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101 General [R-14]

35 U.S.C. 122. Confidential status of applications.

Applications for patents shall be kept in confidence by the Patent and Trademark Office and no information concerning the same given without authority of the applicant or owner unless necessary to carry out the provisions of any Act of Congress or in such special circumstances as may be determined by the Commissioner.

18 U.S.C. 2071. Concealment, removal, or mutilation generally.

(a) Whoever willfully and unlawfully conceals, removes, mutilates, obliterates, or destroys, or attempts to do so, or, with intent to do so takes and carries away any record, proceeding, map, book, paper, document, or other thing, filed or deposited with any clerk or officer of any court of the United States, or in any public office, or with any judicial or public officer of the United States, shall be fined not more than \$2,000 or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.

(b) Whoever, having the custody of any such record, proceeding, map, book, document, paper, or other thing, willfully and unlawfully conceals, removes, mutilates, obliterates, falsifies, or destroys the same, shall be fined not more than \$2,000 or imprisoned not more than three years, or both; and shall forfeit his office and be disqualified from holding any office under the United States.

37 CFR 1.14. Patent application preserved in secrecy.

(a) Except as provided in § 1.11(b) pending patent applications are preserved in secrecy. No information will be given by the Office respecting the filing by any particular person of an application for a patent, the pendency of any particular case before it, or the subject matter of any particular application, nor will access be given to or copies furnished of any pending application or papers relating thereto, without written authority in that particular application from the applicant or his assignee or attorney or agent of record, unless the application has been identified by serial number in a published patent document or the United States of America has been indicated as a Designated State in a published international application, in which case status information such as whether it is pending, abandoned or patented may be supplied, or unless it shall be necessary to the proper conduct of business before the Office or as provided by this part. Where an application has been patented, the patent number and issue date may also be supplied.

All Patent and Trademark Office employees are legally obligated to preserve pending applications for patents in confidence. 35 U.S.C. 122 and 18 U.S.C. 2071 impose statutory requirements which cover the handling of patent applications and related documents. Suspension, removal, and even criminal penalties may be imposed for violations of these statutes.

In order to provide prompt and orderly service to the public, application files must be readily available to authorized Patent and Trademark Office employees at all times. Accordingly, in carrying or transporting applications and related papers, care must be exercised by Patent and Trademark Office employees, especially in corridors and elevators, to insure that applications and related papers are always under employee surveillance and control. Application files must not be displayed or handled so as to permit perusal or inspection by any unauthorized member of the public.

Interoffice mail must be sent in appropriate envelopes.

No part of any application or paper related thereto should be reproduced or copied except for official purposes.

No patent application or related document may be removed from the premises occupied by the Patent and Trademark Office, except for handling as required by the issue process, unless specifically authorized by the Commissioner. If such authorization is given, the employee having custody will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality and otherwise conforming with the requirements of law.

Applications must not be placed in desk drawers or other locations where they might be easily overlooked or are not visible to authorized personnel.

Whenever an application is removed from the operating area having custody of the file, a charge on the PALM system must be properly and promptly made.

Papers arriving within the groups must be properly and promptly placed within the appropriate files. If papers are received with faulty identifications, this should be corrected at once. If papers are received at a destination for which they are not intended due to faulty identification or routing, appropriate corrective action should be taken at once to insure the prompt receipt thereof at the intended destination. See MPEP § 508.01 and § 508.03.

All Patent and Trademark Office employees should bear in mind at all times the critical importance of insuring the confidentiality and accessibility of patent application files and related documents, and in addition to the specific procedures referred to above, should take all appropriate action to that end.

Examiners, classifiers and other Patent and Trademark Office employees who assist public searchers by outlining or indicating a field of search, should also bear in mind the critical importance of insuring the confidentiality of information revealed by a searcher when requesting field of search assistance. See MPEP § 1701. Statutory requirements and curbs regarding the use of information obtained by an employee through Government employment are imposed by 15 U.S.C. 15(b) and 18 U.S.C. 1905.

Examiners, while holding interviews with attorneys and

applicants, should be careful to prevent exposures of files and drawings of other applicants.

Extreme care should be taken to prevent inadvertent disclosure of the filing date or serial number of any application filed by another party. This applies not only to Office actions but also to notes (usually in pencil) in the file wrapper.

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>TELEPHONE AND IN-PERSON REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING PENDING OR ABANDONED APPLICATIONS

Normally no information concerning pending or abandoned patent applications (except reissue applications and reexamination proceedings) may be given to the public without the authorization of the applicant, the assignee of record, or the attorney or agent of record. See 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. Other exceptions are specified in 37 CFR 1.14.

When handling an incoming telephone call or an in-person request for information regarding a pending or abandoned patent application, no information should be disclosed until the identity of the requester can be adequately verified as set forth below. Particular care must be exercised when a request is made for the issue date or patent number assigned to a pending patent application. If the issue date is later than the current date (i.e., the date of the request), such information may be given only to the applicant, or the assignee of record, or the attorney or agent of record.

The following procedure should be followed before any information about a pending or abandoned patent application is given over the telephone:

- 1) Obtain the caller's full name, the application number and the caller's telephone number. Ask the caller if there is an attorney or agent of record.
 - a) If there is an attorney or agent of record, ask for his or her registration number. If the registration number is not known, ask for the name of the attorney or agent of record. Inform caller that an attorney or agent of record will be called after verification of his/her identity and that information concerning the application will be released to that attorney or agent.
 - b) If there is no attorney or agent of record, ask the caller why he or she is entitled to information concerning the application. If the caller identifies himself or herself as an applicant or an authorized representative of the assignee of record, ask for the correspondence address of record and inform caller that his or her association with the application must be verified before any information concerning the application can be released and that he or she will be called back. If the caller indicates that he or she is not an applicant or an authorized representative of the assignee of record, inform caller that no information concerning that application will be released.
- 2) Then, verify that information concerning the application

can be released by checking PALM or the application file.

- a) If the caller stated there was an attorney or agent of record, the 2954 PALM screen should be used to verify the registration number given or to obtain the registration number of an attorney or agent of record. Then, the 3552 PALM screen (using the registration number) should be used to obtain a telephone number for an attorney or agent of record.
 - b) If the caller identified himself or herself as an applicant or an authorized representative of the assignee of record, the 2950 PALM screen should be used to verify the correspondence address of record. The 2954 PALM screen should be used to determine if there is an attorney or agent of record. If there is an attorney or agent of record, their telephone number can be obtained from the 3552 PALM screen.
- 3) Then, return the call using the telephone number as specified below.
- a) If an attorney or agent is of record in the application, information concerning the application should only be released by calling the attorney's or agent's telephone number obtained from the 3552 PALM screen.
 - b) If the applicant or an authorized representative of the assignee of record requests information, and there is no attorney or agent of record and the correspondence address of record has been verified, information concerning the application can be released to the caller using the telephone number given by the caller. If the caller's association with the application cannot be verified, no information concerning the application will be released. However, the caller should be informed that the caller's association with the application could not be verified.
- In handling an in-person request, ask the requester to wait while verifying their identification as in (2) above.<

102 Information as to Status of an Application [R-14]

Status information of an application means only the following information:

1. that the application is abandoned, or
2. that the application is pending, or
3. that the application was issued as a patent and the patent number, issue date and classification of such patent.

PATENTED

If an application on which status information is requested has matured into a patent, the fact that the application is patented and the patent number, issue date and classification relative to the application may be given to anyone.

PENDING OR ABANDONED, NO REFERENCE

If an application is in pending or abandoned status and has not been referred to by number and date in a United States or foreign patent or **>published<* application, status information indicating only that the application is pending or abandoned may be given only to Patent and Trademark Office employees and parties of record such as:

- (a) The applicant.
- (b) The attorney or agent *of record* in the application.
- (c) The assignee of *record* in the Patent and Trademark Office.
- (d) Anyone who has and furnishes written authority from a, b, or c.

>A non-signing inventor (37 CFR 1.47) is entitled to status information only after the application is accepted. See MPEP § 409.03(i).<

REFERENCED APPLICATION

If an application has been referred to by number and date in a United States or foreign patent or published application, status information may be given to Patent and Trademark Office employees and to anyone who furnishes the Patent and Trademark Office with a written request citing the application in question by serial number and date of filing. The source document (a United States or foreign patent or published application) must be identified in the written request by the country, number and date of such patent or application.

REFERENCED APPLICATION, SOURCE DOCUMENT NOT PRESENTED

If a written request for status information is presented without a copy of the source document, Patent and Trademark Office employees will check to see that the source document and the application in question are properly identified and that the source document refers to the application in question before supplying the status information. Requests for information not accompanied with a copy of the source document may require the Office to obtain a copy of the source document for verification before status information can be supplied. This may result in some delay before the desired status information can be forwarded to the requester.

REFERENCED APPLICATION, SOURCE DOCUMENT PRESENTED

If a copy of the source document is presented, the Office will verify that the United States application in question is cited therein. After checking, status information may be immediately given and the source document copy may be returned to the requester. In either case, at the time the status information is supplied, the person supplying the status information marks the request "Information furnished", the date and his or her name. The request is then placed in the file wrapper or forwarded to the appropriate area (group art unit, abandoned files, etc.) for inclusion in the file wrapper as part of the official record of the application. The applicant is not consulted. See MPEP § 203.08.

STATUS LOCATION INFORMATION FOR OFFICE PERSONNEL

When it is desired to determine the current location or status of an application, Office personnel should use their PALM terminal.

However, inasmuch as all 06 series applications prior to 714,000 are not currently in the PALM system, Office personnel requesting status/location information on those applications determined not to be in the PALM system will be requested to contact the ***>File Information Unit<* at *>308-2733<* where the numerical index records of the above mentioned applications are maintained.

103 Right of Public to Inspect Patent Files and Some Application Files [R-14]

37 CFR 1.11. Files open to the public.

(a) After a patent has been issued or a statutory invention registration has been published, the specification, drawings, and all papers relating to the case in the file of the patent or statutory invention registration are open to inspection by the public, and copies may be obtained upon paying the fee therefor. See § 2.27 for trademark files.

(b) All reissue applications, all applications in which the Office has accepted a request to open the complete application to inspection by the public, and related papers in the application file, are open to inspection by the public, and copies may be furnished upon paying the fee therefor. The filing of reissue applications will be announced in the *Official Gazette*. The announcement shall include at least the filing date, reissue application and original patent numbers, title, class and subclass, name of the inventor, name of the owner of record, name of the attorney or agent of record, and examining group to which the reissue application is assigned.

(c) All requests for reexamination for which the fee under § 1.20(c) has been paid, will be announced in the *Official Gazette*. Any reexaminations at the initiative of the Commissioner pursuant to § 1.520 will also be announced in the *Official Gazette*. The announcement shall include at least the date of the request, if any, the reexamination request control number or the Commissioner initiated order control number, patent number, title, class and subclass, name of the inventor, name of the patent owner of record, and the examining group to which the reexamination is assigned.

(d) All papers or copies thereof relating to a reexamination proceeding which have been entered of record in the patent or reexamination file are open to inspection by the general public, and copies may be furnished upon paying the fee therefor.

(e) The file of any interference involving a patent, a statutory invention registration, or an application on which a patent *>has been<* issued or which has been published as a statutory invention registration, is open to inspection by the public, and copies may be obtained upon paying the fee *>therefore<*, if: (1) the interference has terminated, or (2) an award of priority or judgment has been entered as to all parties and all counts.

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37 CFR 1.14 Patent applications preserved in secrecy.

(e) Any request by a member of the public seeking access to, or copies of, any pending or abandoned application preserved in secrecy pursuant to paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, or **any papers relating thereto, must*

(1) be in the form of a petition and be accompanied by the petition fee set forth in § 1.17(i)>(1)<, or

(2) include written authority granting access to the member of the public in that particular application from the applicant or the applicant's assignee or attorney or agent of record.

>Note,< See § 1.612(a) for access by an interference party to a pending or abandoned application.

[Para. (e) amended, 54 FR 6893, Feb. 15, 1989, effective April 17, 1989]

>PETITION FOR ACCESS

Any interested party may file a petition, accompanied by the petition fee, to the Commissioner for access to an application. Inasmuch as the Post Office address is necessary for the complete identification of the petitioner, it should always be included complete with Zip Code number. Petitions for access are addressed by a Special Program Examiner in the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Patents.

The petition may be filed either with proof of service of copy upon the applicant, assignee of record, or attorney or agent of record in the application to which access is sought, or the petition may be filed in duplicate, in which case the duplicate copy will be sent by the Special Program Examiner to the applicant, assignee of record, or attorney or agent of record in the application (hereinafter "applicant"). A separate petition, with fee, should be filed for each application to which access is desired. Each petition should show not only why access is desired, but also why petitioner believes he or she is entitled to access. The applicant will normally be given a limited period such as three weeks within which to state any objection to the granting of the petition for access and reasons why it should be denied. If applicant states that he or she has no objection to the requested access, the petition will be granted. If objection is raised or applicant does not respond, the petition will be decided on the record before the Special Program Examiner. A determination will be made whether "special circumstances" are present which warrant a grant of access under 35 U.S.C. 122. See below when the application is the basis of a claim for benefit of an earlier filing date under 35 U.S.C. 120 or the application is incorporated by reference in a United States patent.

ACCESS WHERE< PATENT CLAIMS 35 U.S.C.120 BENEFIT

Whenever a patent relies upon the filing date of an earlier but still pending application, the public is entitled to see the portion of the earlier application that relates to the common subject matter, and also what prosecution, if any, was had in the earlier application of subject matter claimed in the patent. **>*In re Dreyfus*, 137 USPQ 475 (Comm'r Pat. 1961). If applicant objects to the petition for access, he or she must submit along with the objection two sets of a copy of the portion of the application that relates to the common subject matter including all materials relating to the prosecution in the application of the subject matter claimed in the patent. Failure to submit these materials will result in the entire application file being made available to petitioner. The Office will not attempt to separate the noted materials from the remainder of the application.

Compare *In re Marsh Engineering Co.*, 1913 C.D. 183 (Comm'r. Pats. 1913).<

>ACCESS WHERE APPLICATION INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE IN A UNITED STATES PATENT

The incorporation by reference of an application in a printed United States patent constitutes a special circumstance under 35 U.S.C.122 warranting that access of the original disclosure of the application be granted. The incorporation by reference will be interpreted as a waiver of confidentiality of only the original disclosure as filed, and not the entire application file. *In re Gallo*, 231 USPQ 496 (Comm'r Pat. 1986). If applicant objects to access to the entire application file, two copies of the information incorporated by reference must be submitted along with the objection. Failure to provide the material within the period provided will result in the entire application (including prosecution) being made available to petitioner. The Office will not attempt to separate the noted materials from the remainder of the application. Compare *In re Marsh Engineering Co.*, 1913 C.D. 183 (Comm'r Pat. 1913).<

APPLICATION AT BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

The Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences also handles all petitions for access to applications involved in an interference or having an interference background, see 37 CFR 1.612.

PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

If a defensive publication, an abstract or an abbreviature has been published, the entire application is available to the public for inspection and obtaining copies, see MPEP § 711.06.

REISSUE APPLICATIONS

37 CFR 1.11(b) opens all reissue applications filed after March 1, 1977 to inspection by the general public. 37 CFR 1.11(b) also provides for announcement of the filings of reissue applications in the *Official Gazette*. This announcement will give interested members of the public an opportunity to submit to the examiner information pertinent to patentability of the reissue application.

37 CFR 1.11(b) is applicable only to those reissue applications filed on or after March 1, 1977. Those reissue applications previously on file will not be automatically open to inspection but a liberal policy will be followed by the Special Program Examiner in granting petitions for access to such applications.

For those reissue applications filed on or after March 1, 1977, the following procedure will be observed:

(1) The filing of reissue applications will be announced in the *Official Gazette* and will include certain identifying data as specified in 37 CFR 1.11(b). Any member of the general public may request access to a particular reissue application filed after March 1, 1977. Since no record of such request is intended to be kept, an oral request will suffice. In the Record Room only the

regular application charge card need be completed and submitted. The charge card will not be made part of a pending or abandoned reissue application.

(2) The pending reissue application files will be maintained in the examining groups and inspection thereof will be supervised by group personnel. Although no general limit is placed on the amount of time spent reviewing the files, the Office may impose limitations, if necessary. No access will be permitted while the application is actively being processed.

(3) Where the reissue application has left the examining group for administrative processing, requests for access should be directed to the appropriate supervisory personnel in the division or branch where the application is currently located.

(4) Requests for copies of papers in the reissue application file must be in writing addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231 and may be either mailed or delivered to the Office mail room. The price for a copy of an application as filed is set forth in 37 CFR 1.19(a)(3). Since no useful purpose is seen for retaining such written request for copies of papers in reissue applications, they should be destroyed after the order has been completed.

REQUEST FOR REEXAMINATION

All requests for reexamination and related patent files are available to the public. An announcement of the filing of each request in which the entire fee has been paid and of each reexamination ordered at the initiative of the Commissioner under 37 CFR 1.520 will be published in the Official Gazette. Procedures for access and obtaining copies are the same as those for reissue applications indicated above. See also MPEP § 2232.

37 CFR 1.14. Patent applications preserved in secrecy.

(b) Except as provided in § 1.11(b) abandoned applications are likewise not open to public inspection, except that if an application referred to in a U.S. patent, or in an application in which the applicant has filed an authorization to open the complete application to the public, is abandoned and is available, it may be inspected or copies obtained by any person on written request, without notice to the applicant.

(d) Any decision of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, or any decision of the Commissioner on petition, not otherwise open to public inspection shall be published or made available for public inspection if: (1) The Commissioner believes the decision involves an interpretation of patent laws or regulations that would be of important precedent value; and (2) the applicant, or any party involved in the interference, does not within two months after being notified of the intention to make the decision public, object in writing on the ground that the decision discloses a trade secret or other confidential information. If a decision discloses such information, the applicant or party shall identify the deletions in the text of the decision considered necessary to protect the information. If it is considered the entire decision must be withheld from the public to protect such information, the applicant or party must explain why. Applicants or parties will be given time, not less than twenty days, to request reconsideration and seek court review before any portions of decisions are made public over their objection. See § 2.27 for trademark applications.

>ABANDONED APPLICATION REFERENCED IN U.S. PATENT

Under 37 CFR § 1.14(b), an abandoned application referred to in the text of a U.S. patent is open to public inspection. Note that the status of an application referred to in the text of a U.S. patent may initially be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR § 1.14(a). Under 37 CFR § 1.14(a), any member of the public is entitled to know the current status (i.e., pending, abandoned, or patented) of an application identified by serial number in a published patent document or the United States has been indicated as a Designated State in the published international application. Note that 37 CFR § 1.14(a) is not limited to a U.S. patent. Status information may be supplied if the application is identified in any published patent document (world wide). 37 CFR § 1.14(b), however, is limited to a U.S. patent. Access to an abandoned application is available to any member of the public only if the application is referenced in a U.S. patent.

An abandoned file referenced in a U.S. patent may be ordered by any member of the public through the File Information Unit. Orders for files stored in repositories within the Crystal City (Arlington, Virginia) area are normally filled within 4 to 8 hours. Orders for files stored at the Federal Records Center in Suitland, Maryland are normally filled within 4 to 5 days. An abandoned file received by a member of the public must be returned to the charge counter in the File Information Unit before closing the same day it is received.

37 CFR § 1.14(b) allows public inspection of abandoned applications referred to in defensive publications.

Access to abandoned patent applications forming a part of a File Wrapper Continuation (FWC) application is governed by 37 CFR § 1.14(b). Further, under 37 CFR § 1.62(f) where access is granted to such an abandoned application, access may also be granted to the FWC application.

37 CFR 1.14(d) makes explicit the conditions under which significant decisions of the Patent and Trademark Office will be made available to the public, and includes reference to decisions of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences and the Commissioner.

The section is applicable to decisions deemed by the Commissioner to involve an interpretation of patent laws or regulations that would be of significant precedent value, where such decisions are contained in either pending or abandoned applications or in interference files not otherwise open to the public. It is applicable whether or not the decision is a final decision of the Patent and Trademark Office.

37 CFR 1.14(d) is considered to place a duty on the Patent and Trademark Office to identify significant decisions and to take the steps necessary to inform the public of such decisions, by publication of such decisions, in whole or in part. It is anticipated, however, that no more than a few dozen decisions per year will be deemed of sufficient importance to warrant publication under the authority of this section.

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37 CFR 1.15 Requests for identifiable records.

(a) Requests for records, not disclosed to the public as part of the regular informational activity of the Patent and Trademark Office and

which are not otherwise dealt with in *>the< rules in this part **>shall be made in writing, with the envelope and the letter clearly marked "Freedom of Information Request." Each such request, so marked, should be submitted by mail addressed to the "Patent and Trademark Office, Freedom of Information Request Control Desk, Box 8, Washington, D.C. 20231," or hand delivered to the Office of the Solicitor, Patent and Trademark Office, Arlington, Virginia. The request will be processed in accordance with the procedures set forth in Part 4 of Title 15, Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) Any person whose request for records has been initially denied in whole or in part, or has not been timely determined, may submit a written appeal as provided in § 4.8 of Title 15, Code of Federal Regulations.

(c) Procedures applicable in the event of service of process or in connection with testimony of employees on official matters and production of official documents of the Patent and Trademark Office in civil legal proceedings not involving the United States shall be those established in parts 15 and 15a of Title 15, Code of Federal Regulations.<

[Amended 53 FR 47685, Nov. 25, 1988, effective Dec. 30, 1988]

ACCESSIBILITY OF NON-FINAL DISCOVERY OPINIONS AND ORDERS ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

A number of inquiries have been received from the patent bar and other interested persons relating to discovery practice in interferences before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences. The inquiries indicate a need for making available to the public non-final Board opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of discovery matters before the Board. While non-final opinions need not be made available to the public [5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2)], in order to satisfy the need, copies of non-final opinions issued by the Board will be kept in a file in the Service Branch of the Board in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Crystal Gateway 2, 1225 Jefferson Davis Highway, Room 10C01, Arlington, Virginia). Opinions in the file may be reviewed by the public during normal business hours (8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.). Copies of opinions may be made by the public on reproducing equipment** or copies may be ordered at **>the cost set forth in 37 CFR 1.19(a)(3)<.

In view of the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR *>1.14(a)<, a consent will be obtained by the Office from all parties in an interference before an opinion issued in connection with the interference is placed in the file if the interference file is not otherwise available to the public. Preliminary indications are that the parties and their counsel generally consent.

In order to obtain optimum dissemination of the information contained in the file, opinions placed therein will be indexed according to specific topics. Copies of the index will be updated from time to time as the need occurs. Specific questions relating to the index and file may be directed to the Patent Interference Examiners.

The initial index is as follows:

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- 1.00 Discovery in general [37 CFR § 1.673]
- 1.10 Requests and service under 37 CFR 1.673
- 1.20 Requests under 37 CFR 1.687(b)

- 1.30 Motions for additional discovery under 37 CFR 1.687(c)
 - 1.31 Related to derivation
 - 1.32 Related to abandonment, suppression, and concealment
 - 1.33 Related to iniquitable conduct
 - 1.34 Other
- 1.40 Motions under 37 CFR 1.673(c)
- 1.50 Action under 37 CFR 1.616
- 1.60 Agreements under 37 CFR 1.687(d)

104 Power to Inspect Application [R-14]

No person but the applicant (any one of joint applicants), applicant's legal representative, the assignee whose assignment is of record, or the attorney, agent or associate attorney >or agent< of record will be permitted to have access to the file of any pending application, except as provided for under 37 CFR 1.11(b) or under the interference rules, unless written authority from one of the above indicated parties, identifying the application to be inspected and the name of the person authorized to have access, is made of record, or upon the written order of the Commissioner, which will also become a part of the record of the case.

>A non-signing inventor (37 CFR 1.47) is entitled to access an application only after the application is accepted. See MPEP § 409.03(i).

A person acting in a representative capacity under 37 CFR 1.34(a) may not execute a power to inspect an application. For a discussion of power of attorney in an application see MPEP § 402.<

Approval by the primary examiner of a power to inspect is *not* required. The clerk of the group to which the application is assigned ascertains that the power is properly signed by one of the above indicated parties, and if acceptable, enters *>it< into the file. If the power to inspect is unacceptable, notification of non-entry is written by the clerk to the person who signed the power.

When a power to inspect is received while a file is under the jurisdiction of a service branch, such as the Customer Services Division, the Service Branch of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, and the Patent Issue Division, the question of permission to inspect is decided by the head of the branch who, if he or she approves, indicates the approval directly on the power.

A "power to inspect" is, in effect, the same as a "power to inspect and make copies."

Where an applicant relied upon his or her application as a means to interfere with a competitor's business or customers, permission to inspect the application may be given the competitor by the Commissioner. (*Ex Parte Bonnie-B Co. Inc.*, 1923 C.D. 42; 313 O.G. 453 >(Comm'r Pat. 1922)<.) Such permission is via petition for access under 37 CFR 1.14*>(e)<.

An unrestricted power to inspect given by an applicant is, under existing practice, recognized as good until and unless rescinded. The same is true in the case of one given by the attorney or assignee so long as such attorney or assignee retains his or her connection with the application.

Permission to inspect given by the Commissioner, however, is not of a continuing nature, since the conditions that justified

the permit to inspect when given may not obtain at a later date.

ACCESS TO PATENT APPLICATION AND INTERFERENCE FILES

In order to insure that access to patent applications, other than reissue applications filed after March 1, 1977, and interference files is given only to persons who are entitled thereto or who are specially authorized to have access under 37 CFR 1.14 and to insure also that the file record identifies any such specially authorized person who has been given access to a file, the following practice will be observed by all personnel of the Patent and Trademark Office:

1. Access, as provided for in the Rules of Practice, will be given on oral request to any applicant, patentee, assignee, or attorney or agent of record in an application or patent only upon proof of identity or upon recognition based on personal acquaintance.

2. Where a power of attorney or authorization of agent was given to a registered firm prior to July 2, 1971, access will be given upon oral request as in paragraph 1 above to any registered member or employee of the firm who has signatory power for the firm.

3. Unregistered employees of attorneys or agents, public stenographers, and all other persons not within the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 above will be given access only upon presentation of a written authorization for access (power to inspect) signed by a person specified in paragraph 1 above, which authorization will be entered as a part of the official file. The power to inspect must specifically name the person who is entitled to inspect and copy the application. An associate or representative of the named person is not entitled to access to the application on behalf of the authorized person. Further, the power to inspect must specifically identify the application by serial number and be limited to a single application.

105 Disbarred Attorney Cannot Inspect

Patent and Trademark Office employees are forbidden to hold either oral or written communication with an attorney who has been suspended or excluded from practice regarding an application unless it be one in which said attorney is the applicant. Power to inspect given to such an attorney will not be accepted.

106 Control of Inspection by Assignee [R-14]

The assignee of record of the entire interest in an application may intervene in the prosecution of the case, appointing an attorney of his or her own choice. (See 37 CFR 3.71.) Such intervention, however, does not exclude the applicant from access to the application to see that it is being prosecuted properly, unless the assignee makes specific request to that effect. Even when such request is made, the applicant may be permitted to inspect the case on sufficient showing why such inspection is necessary to conserve his or her rights. *In re The*

Kellogg Switchboard & Supply Company, 1906 C.D. 274 >(Comm'r Pat. 1906)<.

106.01 Rights of Assignee of Part Interest [R-14]

While it is only the assignee of record of the entire interest who can intervene in the prosecution of an application or interference to the exclusion of the applicant, an assignee of a part interest or a licensee of exclusive right is entitled to inspect the application.

110 Confidential Nature of the International Application [R-9]

PCT Article 30 Confidential Nature of the International Application.

(1)(a) Subject to the provisions of subparagraph (b), the International Bureau and the International Searching Authorities shall not allow access by any person or authority to the international application before the international publication of that application, unless requested or authorized by the applicant.

(b) The provisions of subparagraph (a) shall not apply to any transmittals to the competent International Searching Authority, to transmittals provided for under Article 13, and to communications provided for under Article 20.

(2)(a) No national Office shall allow access to the international application by third parties, unless requested or authorized by the applicant, before the earliest of the following dates:

- (i) date of the international publication of the international application,
- (ii) date of the receipt of the communication of the international application under Article 20,
- (iii) date of the receipt of a copy of the international application under Article 22.

(b) The provisions of subparagraph (a) shall not prevent any national Office from informing third parties that it has been designated, or from publishing the fact. Such information or publication may, however, contain only the following data: identification of the receiving Office, name of the applicant, international filing date, international application number, and title of the invention.

(c) The provisions of subparagraph (a) shall not prevent any designated Office from allowing access to the international application for the purposes of the judicial authorities.

(3) The provisions of paragraph (2)(a) shall apply to any receiving Office except as far as transmittals provided for under Article 12(1) are concerned.

(4) For the purposes of this Article, the term "access" covers any means by which third parties may acquire cognizance, including individual communication and general publication, provided, however, that no national Office shall generally publish an international application or its translation before the international publication or, if international publication has not taken place by the expiration of 20 months from the priority date, before the expiration of 20 months from the said priority date.

35 U.S.C. 368. Secrecy of certain inventions; filing international applications in foreign countries.

(a) International applications filed in the Patent and Trademark Office shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 17 of this title.

(b) In accordance with article 27(8) of the treaty, the filing of an international application in a country other than the United States on the invention made in this country shall be considered to constitute the

filing of an application in a foreign country within the meaning of chapter 17 of this title, whether or not the United States is designated in that international application.

(c) If a license to file in a foreign country is refused or if an international application is ordered to be kept secret and a permit refused, the Patent and Trademark Office when acting as a Receiving Office, International Searching Authority, or International Preliminary Examining Authority, may not disclose the contents of such application to anyone not authorized to receive such disclosure.

37 CFR 1.14(a) relating to access to international applications is found in MPEP § 101.

Although most international applications are published soon after the expiration of 18 months from the priority date, PCT Article 21(2)(a), such publication does not open up the Home Copy or Search Copy to the public for inspection.

115 Review of Applications for National Security and Property Rights Issues [R-14]

Secrecy Orders

37 CFR 5.1 Defense inspection of certain applications.

(a) The provisions of this part shall apply to both national and international applications filed in the Patent and Trademark Office and, with respect to inventions made in the United States, to applications filed in any foreign country or any international authority other than the United States Receiving Office. The (1) filing of a national or an international application in a foreign country or with an international authority other than the United States Receiving Office, or (2) transmittal of an international application to a foreign agency or an international authority other than the United States Receiving Office is considered to be a foreign filing within the meaning of Chapter 17 of Title 35, United States Code.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 181, patent applications containing subject matter the disclosure of which might be detrimental to the national security are made available for inspection by defense agencies as specified in said section. Only applications obviously relating to national security, and applications within fields indicated to the Patent and Trademark Office by the defense agencies as so related, are made available. The inspection will be made only by responsible representatives authorized by the agency to review applications. Such representatives are required to sign a dated acknowledgement of access accepting the condition that information obtained from the inspection will be used for no purpose other than the administration of 35 U.S.C. 181-188. Copies of applications may be made available to such representatives for inspection outside the Patent and Trademark Office under conditions assuring that the confidentiality of the applications will be maintained, including the conditions that: (1) all copies will be returned to the Patent and Trademark Office promptly if no secrecy order is imposed, or upon rescission of such order if one is imposed, and (2) no additional copies will be made by the defense agencies. A record of the removal and return of copies made available for defense inspection will be maintained by the Patent and Trademark Office. Applications relating to atomic energy are made available to the Department of Energy as specified in § 1.14 of this chapter.

All applications filed in the Patent and Trademark Office are screened for subject matter the disclosure of which might impact the national security based on information provided by

the Armed Services Patent Advisory Board (ASPAB), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Such applications are referred to the appropriate agencies. Authority for this referral can be found in 35 U.S.C. 181 which provides, in part:

Whenever the publication or disclosure of an invention by the granting of a patent, in which the Government does not have a property interest, might, in the opinion of the Commissioner, be detrimental to the national security, he shall make the application for patent in which such invention is disclosed available for inspection to the Atomic Energy Commission, the Secretary of Defense, and the chief officer of any other department or agency of the Government designated by the President as a defense agency of the United States.

If the agency concludes that disclosure of the invention would be detrimental to the national security, the Commissioner is notified. The Commissioner then issues a Secrecy Order and withholds the grant of a patent for such period as the national interest requires.

For those applications in which the Government has a property interest, responsibility for notifying the Commissioner of the need for a Secrecy Order resides with the agency having that interest.

A second purpose for the screening of all applications is to identify inventions in which DOE or NASA might have property rights. See 42 U.S.C. 2182 and 42 U.S.C. 2457 and MPEP § 150.

A third function of the screening procedure is to process foreign filing license petitions under 37 CFR 5.12(a). See MPEP § 140.

**> Some applications have a label (Form PTO-1305) on the upper right hand corner of the face of the file wrapper. A Notice of Allowance and Issue Fee Due may not be mailed for those applications if the "REV" on the label is circled (although the Examiner may be given credit for a disposal). Such cases must be forwarded to Licensing and Review to have the security review completed before the Notice of Allowance can be mailed. Cases in which only "DOE" and/or "NASA" is circled should be counted for allowance and the notice of allowance mailed before being sent to Licensing and Review for processing under the Atomic Energy and Space Acts.<

While the initial screening is performed only by designated personnel, all examiners have a responsibility to be alert for obviously sensitive subject matter either in the original disclosure or subsequently introduced, for example, by amendment. Such applications should be forwarded to Licensing & Review. It would be helpful if the examiner would identify the significant subject matter such as by a check mark in the margin of the paper.

120 Secrecy Orders [R-14]

37 CFR 5.2 Secrecy order.

(a) When notified by the chief officer of a defense agency that publication or disclosure of the invention by the granting of a patent would be detrimental to the national security, an order that the invention be kept secret will be issued by the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks.

(b) The secrecy order is directed to the applicant, his successors, any and all assignees, and their legal representatives; hereinafter designated as principals.

(c) A copy of the secrecy order will be forwarded to each principal of record in the application and will be accompanied by a receipt, identifying the particular principal, to be signed and returned.

(d) The secrecy order is directed to the subject matter of the application. Where any other application in which a secrecy order has not been issued discloses a significant part of the subject matter of the application under secrecy order, the other application and the common subject matter should be called to the attention of the Patent and Trademark Office. Such a notice may include any material such as would be urged in a petition to rescind secrecy orders on either of the applications.

37 CFR 5.3 Prosecution of application under secrecy orders; withholding patent.

Unless specifically ordered otherwise, action on the application by the Office and prosecution by the applicant will proceed during the time an application is under secrecy order to the point indicated in this section:

(a) National applications under secrecy order which come to a final rejection must be appealed or otherwise prosecuted to avoid abandonment. Appeals in such cases must be completed by the applicant but unless otherwise specifically ordered by the Commissioner will not be set for hearing until the secrecy order is removed.

(b) An interference will not be declared involving national applications under secrecy order. However, if an applicant whose application is under secrecy order seeks to provoke an interference with an issued patent, a notice of that fact will be placed in the file wrapper of the patent. (See § 1.607(d)).

(c) When the national application is found to be in condition for allowance except for the secrecy order the applicant and the agency which caused the secrecy order to be issued will be notified. This notice (which is not a notice of allowance under § 1.311 of this chapter) does not require response by the applicant and places the national application in a condition of suspension until the secrecy order is removed. When the secrecy order is removed the Patent and Trademark Office will issue a notice of allowance under § 1.311 of this chapter, or take such other action as may then be warranted.

(d) International applications under secrecy order will not be mailed, delivered or otherwise transmitted to the international authorities or the applicant. International applications under secrecy order will be processed up to the point where, if it were not for the secrecy order, record and search copies would be transmitted to the international authorities or the applicant.

37 CFR 5.4 Petition for rescission of secrecy order.

(a) A petition for rescission or removal of a secrecy order may be filed by, or on behalf of, any principal affected thereby. Such petition may be in letter form, and it must be in duplicate. The petition must be accompanied by one copy of the application or an order for the same, unless a showing is made that such a copy has already been furnished to the department or agency which caused the secrecy order to be issued.

(b) The petition must recite any and all facts that purport to render the order ineffectual or futile if this is the basis of the petition. When prior publications or patents are alleged the petition must give complete data as to such publications or patents and should be accompanied by copies thereof.

(c) The petition must identify any contract between the Government and any of the principals, under which the subject matter of the

application or any significant part thereof was developed, or to which the subject matter is otherwise related. If there is no such contract, the petition must so state.

(d) Unless based upon facts of public record, the petition must be verified.

37 CFR 5.5 Permit to disclose or modification of secrecy order.

(a) Consent to disclosure, or to the filing of an application abroad, as provided in 35 U.S.C. 182, shall be made by a "permit" or "modification" of the secrecy order.

(b) Petitions for a permit or modification must fully recite the reason or purpose for the proposed disclosure. Where any proposed disclosee is known to be cleared by a defense agency to receive classified information, adequate explanation of such clearance should be made in the petition including the name of the agency or department granting the clearance and the date and degree thereof. The petition must be filed in duplicate and be accompanied by one copy of the application or an order for the same, unless a showing is made that such a copy has already been furnished to the department or agency which caused the secrecy order to be issued.

(c) In a petition for modification of a secrecy order to permit filing abroad, all countries in which it is proposed to file must be made known, as well as all attorneys, agents and others to whom the material will be consigned prior to being lodged in the foreign patent office. The petition should include a statement vouching for the loyalty and integrity of the proposed disclosees and where their clearance status in this or the foreign country is known all details should be given.

(d) Consent to the disclosure of subject matter from one application under secrecy order may be deemed to be consent to the disclosure of common subject matter in other applications under secrecy order so long as not taken out of context in a manner disclosing material beyond the modification granted in the first application.

(e) The permit or modification may contain conditions and limitations.

37 CFR 5.6 General and group permits.

(a) Organizations requiring consent for disclosure of applications under secrecy order to persons or organizations in connection with repeated routine operation may petition for such consent in the form of a general permit. To be successful such petitions must ordinarily recite the security clearance status of the disclosees as sufficient for the highest classification of material that may be involved.

(b) Where identical disclosees and circumstances are involved, and consent is desired for the disclosure of each of a specific list of applications, the petitions may be joined.

37 CFR 5.7 Compensation.

Any request for compensation as provided in 35 U.S.C. 183 must not be made to the Patent and Trademark Office but should be made directly to the department or agency which caused the secrecy order to be issued. Upon written request persons having a right to such information will be informed as to the department or agency which caused the secrecy order to be issued.

37 CFR 5.8 Appeal to Secretary.

Appeal to the Secretary of Commerce, as provided by 35 U.S.C. 181, from a secrecy order cannot be taken until after a petition for rescission of the secrecy order has been made and denied. Appeal must be taken within 60 days from the date of the denial, and the party appealing, as well as the department or agency which caused the order to be issued will be notified of the time and place of hearing. The appeal will be heard and decided by the Secretary or such officer or officers as he may designate.

Three types of Secrecy Orders, each of a different scope, are issued as follows:

1) Secrecy Order and Permit for Foreign Filing in Certain Countries - to be used for those patent applications that contain technical data whose export is controlled by the guidelines contained in DOD Directive 5230.25 dated November 6, 1984 which reviews export control under 10 U.S.C. 140(c) and the Militarily Critical Technology List (MCTL).

2) Secrecy Order and Permit for Disclosing Classified Information - to be used for those patent applications which contain technical data that is properly classifiable under a security guideline where the patent application owner has a current DOD Security Agreement, DD Form 441, which requires protection of classified technical data as prescribed in the Industrial Security Manual (ISM).

3) Secrecy Order - to be used for those patent applications that contain technical data properly classifiable under a security guideline where the patent application owner does not have a DOD Security Agreement.

The first Secrecy Order is intended to permit the widest utilization of the technical data in the patent application while still controlling any publication or disclosure which would result in an unlawful exportation. This type of Secrecy Order is based on the applicable export controls in either the Commodity Control List (CCL) or the Munitions Lists of the International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR), and identifies the countries where corresponding patent applications may be filed. Countries with which the United States has reciprocal security agreements are: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Please note that applications >subject to a secrecy order< cannot be filed directly with the European Patent Office since no reciprocal security agreement with this organization exists. Applications must be filed in the individual EPO member countries identified above.

The intent of the second Secrecy Order is to treat classified technical data presented as a patent application in the same manner as any other classified material. Accordingly, this Secrecy Order will include a notification of the classification level of the technical data in the application.

The third type of Secrecy Order is used where the other types of Orders do not apply, including Orders issued by direction of agencies other than the Department of Defense.

The Secrecy Orders apply to the subject matter of the invention, not just to the patent application itself. Thus, the Secrecy Order restricts disclosure or publication of the invention in any form. Furthermore, other patent applications already filed or later filed which contain any significant part of the subject matter of the application also fall within the scope of the Order and *>must< be brought to the attention of Licensing & Review if such applications are not already under Secrecy Order by the Commissioner.

The effects of a Secrecy Order are detailed in the notifying letter and include restrictions on disclosure of the invention and delay of any patent grant until the Order is rescinded.

When the Secrecy Order issues, the law specifies that the subject matter or any material information relevant to the application, including unpublished details of the invention, shall not be published or disclosed to any person not aware of the invention prior to the date of the Order, including any employee of the principals except as permitted by the Secrecy Order. The law also requires that all information material to the subject matter of the application be *kept in confidence, unless written permission to disclose is first obtained from the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks except as provided by the Secrecy Order.

When applicants desire to change the Power of Attorney in an application under Secrecy Order, the name, date of birth and Social Security number of the new attorney(s) should be included in the change notice so that Licensing and Review may conduct the necessary security clearance checks.

Applicants should also ensure that the correspondence address (37 CFR 1.33) of any application under Secrecy Order represents a location suitable for the receipt of security information.

If the Secrecy Order is applied to an international application, the application will not be forwarded to the International Bureau as long as the Secrecy Order remains in effect. If the Secrecy Order remains in effect at the end of the time limit under PCT Rule 22.3, the international application will be considered withdrawn (abandoned) because the Record Copy of the international application was not received in time by the International Bureau (37 CFR 5.3(d), PCT Article 12(3), and PCT Rule 22.3). If the United States of America has been designated, however, it is possible to save the U.S. filing date, by fulfilling the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 371(c) prior to the withdrawal.

Subject matter under Secrecy Order must be safeguarded under conditions that will provide adequate protection and prevent access by unauthorized persons.

Applicants may petition for rescission or modification of the Secrecy Order. For example, if the applicant believes that certain existing facts or circumstances would render the Secrecy Order ineffectual, he or she may informally contact the sponsoring agency to discuss these facts or formally petition the Commissioner to rescind the Order. The applicant may also petition the Commissioner for a permit to disclose the invention to another or to modify the Secrecy Order stating fully the reason or purpose for disclosure or modification. An example of such a situation would be a request to file the application in a foreign country. The requirements for petitions are described in 37 CFR 5.4 and 5.5. The law also provides that if an appeal is necessary, it may be taken to the Secretary of Commerce under the provision of 37 CFR 5.8. Any petition or appeal should be addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Attention: Licensing and Review, Washington, D.C. 20231.

If, prior to or after the issuance of the Secrecy Order, any significant part of the subject matter or material information relevant to the application has been or is revealed to any U.S. citizen in the United States, the principals must promptly inform such person of the Secrecy Order and the penalties for improper disclosure. If such part of the subject matter was or is disclosed to any person in a foreign country or foreign national in the U.S.,

the principals must not inform such person of the Secrecy Order, but instead must promptly furnish to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Patent and Trademark Office, Attention: Licensing and Review, Washington, D.C. 20231 the following information to the extent not already furnished: date of disclosure; name and address of the discloser; identification of such subject matter; and any authorization by a U.S. government agency to export such subject matter. If the subject matter is included in any foreign patent application or patent, this should be identified.

A Secrecy Order should not be construed in any way to mean that the Government has adopted or contemplates adoption of the alleged invention disclosed in an application; nor is it any indication of the value of such invention.

Under the provision of 35 U.S.C. 181, a Secrecy Order remains in effect for a period of one year from its date of issuance. A Secrecy Order may be renewed for additional periods of not more than one year upon notice by a government agency that the national interest so requires. The applicant is notified of any such renewal.

The expiration of or failure to renew a Secrecy Order does not lessen in any way the responsibility of the principals for the security of the subject matter if it is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12356 or the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, 42 U.S.C., 141 et. seq. and 42 U.S.C. 2181 et. seq. or other applicable law unless the principals have been expressly notified that the subject patent application has been declassified by the proper authorities and the security markings have been authorized to be canceled or removed.

121 Handling of Applications and other Papers Bearing Security Markings [R-9]

Under Executive Order for National Security Information (Executive Order 12356, 47 Federal Register, Number 66 page 14875 et seq., April 12, 1982) standards are prescribed for the marking, handling, and care of official information which requires safeguarding in the interest of security.

Papers marked as prescribed in the Executive Order, and showing that such marking is applied by, or at the direction of, a government agency, are accepted in patent applications. All applications or papers in the Patent and Trademark Office bearing words such as "Secret" or "Confidential" must be promptly referred to Group 220 for clarification or security treatment. Under no circumstances can any such application, drawing, exhibit, or other paper be placed in public records, such as the patented files, until all security markings have been considered and declassified or otherwise explained.

Authorized security markings may be placed on the patent application drawings when filed provided that such markings are outside the illustrations and that they are removed when the material is declassified, 37 CFR 1.84(1).

130 Examination of Secrecy Order Cases [R-9]

All applications in which a Secrecy Order has been imposed are examined in Group 220. If the Order is imposed subsequent to the docketing of an application in another group, the application will be transferred to Group 220.

Secrecy Order cases are examined for patentability as in other cases, but may not be passed to issue; nor will an interference be declared where one or more of the conflicting cases is classified or under Secrecy Order. See MPEP § 2309.06. When requested to do so, by examiners outside the Group 220, examiners in Group 220 will conduct the interference searches of those interference files containing brief cards from classified or Secrecy Order cases.

In case of a final rejection, while such action must be properly responded to, and an appeal, if filed, must be completed by the applicant to prevent abandonment, such appeal will not be set for hearing by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interference until the Secrecy Order is removed, unless specifically ordered by the Commissioner.

When a Secrecy Order case is in condition for allowance, a notice of allowability (Form D-10) is issued, thus closing the prosecution. Any amendments received thereafter are not entered or responded to until such time as the Secrecy Order is rescinded. At such time, amendments which are free from objection will be entered; otherwise they are denied entry.

Due to the additional administrative burdens associated with handling papers in Secrecy Order cases, the full statutory period for response will ordinarily be set for all Office actions issued on such cases.

Sometimes applications bearing security markings but no Secrecy Order come up for examination. In this case, the examiner should require the applicant to seek imposition of a Secrecy Order or authority to cancel the markings. This should preferably be done with the first action and, in any event, prior to final disposition of the application.

140 Foreign Filing Licenses [R-14]

35 U.S.C. 184. Filing of application in foreign country

Except when authorized by a license obtained from the Commissioner a person shall not file or cause or authorize to be filed in any foreign country prior to six months after filing in the United States an application for patent or for the registration of a utility model, industrial design, or model in respect of an invention made in this country. A license shall not be granted with respect to an invention subject to an order issued by the Commissioner pursuant to section 181 of this title without the concurrence of the head of the departments and the chief officers of the agencies who caused the order to be issued. The license may be granted retroactively where an application has been filed abroad through error and without deceptive intent and the application does not disclose an invention within the scope of section 181 of this title.

The term "application" when used in this chapter includes applications and any modifications, amendments, or supplements thereto, or divisions thereof.

The scope of a license shall permit subsequent modifications,

amendments, and supplements containing additional subject matter if the application upon which the request for the license is based is not, or was not, required to be made available for inspection under section 181 of this title and if such modifications, amendments, and supplements do not change the general nature of the invention in a manner which would require such application to be made available for inspection under such section 181. In any case in which a license is not, or was not, required in order to file an application in any foreign country, such subsequent modifications, amendments, and supplements may be made, without a license, to the application filed in the foreign country if the United States application was not required to be made available for inspection under section 181 and if such modifications, amendments, and supplements do not, or did not, change the general nature of the invention in a manner which would require the United States application to have been made available for inspection under such section 181.

[Amended by Public Law 100-418, August 23, 1988]

35 U.S.C. 185 Patent barred for filing without license

Notwithstanding any other provisions of law any person, and his successors, assigns, or legal representatives, shall not receive a United States patent for an invention if that person, or his successors, assigns, or legal representatives shall, without procuring the license prescribed in section 184 of this title, have made, or consented to or assisted another's making, application in a foreign country for a patent or for the registration of a utility model, industrial design, or model in respect of the invention. A United States patent issued to such a person, his successors, assigns, or legal representatives shall be invalid, unless the failure to procure such license was through error and without deceptive intent, and the patent does not disclose subject matter within the scope of section 181 of this title.

[Amended by Public Law 100-418, August 23, 1988]

35 U.S.C. 186 Penalty

Whoever, during the period or periods of time an invention has been ordered to be kept secret and the grant of a patent thereon withheld pursuant to section 181 of this title, shall, with knowledge of such order and without due authorization, willfully publish or disclose or authorize or cause to be published or disclosed the invention, or material information with respect thereto, or whoever willfully, in violation of the provisions of section 184 of this title, shall file or cause or authorize to be filed in any foreign country an application for patent or for the registration of a utility model, industrial design, or model in respect of any invention made in the United States, shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than two years, or both.

[Amended by Public Law 100-418, August 23, 1988]

The amendments made to 35 U.S.C. 184, 185 and 186 by Public Law 100-418 apply to all United States patents granted before, on, or after August 23, 1988, to all applications for United States patents pending on or filed after August 23, 1988, and to all licenses under 35 U.S.C. 184 granted before, on, or after August 23, 1988

More specifically, paragraphs (c) and (d) of section 9101 of Public Law 100-418 read as follows:

"Sec. 9101. INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS OF PATENT LAW

(c) REGULATIONS.-- The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to implement the amendments made by this section.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.-- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of this subsection, the amendments made by this section shall apply to all United States patents granted before, on, or after the date of enactment of this section, to all applications for United States patents pending on or filed after such date of enactment, and to all licenses under section 184 granted before, on, or after the date of enactment of this section.

(2) The amendments made by this section shall not affect any final decision made by a court or the Patent and Trademark Office before the date of enactment of this section with respect to a patent or application for patent, if no appeal from such decision is pending and the time for filing an appeal has expired.

(3) No United States patent granted before the date of enactment of this section shall abridge or affect the right of any person or his successors in business who made, purchased, or used, prior to such date of enactment, anything protected by the patent, to continue the use of, or sell to others to be used or sold, the specific thing so made, purchased, or used, if the patent claims were invalid or otherwise unenforceable on a ground obviated by this section and the person made, purchased, or used the specific thing in reasonable reliance on such invalidity or unenforceability. If a person reasonably relied on such invalidity or unenforceability, the court before which such matter is in question may provide for the continued manufacture, use, or sale of the thing made, purchased, or used as specified, or for the manufacture, use, or sale of which substantial preparation was made before the date of enactment of this section, and it may also provide for the continued practice of any process practiced, or for the practice of which substantial preparation was made, prior to the date of enactment of this section, to the extent and under such terms as the court deems equitable for the protection of investments made or business commenced before such date of enactment.

(4) The amendments made by this section shall not affect the right of any party in any case pending in court on the date of enactment of this section to have its rights or liabilities --

(A) under any patent before the court, or

(B) under any patent granted after such date of enactment which is related to the patent before the court by deriving priority rights under section 120 or 121 of title 35, United States Code, from a patent or an application for patent common to both patents, determined on the basis of the substantive law in effect before the date of enactment of this section."

[Editor's note: The date of enactment of Public Law 100-418 was August 23, 1988.]

35 U.S.C. 187 Nonapplicability to certain persons

The prohibitions and penalties of this chapter shall not apply to any officer or agent of the United States acting within the scope of his authority, nor to any person acting upon his written instructions or permission.

35 U.S.C. 188 Rules and regulations, delegation of power

The Atomic Energy Commission, the Secretary of a defense department, the chief officer of any department or agency of the Government designated by the President as a defense agency of the United States, and the Secretary of Commerce, may separately issue rules and regulations to enable the respective department or agency to carry out the provisions of this chapter, and may delegate any power conferred by this chapter.

37 CFR 5.11 License for filing in a foreign country an application on an invention made in the United States or for transmitting an international application.

(a) A license from the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

under 35 U.S.C. 184 is required before filing any application for patent >including any modifications, amendments, or supplements **>thereto< or divisions thereof< or for the registration of a utility model, industrial design, or model, **in a foreign patent office >or any foreign patent agency< or any international agency other than the United States Receiving Office>,< if >the invention was made in the United States and<:

(1) An application on the invention has been **>filed< in the United States less than six months prior to the date on which the application is >to be< filed, or

(2) No application on the invention has been filed in the United States.

(b) The license from the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks referred to in paragraph (a) would also authorize the export of technical data abroad for purposes related for purposes *>relating< to the preparation, filing or possible filing and prosecution of a foreign patent application without separately complying with the regulations contained in 22 CFR Parts 121 - 130 (International Traffic in Arms Regulations of the Department of State), 15 CFR Part 379 (Regulations of the Office of Export Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce) and 10 CFR Part 810 (Foreign Atomic Energy Programs of the Department of Energy).

(c) Where technical data in the form of a patent application, or in any form, is being exported for purposes related to the preparation, filing or possible filing and prosecution of a foreign patent application, without the license from the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks referred to in paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section, or on an invention not made in the United States, the export regulations contained in 22 CFR Parts 121 through 130 (International Traffic in Arms Regulations of the Department of State), 15 CFR Part 379 (Regulations of the Office of Export Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce) and 10 CFR Part 810 (Foreign Atomic Energy Programs of the Department of Energy) must be complied with unless a license is not required because a United States application was on file at the time of the export for at least six months without a secrecy order under § 5.2 being placed thereon. The term "exported" means export as it is defined in 22 CFR Parts 121 through 130, 15 CFR Part 379 and 10 CFR Part 810.

(d) If a secrecy order has been issued under § 5.2, an application cannot be exported to, or filed in, a foreign country (including an international agency in a foreign country), except in accordance with § 5.5.

(e) No license pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section is required*:

(1) *>If the< invention was not made in the United States, or

(2) *>If the corresponding< United States application is not subject to a secrecy order under § 5.2, and was filed at least six months prior to the date on which the application is filed in a foreign country >, or

(3) For subsequent modifications, amendments and supplements containing additional subject matter to, or divisions of, a foreign patent application if:

(i) a license is not, or was not, required under paragraph (e)(2) of this section for the foreign patent application;

(ii) the corresponding United States application was not required to be made available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1; and

(iii) such modifications, amendments, and supplements do not, or did not, change the general nature of the invention in a manner which would require any corresponding United States application to be or have been available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1<.

(f) A license pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section can be revoked at any time upon written notification by the Patent and Trademark Office. An authorization to file a foreign patent application resulting from the passage of six months from the date of filing of a United States patent application may be revoked by the imposition of a secrecy order.

[Paras. (a) & (e)(1) and (2) amended, Jan. 18, 1991, 56 FR 1924, effective Feb. 19, 1991; para. (e)(3) added, Jan. 18, 1991, 56 FR 1924, effective Feb. 19, 1991]

37 CFR 5.12 Petition for license.

(a) Filing of an application for patent for inventions made in the United States will be considered to include a petition for license under 35 U.S.C. 184 for the subject matter of the application. The filing receipt will indicate if a license is granted. If the initial automatic petition is not granted, a subsequent petition may be filed under paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) Petitions for license should be presented in letter form and must include the required fee (§ 1.17(h))**>. If <expedited handling of the petition is also sought, the petitioner's address, and full instructions for delivery of the requested license when it is to be delivered to other than the petitioner.

37 CFR 5.13 Petition for license; no corresponding application.

If no corresponding national or international application has been filed in the United States, the petition for license under § 5.12(b) must be accompanied by the required fee (§ 1.17(h)), if expedited handling is *sought >of the petition<, and a legible copy of the material upon which license is desired. This copy will be retained as a measure of the license granted. For assistance in the identification of the subject matter of each license so issued, it is suggested that the petition be submitted in duplicate and provide a title and other description of the material. The duplicate copy of the petition will be returned with the license or other action on the petition.

37 CFR 5.14 Petition for license; corresponding U.S. application.

(a) Where there is a corresponding United States application on file, a petition for license under § 5.12(b) must include the required fee (§ 1.17(h)), if expedited handling of the petition is also sought >,< and must identify this application by serial number, filing date, inventor, and title, *>and< a copy of the material upon which the license is desired is not required. The subject matter licensed will be measured by the disclosure of the United States application. Where the title is not descriptive, and the subject matter is clearly of no interest from a security standpoint, time may be saved by a short statement in the petition as to the nature of the invention.

(b) Two or more United States applications should not be referred to in the same petition for license unless they are to be combined in the foreign or international application, in which event the petition should so state and the identification of each United States application should be in separate paragraphs.

(c) Where the application to be filed or exported abroad contains matter not disclosed in the United States application or applications, including the case where the combining of two or more United States applications introduces subject matter not disclosed in any of them, a copy of the application as it is to be filed in the foreign country or international application which is to be transmitted to a foreign international or national agency for filing in the Receiving Office, must be furnished with the petition. If, however, all new matter in the foreign or international application to be filed is readily identifiable, the new matter may be submitted in detail and the remainder by reference to the pertinent United States application or applications.

37 CFR 5.15 Scope of license.

(a) > Applications or other materials reviewed pursuant to §§ 5.12 through 5.14, which were not required to be made available for inspection by defense agencies under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1, will be eligible for a license of the scope provided in this paragraph. This license permits subsequent modifications, amendments, and supplements containing additional subject matter to, or divisions of, a foreign

patent application, if such changes to the application do not alter the general nature of the invention in a manner which would require the United States application to have been made available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1. This license also covers the inventions disclosed in foreign applications which had been granted a license under this part prior to April 4, 1984, and which were not subject to security inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1. Grant of this license **authorizes the export and filing of an application in a foreign country or the transmitting of an international application to any foreign patent agency or international patent agency when the subject matter of the foreign or international application corresponds to that of the domestic application. This license includes authority:

(1) To export and file all duplicate and formal application papers in foreign countries or with international agencies;

(2) To make amendments, modifications* and supplements, including divisions, changes or supporting matter consisting of the illustration, exemplification, comparison, or explanation of subject matter disclosed in the application; and

(3) To take any action in the prosecution of the foreign or international application **provided that the adding of subject matter or taking of any action under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section which does not change the general nature of the invention disclosed **in the application in a manner which would require such application to have been made available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1 by including technical data pertaining to:

(i) Defense services or articles designated in the United States Munitions List applicable at the time of foreign filing, the unlicensed exportation of which is prohibited pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, and 22 CFR Parts 121 through 130; or

(ii) Restricted Data, sensitive nuclear technology or technology useful in the production or utilization of special nuclear material or atomic energy, the dissemination of which is subject to restrictions of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978, as implemented by the regulations for Unclassified Activities in Foreign Atomic Energy Programs, 10 CFR 810, in effect at the time of foreign filing.

(b) Applications or other materials which were required to be made available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1 will be eligible for a license of the scope provided in this paragraph. Grant of this license **authorizes the export and filing of an application in a foreign country or the transmitting of an international application to any foreign patent agency or international patent agency. Further, this license includes authority **to export and file all duplicate and formal papers **in foreign countries or with foreign and international patent agencies and to make amendments, modifications*, and supplements to, file divisions of, and take any action in the prosecution of the foreign or international application, provided subject matter additional to that covered by the license is not involved.

(c) A license granted under § 5.12(b) pursuant to § 5.13 or § 5.14 shall have the scope indicated in paragraph (a) of this section, if it is so specified in the license. A petition, accompanied by the required fee (§ 1.17(h)), may also be filed to change a license having the scope indicated in paragraph (b) of this section to a license having the scope indicated in paragraph (a) of this section. No such petition will be granted if the copy of the material filed pursuant to § 5.13 or any corresponding United States application was required to be made available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1. The change in the scope of a license will be effective as of the date of the grant of the petition.

(d) In those cases in which no license is required to file the foreign application or transmit the international application, no license is required to file papers in connection with the prosecution of the foreign or international application not involving the disclosure of additional subject matter.

(e) Any paper filed abroad or transmitted to an international patent agency following the filing of a foreign or international application which changes the general nature of the subject matter disclosed at the time of filing in a manner which would require such application to have been made available for inspection under 35 U.S.C. 181 and § 5.1 or which involves the disclosure of subject matter listed in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) or (ii) of this section must be separately licensed in the same manner as a foreign or international application. Further, if no license has been granted under § 5.12(a) on filing the corresponding United States application, any paper filed abroad or with an international patent agency which involves the disclosure of additional subject matter must be licensed in the same manner as a foreign or international application.

(f) Licenses separately granted in connection with two or more United States applications may be exercised by combining or dividing the disclosures, as desired, provided:

(1) Subject matter which changes the general nature of the subject matter disclosed at the time of filing or which involves subject matter listed in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) or (ii) of this section is not introduced, and

(2) In the case where at least one of the licenses was obtained under § 5.12(b), additional subject matter is not introduced.

(g) A license does not apply to acts done before the license was granted. See § 5.25 for petitions for retroactive licenses.

[Paras. (a)-(c), (e) & (f) amended, Jan. 18, 1991, 56 FR 1924, effective Feb. 19, 1991]

37 CFR 5.16 Effect of secrecy order.

Any license obtained under 35 U.S.C. 184 is ineffective if the subject matter is under a secrecy order, and a secrecy order prohibits the exercise of or any further action under the license unless separately specifically authorized by a modification of the secrecy order in accordance with § 5.5.

37 CFR 5.17 Who may use license.

Licenses may be used by anyone interested in the export, foreign filing, or international transmittal for or on behalf of the inventor or the inventor's assigns.

37 CFR 5.18 Arms, ammunition, and implements of war.

(a) The exportation of technical data relating to arms, ammunition, and implements of war generally is subject to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations of the Department of State (22 CFR Parts 121 through 128); the articles designated as arms, ammunition, and implements of war are enumerated in the U.S. Munitions List, 22 CFR 121.01. However, if a patent applicant complies with regulations issued by the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks under 35 U.S.C. 184, no separate approval from the Department of State is required unless the applicant seeks to export technical data exceeding that used to support a patent application in a foreign country. This exemption from Department of State regulations is applicable regardless of whether a license from the Commissioner is required by the provisions of §§ 5.11 and 5.15 (22 CFR 125.04(b), 125.20(b)).

(b) When a patent application containing subject matter on the Munitions List (22 CFR 121.01) is subject to a secrecy order under § 5.2 and a petition is made under § 5.5 for a modification of the secrecy order to permit filing abroad, a separate request to the Department of State for authority to export classified information is not required (22 CFR 125.05(d)).

37 CFR 5.19 Export of technical data.

(a) Under regulations (15 CFR 370.10(j)) established by the U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Office

of Export Administration, a validated export license is not required in any case to file a patent application or part thereof in a foreign country if the foreign filing is in accordance with the regulations (37 CFR 5.11*)-< 5.23) of the Patent and Trademark Office.

(b) A validated export license is not required for data contained in a patent application prepared wholly from foreign-origin technical data where such application is being sent to the foreign inventor to be executed and returned to the United States for subsequent filing in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (15 CFR 379.3(c)).

(c) Inquiries concerning the export control regulations for the foreign filing of technical data other than patent applications should be made to the Office of Export Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20230.

37 CFR 5.20 Export of technical data relating to sensitive nuclear technology.

(a) Under regulations (10 CFR 810.7) established by the United States Department of Energy, an application filed in accordance with the regulations (37 CFR 5.11 through 5.33) of the United States Patent and Trademark Office and eligible for foreign filing under 35 U.S.C. 184, is considered to be information available to the public in published form and a generally authorized activity for the purposes of the Department of Energy regulations.

(b) Inquiries concerning the export of sensitive nuclear technology other than related to the filing or prosecution of a foreign patent application should be made to the Attention: Secretary, United States Department of Energy, Office of International Security Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20858.

37 CFR 5.25 Petition for retroactive license

(a) A petition *>for< a retroactive license under 35 U.S.C. 184 shall be presented in accordance with § 5.13 or § 5.14>(a)<, and shall include:

(1) A listing of >each of< the foreign countries in which the >unlicensed< patent application material was filed.

(2) The dates on which the material was filed >in each country<.

(3) A verified statement >(oath or declaration)< containing:

(i) An averment that the subject matter in question was not under a secrecy order at the time it was filed abroad, and that it is not currently under a secrecy order,

(ii) A showing that the license has been diligently sought after discovery of the proscribed foreign filing, and

(iii) An explanation of why the material was *filed abroad >through error and without deceptive intent< without the required license under § 5.11 first having been obtained, and

(4) The required fee (§ 1.17(h)).

The above explanation must include a showing of facts rather than a mere allegation of *>action through error and without deceptive intent<. The showing of facts as to the nature of the error should include statements by those persons having personal knowledge of the acts regarding filing in a foreign country and should be accompanied by copies of any necessary supporting documents such as letters of transmittal or instructions for filing. The acts which are alleged to constitute *>error without deceptive intent< should cover the period **>leading up to and including each of the proscribed foreign filings<.

(b) If a petition for a retroactive license is denied, a time period of not less than thirty days shall be set, during which the petition may be renewed. Failure to renew the petition within the set time period will result in a final denial of the petition. A final denial of a petition stands unless a petition is filed under § 1.181 within two months of the date of the denial. If the petition for a retroactive license is denied with respect to the invention of a pending application and no petition under § 1.181 has been filed, a final rejection of the application under 35

U.S.C. 185 will be made.

(c) The granting of a retroactive license does not excuse any violation of the export regulations contained in 22 CFR Parts 121 through 130 (International Traffic in Arms Regulations of the Department of State), 15 CFR Part 379 (Regulations of Office of Export Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce) and 10 CFR Part 810 (Foreign Atomic Energy Programs of the Department of Energy) which may have occurred because of failure to obtain an appropriate license prior to export.

[Para. (a) amended, Jan. 18, 1991, 56 FR 1924, effective Feb. 19, 1991]

GENERAL

37 CFR 5.31 Effect of modification, rescission or license.

Any consent, rescission or license under the provisions of this part does not lessen the responsibilities of the principals in respect to any Government contract or the requirements of any other Government agency.

37 CFR 5.32 Papers in English language.

All papers submitted in connection with petitions must be in the English language, or be accompanied by an English translation and a translator's certificate as to the true, faithful and exact character of the translation.

37 CFR 5.33 Correspondence.

All correspondence in connection with this part, including petitions, should be addressed to "Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks (Attention Licensing and Review), Washington, D.C. 20231."

In the interests of national security, the United States government imposes restrictions on the export of technical information. These restrictions are administered by the Departments of Commerce, State, and/or Energy depending on the subject matter involved. For the filing of patent applications in foreign countries, the authority for export control has been delegated to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks.

There are two ways in which permission to file a patent application abroad may be obtained: either a petition for a foreign filing license may be granted (37 CFR 5.12) or an applicant may wait six months after filing a patent application in the PTO (35 U.S.C. 184) at which time a license on that subject matter is no longer required as long as no Secrecy Order has been imposed (37 CFR 5.11(*>e<)(2)).

There are several means by which a foreign filing license may be issued. First, every U.S. origin application filed in the PTO is considered to include an implicit petition for a foreign filing license. The grant of a license is not immediate or even insured. If the application is not marked by the security screeners, the petition is granted. This is indicated to the applicant by the presence on the filing receipt of the phrase "Foreign Filing License Granted" and a date. The license becomes effective on the date shown. Further, grant of this license is made of record in the application file by means of a similar notation on the file jacket of the application below the "Foreign/PCT Applications" data. The scope of this license is quite broad as set forth in 37 CFR 5.15(a).

Explicit petitions for foreign filing licenses will also be accepted in accordance with 37 CFR 5.12(b). Applicants may be interested in such petitions in cases (1) in which the filing receipt

license is not granted or (2) in which the filing receipt has not yet been issued (37 CFR 5.14(a) or (b)) or (3) in which there is no corresponding U.S. application (37 CFR 5.13) or (4) in which subject matter additional to that already licensed is sought to be licensed (37 CFR 5.14(c) and 5.15(e)) or (5) in which expedited handling is requested. The scope of any license granted on these petitions is indicated on the license. If applicants desire expedited processing (turn around time of three business days or less (starting with the date of receipt of the petition in Licensing and Review) or if the petition covers subject matter corresponding to a U.S. application in which the filing receipt has not yet been issued) a fee is charged (See 37 CFR 1.17(h)). There is no fee for other petitions under 37 CFR 5.12(b).

Petitions under 37 CFR 5.14(a) or (b) as well as any license granted on the petition are given paper numbers and endorsed on the file wrapper. Petitions under 37 CFR 5.14(c) are not ordinarily made of record in the file.

Applicants granted a license under 37 CFR 5.12(b) having the relatively narrow scope indicated in 37 CFR 5.15(b) may petition under 37 CFR 5.15(c) to convert the license to the broad scope of 37 CFR 5.15(a). A fee is charged for such a petition (See 37 CFR 1.17(h)). If the petition is granted, the change in the scope of the license is effective as of that day.

Finally, a retroactive license may be sought if an unlicensed foreign filing has occurred through error and without deceptive intent. However, the requirements of 37 CFR 5.25 must be fulfilled in order for such a petition to be granted. Note that licenses under 37 CFR 5.25 are only made retroactive with respect to specific acts of foreign filing, and therefore the countries, the actual dates of filing and the establishing of the nature of the error must be provided for each act of proscribed foreign filing for which a retroactive license is sought. Also, the required verified statement must be in oath or declaration form.

Upon written notification from the Patent and Trademark Office, any foreign filing license required by 37 CFR 5.11(a) may be revoked. Ordinarily, revocation indicates that additional review of the licensed subject matter revealed the need for referral of the application to the appropriate defense agencies. Revocation of a filing receipt license (37 CFR 5.12(a)) does not necessarily mean that a petition under 37 CFR 5.12(b) for a license of narrower scope will not be granted. The revocation becomes effective on the date on which the notice is mailed. Foreign filings which occurred prior to revocation need not be abandoned or otherwise specially treated; however, additional filings without a license are not permitted unless six months have elapsed from the filing of any corresponding U.S. application. Papers and other documents needed in support of prosecution of foreign applications may be sent abroad if they comply with any pertinent export regulations. Of course, if and once a Secrecy Order is issued, the restrictions thereof must immediately be observed.

Only the imposition of a Secrecy Order will cause revocation of the authority which arises from 35 U.S.C. 184 to file a foreign patent application six months or later after the date of filing of a corresponding U.S. patent application.

The penalties for failing to obtain any necessary license to file a patent application abroad are set forth in 35 U.S.C. 182, 35

U.S.C. 185 and 35 U.S.C. 186 and include loss of patenting rights in addition to possible fine or imprisonment.

150 Statements to DOE and NASA [R-14]

37 CFR 1.14 Patent applications preserved in secrecy

(c) Applications for patents which disclose* or which appear to disclose, or which purport to disclose, inventions or discoveries relating to atomic energy are reported to the Department of Energy, which Department will be given access to such applications, but such reporting does not constitute a determination that the subject matter of each application so reported is in fact useful or an invention or discovery or that such application in fact discloses subject matter in categories specified by sections 151(c) and 151(d) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, 68 Stat, 919; 42 U.S.C. 2181(c) and (d).

Title 42 United States Code, Section 2182 reads in part:

No patent for any invention or discovery, useful in the production or utilization of special nuclear material or atomic energy, shall be issued unless the applicant files with the application, or within thirty days after request therefor by the Commissioner of Patents (unless the Commission advises the Commissioner of Patents that its rights have been determined and that accordingly no statement is necessary) a statement under oath setting forth the full facts surrounding the making or conception of the invention or discovery described in the application and whether the invention or discovery was made or conceived in the course of or under any contract, subcontract, or arrangement entered into with or for the benefit of the Commission, regardless of whether the contract, subcontract, or arrangement involved the expenditure of funds by the Commission. The Commissioner of Patents shall as soon as the application is otherwise in condition for allowance forward copies of the application and the statement to the Commission.

Similarly, 42 U.S.C. 2457 provides in part:

(c) *Patent application.* No patent may be issued to any applicant other than the Administrator for any invention which appears to the Commissioner of Patents to have significant utility in the conduct of aeronautical and space activities unless the applicant files with the Commissioner, with the application or within thirty days after request therefor by the Commissioner, a written statement executed under oath setting forth the full facts concerning the circumstances under which such invention was made and stating the relationship (if any) of such invention to the performance of any work under any contract of the Administration. Copies of each statement and application to which it relates shall be transmitted forthwith by the Commissioner to the Administrator.

Property rights statements to DOE or NASA may be filed at any time but should be updated if necessary to accurately reflect property rights at the time the application is allowed.

Shortly after filing, an informal request for a property rights statement will be mailed to those applicants whose applications have been marked by the security screeners as being of interest to DOE or NASA. While no formal time period is set, a response by applicants within 45 days will expedite processing. If the statement submitted during this period is defective, another letter is sent from Licensing and Review detailing the deficiency.

cies and giving applicant another opportunity to respond during this period of informal correspondence.

If no response to the initial so called "45-Day Letter" is received or if repeated efforts to correct a defective statement evidence an absence of cooperation on the part of the applicant, a formal request for a statement in accordance with the statutes will be made. A 30 day statutory period for response is then set. There is no provision for an extension of this time period. If no proper and timely statement is received, the application will be held abandoned and the applicant so notified. Such applications may be revived under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 137. *In re Rutan*, 231 USPQ 864 (**>Comm'r Pat.< 1986).

> Any papers pertaining to property rights under section 152 of the Atomic Energy Act, 42 U.S.C. 2182, (DOE), or section 305(c) or the National Aeronautics and Space Act, 42 U.S.C. 2457, (NASA), that have not been associated with the application file, or have not been made of record in the file and processed by the Licensing and Review section, must be sent to the Licensing and Review section immediately.<

151 Content of the Statement [R-14]

The law requires the statement to set forth "the full facts" surrounding the conception and making of the invention. These facts should include those which are unique to that invention. The use of form paragraphs or printed forms which set forth only broad generalized statements of fact is not ordinarily regarded as meeting the requirements of these statutes.

The word "applicant" in both of these statutes has been construed to mean the inventor or joint inventors in person. Accordingly, in the ordinary situation, the statements must be signed by the inventor or the joint inventors, if available. This construction is consistent with the fact that no other person could normally be more knowledgeable of the "full facts concerning the circumstances under which such invention was made," (45 U.S.C. 2457) or, "full facts surrounding the making or conception of the invention or discovery" (45 U.S.C. 2182).

In instances where an applicant does not have firsthand knowledge whether the invention involved work under any contract, subcontract, or arrangement with or for the benefit of the Atomic Energy Commission, or had any relationship to any work under any contract of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and includes in his statement information of this nature derived from others, his >or her< statement should identify the source of his >or her< information. Alternatively, the statement by the applicant could be accompanied by a supplemental declaration or oath, as to the contractual matters, by the assignee or other person, e.g., an employee thereof, who has the requisite knowledge.

When an applicant is deceased or incompetent, or where it is shown to the satisfaction of this Office that he or she refuses to furnish a statement or cannot be reached after diligent efforts, declarations or statements under oath setting forth the information required by the statutes may be accepted from an officer or employee of the assignee who has sufficient knowledge of the facts. The offer of such substitute statements should be based on the actual unavailability of or refusal by the applicant, rather

than mere inconvenience. Where it is shown that one of the joint inventors is deceased or unavailable, a statement by all of the other inventor(s) may be accepted.

The following is an acceptable format for statements to DOE or NASA assuming that no government funds or other considerations were involved in the making or conception of the invention. It is important, however, that the information provided in the statement be an accurate reflection of the fact situation at the time the statement is made. While the sample below is in the form of a declaration, a sworn >oath< is equally acceptable.

Note that the statement must be in the form of an oath or declaration. Further note that the statement must be signed by all the inventors. See also the notice published in 914 O.G. 1 for further information.

I (We) _____ citizens of _____ residing at _____ declare: That I (we) made and conceived the invention described and claimed in patent application Serial Number _____ filed in the United States of America on _____ titled _____.

(Check and complete either I. or II. below)

I. (for Inventors Employed by an Organization)

That I (we) made and conceived this invention while employed by _____.

That the invention is related to the work I am (we are) employed to perform and was made within the scope of my (our) employment duties;

That the invention was made during working hours and with the use of facilities, equipment, materials, funds, information and services of _____.

Other relevant facts are: _____.

That to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief based upon information provided by _____ of _____:

—OR—

II. (For Self-Employed Inventors)

That I (we) made and conceived this invention on my (our) own time using only my (our) own facilities, equipment, materials, funds, information and services.

Other relevant facts are _____.

That to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief:

(Check III. and/or IV. below as appropriate)

III. The invention or discovery was not made or conceived in the course of, or in connection with, or under the terms of any contract, subcontract or arrangement entered into with or for the benefit of the United States Atomic Energy Commission or its successors Energy Research and Development Administration or the Department of Energy.

—AND/OR—

IV. The invention was not made under nor is there any relationship of the invention to the performance of any work under any contract of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The undersigned inventor(s) declare(s) further that all statements made herein of his or her (their) own knowledge are true and that all

statements made on information and belief are believed to be true and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

Inventor's Signature _____
Post Office Address _____
Date _____

Inventor's Signature _____
Post Office Address _____
Date _____

