

Registration Processing Times

The Copyright Office's processing times vary based on a number of factors, including how difficult a claim is to review, whether an applicant submitted a physical deposit, whether the Copyright Office needs to correspond with an applicant, and the number of registration specialists available to review claims. For example, claims take longer to process when applicants submit online claims but do not submit physical deposits when necessary, or when applicants do not fully respond to an examiner's questions. The Office encourages applicants to refer to the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices* and the Copyright Office's circulars prior to submitting applications to avoid unnecessary delays and correspondence.

Overall processing times usually are longer for claims submitted entirely by mail, so the Copyright Office encourages applying online.

The Office understands processing times are important and is working to improve them.

For questions, please contact the Public Information Office by phone at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll-free), or online at www.copyright.gov/help. While the Public Information Office can provide information on pending claims, it can take the Copyright Office as long as the outer ranges set forth below to issue decisions on whether to register claims.

The average processing time for all claims is 3.1 months. The Office had to communicate with applicants on twenty-three percent of all claims to resolve questions about submitted claims before rendering a decision. For information on the processing times and correspondence rates for specific types of applications, see the below charts.

Note regarding the pandemic and claims with physical deposits. The Office calculates processing times based on the time between the date that a record is created in our system and the date that the record is marked "closed." Current processing times thus do not reflect claims with physical deposits that the Office was unable to process before March 31 due to the pandemic. The Office expects average processing times for those claims to increase as the Office closes them, though any such increase should be temporary. As the physical deposits affected by the pandemic are examined and closed by staff after returning onsite, processing times are expected to decrease.

eService Claims: online application with uploaded digital deposit *(approximately 90 percent of all applications)*

Claims that DO NOT require correspondence *(approximately 78 percent of all eService claims and 70 percent of all claims)*

 **average 1.9 months**
(but claims can range from <1 month to 4 months)

Claims WITH correspondence *(approximately 22 percent of all eService claims and 20 percent of all claims)*

 **average 3.7 months**
(but claims can range from <1 month to 8 months)

Deposit Ticket Claims: online application with mail-in physical deposit *(approximately 9 percent of all applications)*

Claims that DO NOT require correspondence *(approximately 73 percent of all Deposit Ticket claims and 6 percent of all claims)*

 **average 10.2 months**
(but claims can range from 3 months to 17 months)

Claims WITH correspondence *(approximately 27 percent of all Deposit Ticket claims and 2 percent of all claims)*

 **average 11.9 months**
(but claims can range from 4 months to 20 months)

Mail Claims: application by paper form submission *(approximately 1 percent of all applications)*

Claims that DO NOT require correspondence *(approximately 31 percent of all Mail claims and <1 percent of all claims)*

 **average 13.5 months** (but claims can range from <1 month to 35 months)

Claims WITH correspondence *(approximately 69 percent of all Mail claims and 1 percent of all claims)*

 **average 11.8 months** (but claims can range from 3 months to 21 months)

* **Processing times for cases closed October 1 – March 31, 2021.** Note that this time period occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, when mail services to the Copyright Office were significantly disrupted. This resulted in unusually long processing times for mail claims and deposit ticket claims. The Copyright Office created accommodations for deposit tickets claims to mitigate the mail disruption issue that, if used, can reduce processing times. For more information on Copyright Office operations during the pandemic, please visit www.copyright.gov/coronavirus.

Registration Processing Times FAQs

How Does the Copyright Office Measure Processing Times?

The Copyright Office measures processing times from the time a record is created in our system until a claim is marked “closed” in the system. For applications submitted via our website, a record is created when we receive the application and payment even if we have not yet received the deposit; for applications submitted by mail, a record is created when the application information has been transcribed into our electronic system. Claims that are received without a deposit, correct application, or full payment will have a delayed registration decision and therefore will delay processing.

How long does the registration process take, and when will I receive my certificate?

The amount of time needed to examine a claim and issue a certificate varies depending on a number of factors. These factors may include the complexity of your claim, the Office’s available resources when your claim is received, and the total number of claims that are currently pending with the Copyright Office. Processing times vary depending on whether you submitted your claim through the electronic registration system or sent it to the Office by mail. Processing times also vary depending on whether there are problems with your claim, and whether the Office must communicate with you to address those issues.

The Office understands that processing times are important to applicants and continues to strive towards making the examination process more efficient.

How can I ensure my claim is processed in a timely manner?

Claims that are submitted electronically are typically processed the fastest. Processing times are typically longer if you submit your application by mail, or if you submit an electronic application and mail your deposit to the Office. Thus, the Office encourages applicants to use the electronic application and upload an electronic copy of your work whenever possible.

Processing times also increase if there are problems or deficiencies with your application, deposit, or filing fee, and if the Office must correspond with you to address these issues. To avoid delays, the Office encourages applicants to refer to the Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices and the Copyright Office’s circulars when completing your application and prior to submitting your claim.

Once your claim has been filed, you should routinely monitor your email account for messages from the Copyright Office. If you receive an email from the Office you should respond within 45 days after the message was sent, and you should provide a full and complete response to the examiner’s questions.

Why is my claim taking longer than the average processing time shown on the Copyright Office’s website?

Processing times increase whenever there are problems or deficiencies with an application, deposit, or filing fee, and whenever the Copyright Office must call or write the applicant to address these issues. For example, processing times increase when applicants submit an electronic application, but do not submit the deposit within the time allowed, or when applicants upload an electronic deposit in cases where a physical deposit is required. Processing times also increase when an examiner emails the applicant but does not receive a complete response to his or her questions. While the Office will attempt to solve some problems through correspondence with the applicant, claims with deficiencies or inaccuracies will always take longer to resolve.

Who do I contact with questions?

The Public Information Office can provide general information on your pending claim if you contact them by phone at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll-free), or online at www.copyright.gov/help.