



# In answer to your query

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USEFUL ARTICLES

FL-103

Designs for useful articles such as vehicular bodies, wearing apparel, household appliances, and the like are not protected by copyright. However, the design of a useful article is subject to copyright protection to the degree that its pictorial, graphic, or sculptural features can be identified as existing independently of the utilitarian object in which they are embodied.

The line between uncopyrightable works of industrial design and copyrightable works of applied art is not always clear. A two-dimensional painting, drawing, or other graphic work is still identifiable when it is printed on or applied to useful articles such as textile fabrics, wall-paper, containers, and the like. On the other hand, although the shape of an industrial product may be aesthetically satisfying and valuable, the copyright law does not afford it protection. The designs of some useful objects may be entitled to protection under design patent law administered by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Write to Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 or call the Patent and Trademark help line at (800) 786-9199 or (571) 272-1000 (tty: (571) 272-9950). For the Trademark Assistance Center, call (800) 786-9199 or (571) 272-9250. Information is available at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov).

Designs separately identifiable from useful articles may be registered.

Sincerely yours,

Register of Copyrights

## Registering a Copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office

An application for copyright registration contains three essential elements: a completed application form, a nonrefundable filing fee, and a nonreturnable deposit—that is, a copy or copies of the work being registered and “deposited” with the Copyright Office.

A copyright registration is effective on the date the Copyright Office receives all the required elements in acceptable form.

### Online Registration

Online registration through the electronic Copyright Office (eCO) is the preferred way to register basic claims for literary works; visual arts works; performing arts works, including motion pictures; sound recordings; and single serials.

Advantages of eCO filing include the lowest filing fee; the fastest processing time; online status tracking; secure payment by credit or debit card, electronic check, or Copyright Office deposit account; and the ability to upload certain categories of deposits directly into eCO as electronic files. To access eCO, go to the Copyright Office website and click on *electronic Copyright Office*.

### Fill-In Form CO

The new fill-in Form CO is the next-best option for registering basic claims. Simply complete Form CO on your personal computer,

print it out, and mail it along with a check or money order and your deposit. To access Form CO, go to the Copyright Office website and click on *Forms*.

### Registration with Paper Forms

Paper versions of Forms TX (literary works); VA (visual arts works); PA (performing arts works); SR (sound recordings); SE (single serials); and CON (continuation sheet for paper applications) are still available. However, these paper forms are not accessible on the Copyright Office website; staff will send them by postal mail upon request (limit of two copies of each form). Certain other applications *must* be completed on paper and mailed to the Copyright Office with the appropriate fee and deposit. These applications, available on the Office’s website by clicking on *Forms*, include Form RE (renewal of copyright claims) and forms for group submissions. For a complete list, see SL-35, *Registering a Copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office*.

See Circular 1, *Copyright Basics*, for complete details about copyright, deposit requirements, and registration procedures.

**NOTE: Copyright Office fees are subject to change. For current fees, please check the Copyright Office website, write the Copyright Office, or call (202) 707-3000.**

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## For Further Information

### By Internet

Circulars, announcements, regulations, certain application forms, and other materials are available from the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov). To send an email communication, click on *Contact Us* at the bottom of the homepage.

### By Telephone

For general information about copyright, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000. Staff members are on duty from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, eastern time, Monday

through Friday, except federal holidays. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day. To request paper application forms or circulars, call the Forms and Publications Hotline at (202) 707-9100 and leave a recorded message.

### By Regular Mail

Write to  
*Library of Congress  
Copyright Office-COPUBS  
101 Independence Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20059-6304*