

§ 1.251

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(2) By leaving a copy at the usual place of business of the person served with someone in his employment;

(3) When the person served has no usual place of business, by leaving a copy at the person's residence, with some person of suitable age and discretion who resides there;

(4) Transmission by first class mail. When service is by mail the date of mailing will be regarded as the date of service;

(5) Whenever it shall be satisfactorily shown to the Commissioner that none of the above modes of obtaining or serving the paper is practicable, service may be by notice published in the *Official Gazette*.

(b) Papers filed in the Patent and Trademark Office which are required to be served shall contain proof of service. Proof of service may appear on or be affixed to papers filed. Proof of service shall include the date and manner of service. In the case of personal service, proof of service shall also include the name of any person served, certified by the person who made service. Proof of service may be made by:

(1) An acknowledgement of service by or on behalf of the person served or

(2) A statement signed by the attorney or agent containing the information required by this section.

(c) See § 1.646 for service of papers in interferences.

[46 FR 29184, May 29, 1981, as amended at 49 FR 48454, Dec. 12, 1984]

§ 1.251 Unlocatable file.

(a) In the event that the Office cannot locate the file of an application, patent, or other patent-related proceeding after a reasonable search, the Office will notify the applicant or patentee and set a time period within which the applicant or patentee must comply with the notice in accordance with one of paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) of this section.

(1) Applicant or patentee may comply with a notice under this section by providing:

(i) A copy of the applicant's or patentee's record (if any) of all of the correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding (except for U.S. patent documents);

(ii) A list of such correspondence; and

(iii) A statement that the copy is a complete and accurate copy of the applicant's or patentee's record of all of the correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding (except for U.S. patent documents), and whether applicant or patentee is aware of any correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding that is not among applicant's or patentee's records.

(2) Applicant or patentee may comply with a notice under this section by:

(i) Producing the applicant's or patentee's record (if any) of all of the correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding for the Office to copy (except for U.S. patent documents); and

(ii) Providing a statement that the papers produced by applicant or patentee are applicant's or patentee's complete record of all of the correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding (except for U.S. patent documents), and whether applicant or patentee is aware of any correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding that is not among applicant's or patentee's records.

(3) If applicant or patentee does not possess any record of the correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding, applicant or patentee must comply with a notice under this section by providing a statement that applicant or patentee does not possess any record of the correspondence between the Office and the applicant or patentee for such application, patent, or other proceeding.

(b) With regard to a pending application, failure to comply with one of paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) of this section within the time period set in the notice will result in abandonment of the application.

[65 FR 69451, Nov. 17, 2000]

PROTESTS AND PUBLIC USE PROCEEDINGS

§ 1.291 Protests by the public against pending applications.

(a) Protests by a member of the public against pending applications will be referred to the examiner having charge of the subject matter involved. A protest specifically identifying the application to which the protest is directed will be entered in the application file if:

(1) The protest is submitted prior to the date the application was published or the mailing of a notice of allowance under § 1.311, whichever occurs first; and

(2) The protest is either served upon the applicant in accordance with § 1.248, or filed with the Office in duplicate in the event service is not possible.

(b) Protests raising fraud or other inequitable conduct issues will be entered in the application file, generally without comment on those issues. Protests which do not adequately identify a pending patent application will be returned to the protestor and will not be further considered by the Office. A protest submitted in accordance with the second sentence of paragraph (a) of this section will be considered by the Office if the application is still pending when the protest and application file are brought before the examiner and it includes:

(1) A listing of the patents, publications, or other information relied upon;

(2) A concise explanation of the relevance of each listed item;

(3) A copy of each listed patent or publication or other item of information in written form or at least the pertinent portions thereof; and

(4) An English language translation of all the necessary and pertinent parts of any non-English language patent, publication, or other item of information in written form relied upon.

(c) A member of the public filing a protest in an application under paragraph (a) of this section will not receive any communications from the Office relating to the protest, other than the return of a self-addressed postcard which the member of the public may include with the protest in order to receive an acknowledgment by the Office that the protest has been received. In

the absence of a request by the Office, an applicant has no duty to, and need not, reply to a protest. The limited involvement of the member of the public filing a protest pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section ends with the filing of the protest, and no further submission on behalf of the protestor will be considered, except for additional prior art, or unless such submission raises new issues which could not have been earlier presented.

[47 FR 21752, May 19, 1982, as amended at 57 FR 2035, Jan. 17, 1992; 61 FR 42806, Aug. 19, 1996; 62 FR 53198, Oct. 10, 1997; 65 FR 57060, Sept. 20, 2000]

§ 1.292 Public use proceedings.

(a) When a petition for the institution of public use proceedings, supported by affidavits or declarations is found, on reference to the examiner, to make a *prima facie* showing that the invention claimed in an application believed to be on file had been in public use or on sale more than one year before the filing of the application, a hearing may be had before the Commissioner to determine whether a public use proceeding should be instituted. If instituted, the Commissioner may designate an appropriate official to conduct the public use proceeding, including the setting of times for taking testimony, which shall be taken as provided by §§ 1.671 through 1.685. The petitioner will be heard in the proceedings but after decision therein will not be heard further in the prosecution of the application for patent.

(b) The petition and accompanying papers, or a notice that such a petition has been filed, shall be entered in the application file if:

(1) The petition is accompanied by the fee set forth in § 1.17(j);

(2) The petition is served on the applicant in accordance with § 1.248, or filed with the Office in duplicate in the event service is not possible; and

(3) The petition is submitted prior to the date the application was published or the mailing of a notice of allowance under § 1.311, whichever occurs first.

(c) A petition for institution of public use proceedings shall not be filed by a party to an interference as to an application involved in the interference.