



# 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, wallpaper, 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, Washington, D.C. 20231 or call the Patent and Trademark help line at (800) PTO-9199 or (703) 308-help (TTY: (703) 305-7785). For the Trademark Assistance Center, call (703) 308-9000. Internet information is available on the Internet at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov).

Designs separately identifiable from useful articles may be registered on Form VA.

Sincerely yours,

Register of Copyrights

## How Long Does Copyright Registration Take?

A copyright registration is effective on the date the Copyright Office receives all required elements in acceptable form, regardless of the length of time it takes to process the application and mail the certificate of registration. The length of time required to process an application varies, depending on the amount of material received.

You will receive no acknowledgment that your application for copyright registration has been received (the Office receives more than 500,000 applications annually), but you may expect:

- A letter, telephone, or email call from a Copyright Office staff member if further information is needed; *and*

- A certificate of registration to indicate the work has been registered, or if the application cannot be accepted, a letter explaining why it has been rejected.

You might not receive either of these until approximately 4–5 months after submission.

If you want to know when the Copyright Office received your material, send it via registered or certified mail and request a return receipt.

For further information, write:

*Library of Congress  
Copyright Office  
Information Section, LM-401  
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000*

## Application Forms

If you need additional application forms for copyright registration, call (202) 707-9100 at any time. Leave your request as a recorded message on the Copyright Office Forms and Publications Hotline. Please specify the kind and number of forms you need. If you have general information questions and wish to talk to an information specialist, call (202) 707-3000, TTY (202) 707-6737.

You may also photocopy blank application forms; *however*, photocopied forms submitted to the Copyright Office must be clear, legible, on a good grade of 8½-inch by 11-inch white paper suitable for automatic feeding through a scanner/photocopier. The forms should be printed, preferably in black ink, head-to-head so that when you turn the sheet over, the top of page 2 is directly behind the top of page 1. **Forms not meeting these requirements will be returned.**

All Copyright Office application forms are available from the Copyright Office Website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov). They may be downloaded and printed for use in registering or renewing a claim to copyright.

You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer to view and print the forms. The free Adobe Acrobat Reader may be downloaded from Adobe Systems Incorporated through links from the same Internet site at which the forms are available.

Print application forms head-to-head (top of page 2 is directly behind the top of page 1) on a single piece of good quality, 8½-inch by 11-inch white paper. To achieve the best quality copies, use a laser printer.

Copyright Office circulars, forms, and other information are also available from the Copyright Office website.

Copyright Office circulars and announcements are available via fax. Call (202) 707-2600 from any touchtone telephone. Key in your fax number at the prompt and the document number of the item(s) you want to receive by fax. The item(s) will be transmitted to your fax machine. If you do not know the document number of the item(s) you want, request that a menu be faxed to you. You may order up to three items at a time. Note that copyright application forms are *not* available by fax.