*Library of Congress
Copyright Office—COPUBS
101 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20559-6304*

NOTE: We now limit the quantity of forms that we mail to two of each kind. We encourage you to register online at www.copyright.gov.