



In answer to your query

GAMES

FL-108

Copyright does not protect the idea for a game, its name or title, or the method or methods for playing it. Nor does copyright protect any idea, system, method, device, or trademark material involved in developing, merchandising, or playing a game. Once a game has been made public, nothing in the copyright law prevents others from developing another game based on similar principles. Copyright protects only the particular manner of an author's expression in literary, artistic, or musical form.

Material prepared in connection with a game may be subject to copyright if it contains a sufficient amount of literary or pictorial expression. For example, the text matter describing the rules of the game or the pictorial matter appearing on the gameboard or container may be registrable.

The back side of this form letter describes the options for registering copyrightable portions of games. If your game includes any written element, such as instructions or directions, we recommend that you apply to register it as a literary work. Doing so will allow you to register all copyrightable parts of the game, including any pictorial elements. When the copyrightable elements of the game consist predominantly of pictorial matter, you should apply to register it as a work of the visual arts.

The deposit requirements will vary, depending on whether the work has been published at the time of registration. If the game is *published*, the proper deposit is one complete copy of the work. If, however, the game is published in a box larger than 12" x 24" x 6" (or a total of 1,728 cubic inches) then identifying material must be submitted in lieu of the entire game. (See "identifying material" below). If the game is published and contains fewer than three three-dimensional elements, then identifying material for those parts must be submitted in lieu of those parts. If the game is *unpublished*, either one copy of the game or identifying material should be deposited.

Identifying material deposited to represent the game or its three-dimensional parts usually consists of photographs, photostats, slides, drawings, or other two-dimensional representations of the work. The identifying material should include as many pieces as necessary to show the entire copyrightable content of the work, including the copyright notice if it appears on the work. All pieces of identifying material other than transparencies must be no less than 3" x 3" in size, and not more than 9" x 12", but preferably 8" x 10". At least one piece of identifying material must, on its front, back, or mount, indicate the title of the work and an exact measurement of one or more dimensions of the work.

Sincerely yours,

Register of Copyrights

Copyright Office fees are subject to change. For current fees, please check the Copyright Office website at www.copyright.gov, write the Copyright Office, or call (202) 707-3000.

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.

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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. 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