

# Copyright Registration of Musical Compositions and Sound Recordings

This circular explains the difference, for copyright purposes, between *musical compositions* and *sound recordings*.

A *musical composition* consists of music, including any accompanying words, and is normally registered on Form PA. The author of a musical composition is generally the composer, and the lyricist, if any. A musical composition may be in the form of a notated copy (for example, sheet music) or in the form of a phonorecord (for example, cassette tape, LP, or CD). Sending a musical composition in the form of a phonorecord does not necessarily mean that there is a claim to copyright in the sound recording.

A *sound recording* results from the fixation of a series of musical, spoken, or other sounds and is always registered on Form SR. The author of a sound recording is the performer(s) whose performance is fixed, or the record producer who processes the sounds and fixes them in the final recording, or both.

Copyright in a sound recording is not the same as, or a substitute for, copyright in the underlying musical composition.

## Registration of a Musical Composition and a Sound Recording with a Single Application

Although they are separate works, a musical composition and a sound recording may be registered together on a single application if ownership of the copyrights in both is exactly the same. To register a single claim in both works, complete Form SR. Give information about the author(s) of both the musical composition and the sound recording.

## Registration Procedures

To register your work, send the following material in the same envelope or package to *Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 101 Independence Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20559-6000*:

- 1 A properly completed application form
- 2 A nonreturnable, clearly labeled deposit(s) of the work to be registered and
- 3 A nonrefundable filing fee\* for each application

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

## Use This Chart to Help Choose the Appropriate Form for Copyright Registration

What is being registered	Form to Use	How to describe "Nature of Authorship" in space 2	What should be deposited Published in the United States*	What should be deposited Unpublished
Song or other musical composition	PA	Music and words <i>or</i> Music	2 complete copies (if published in a notated copy) <i>or</i> 1 phonorecord (if published only on a disc or cassette)	1 complete copy (lead sheet, etc.) <i>or</i> 1 complete phonorecord (disc or cassette)
Sound recording only	SR	Sound recording	2 complete phonorecords	1 complete phonorecord
Musical composition and sound recording	SR	Music and sound recording <i>or</i> Music, words, and sound recording	2 complete phonorecords	1 complete phonorecord

**Points to note:** Do not leave space 2 blank. Do not use "entire work" to describe "nature of authorship." Deposit the "best edition" of a published work.

\*For foreign publications, one copy or phonorecord of either the first published edition or the best edition.

**NOTE:** To make a single registration, copyright ownership in the musical composition and in the sound recording must be the same.

**NOTE:** Phonorecords (tapes, cassette tapes, cartridges, discs) are not sound recordings. Phonorecords are physical objects in which various kinds of works can be fixed. The works themselves may be musical compositions, literary works, dramatic works, or sound recordings.

### Effective Date of Registration

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

If you apply for copyright registration, you will not receive an acknowledgment that your application has been received (the Office receives more than 600,000 applications annually), but you can expect:

- A letter or a telephone call from a Copyright Office staff member if further information is needed or
- A certificate of registration indicating that the work has been registered, or if the application cannot be accepted, a letter explaining why it has been rejected.

Requests to have certificates available for pickup in the Public Information Office or to have certificates sent by Federal Express or another mail service cannot be honored.

If you want to know the date that the Copyright Office receives your material, send it by registered or certified mail and request a return receipt.

### For Further Information

#### Information via the Internet

Circulars, announcements, regulations, other related materials, and all copyright application forms are available from the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

#### Information by telephone

For general information about copyright, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000. The TTY number is (202) 707-6737. 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. Or, if you know which application forms and circulars you want, request them 24 hours a day from the Forms and Publications Hotline at (202) 707-9100. Leave a recorded message.

#### Information by regular mail

Write to:

Library of Congress  
Copyright Office  
Publications Section  
101 Independence Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20559-6000