

COPYRIGHTS

This document is intended to provide an overview of the basics of copyright, the steps required to register your copyright, and the deposit requirements. When available, a link to the pertinent section of the United States Copyright Office is included. The homepage of the Office is <http://www.copyright.gov/>.

Copyright Basics

Registering a Copyright

Deposit

Copyright Basics: <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf>

Copyright protects the expression of an idea, not the idea itself, in contrast to a patent, which protects an idea and its implementation. The expression must be in some retrievable form such as handwriting, set in type, or recorded on storage media. Copyright covers the expression in literary or musical works, computer programs, video or motion pictures, sound recording, photographs, and sculpture.

1. The owner of the copyrighted work has the exclusive right to control copying, adaptations, and distribution of copies, public performances and public displays.
2. In the "fair use doctrine," others may use a copyrighted work in limited ways for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship or research without infringing.
3. Unlike with patents, copyright protection exists the moment you fix your work in a retrievable form, however registration with the US Copyright office affords many protections.
4. Copyrights are rather easy and inexpensive to register and can be done electronically or by mailing in a form found on the US Copyright Office Website.

Registering a Copyright: <http://www.copyright.gov/eco/>

Filing with an eCO account is the easiest and least expensive method, however it does require you to set up an account with the Copyright Office.

The second best way to file is to fill out "Form CO" found at the above website, and mail it in with the required fee. DO NOT print out a blank "Form CO" and then fill it out, information must be entered by computer so the barcode system works properly. Do not submit a photocopy of form CO.

The legacy forms are also available on the copyright office website, however using these is the most expensive and slowest method of registering your copyright.

Deposit: <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ07d.pdf>

You must include a copy of the work you want registered. Typically it is one copy for unpublished works and two copies for published works.

Any work published in the United States is subject to the mandatory deposit requirement, whether or not registration is desired.