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Registering Copyright Work

This fact sheet explains the process of copyright registration, and the benefits of registering your work.

1. **Why register?**
   Although copyright is an automatic right of the author, if an unscrupulous third party infringes your work, proving your claim may be a difficult matter.
   In the past, a popular but misguided solution has been to post a copy of the work to yourself. As it is an easy task to open and replace the contents, or simply seal the envelope later, this method does not provide strong evidence in the event of a dispute.
   Without more substantial evidence, copyright disputes can boil down to a case of their word against yours, and if the other party has greater financial resources, reputation and lawyers it may be very difficult to get a ruling in your favour.
   This is why we feel the best solution is to have the work registered, so that in the event of a dispute you have the best, independently verifiable, evidence that you are the copyright owner.
2. **About Copyright Witness**
   One of the key considerations in setting up Copyright Witness was to achieve a better level of copyright protection at a price that everyone can afford.
   Copyright Witness is essentially an independent witnessing service and an archive of original works, which offers impartial supporting evidence of copyright ownership.
   Nothing can ever provide a 100% guarantee, but if you register your copyright and follow our guidelines we feel you will have done as much as possible to protect your work.
3. **What types of work can be registered?**
   Just about anything which is an original work, here are some examples based on experience so far:
   Music, lyrics and sound recordings. Design work. Web sites. Advertisements, plans, designs and patterns. Labels, maps and charts. Computer programs. Films and scripts. Books, manuscripts and synopsis. Artwork and photography. Commercial documents, logos, letterheads. Periodicals, catalogues and other documents. Games (rules and descriptions). Descriptions of ideas prior to patent.
4. **What happens when your work is registered?**
   i. You will be allocated a personal account number, and information about the work is stored in our database.
   ii. Your work will be stored in our secure archives and allocated a registration number that identifies it.
   iii. Encrypted back ups of your work are stored in multiple, geographically separated locations. This precaution ensures protection against data corruption, fire, and other risks.
   iv. You will be sent a certificate as confirmation of registration.
      - For postal submissions a paper certificate is posted back.
      - For online submission a PDF certificate is emailed.
      - Additional paper certificates may be ordered on the registration form.

   v. The archive is maintained by Copyright Witness personnel who take every reasonable care to ensure that copies of your work are kept safe and secure for the period of registration. You will also be notified when the registration is nearing it's end and offered the option to extend the registration period if required.
   vi. Your details, your work and all data about it are treated as confidential.
   vii. An entry in our archive is evidence of copyright ownership from the date of registration, and will assist you in the event of a dispute.
5. **How to register your work**
   i. **On-line**
   The fastest way to register is via the on-line registration service available on our website. This provides immediate protection for your work.
   ii. **Postal applications**
   To register by post, simply complete the registration application form F-01, and send the following:
      - A copy of the work to be registered.
      - The completed application.
      - The registration fee.

   The online registration facility and postal forms can be accessed from our website via copyrightwitness.com/reg
6. **When to register**
   It is important to remember that a registration is evidence of your work from the registration date. It is therefore best to register sooner rather than later so you establish the evidence before your work has a chance to be infringed.
7. **Accepted media formats for postal applications**
   i. **Recommended formats**
   Recommended formats are all acceptable in the standard fees with no extra cost:
      - Compact disc, DVD, Blu-ray disc or USB Flash drive/USB SSD media up to 10GB (10240MB) of data. (Video DVD/BD must be multi region [Region 0] or playable on UK machines [Region 2], PAL format, and not copy protected).
      - Fabric, up to 20 samples of A4/Letter/Foolscap size maximum per registration.
      - Paper documents up to 20 pages of A4/Letter/Foolscap size: This includes all items printed on a paper media type including photographs.
        Wherever possible non-bound documents are preferred.
        'Pages' here means physical paper pages (sheets of paper).

   ii. **Formats requiring an additional processing fee**
   These formats incur an extra fee to cover additional data back-up cost and administration time, (please see section headed "Charges and registration limits" for details):
      - CD/DVD/BluRay discs or USB Flash drive/USB SSD media containing over 10GB (10240MB) of data.
      - Paper documents over 20 pages.
      - Paper documents larger than A4 size

   iii. **Not accepted**
   The following formats are not/no longer accepted:
      - Video tapes.
      - Floppy disc.
      - Cassette or DAT tapes (any format).
      - Paper documents larger than A3 size.
        (10 pages maximum at A3 size).
      - MiniDisc, Zip or Jaz drive.
      - Vinyl Records.
      - Negatives or film reels.

   If you wish to register formats not listed please contact Copyright Witness via our web site or write to us at the following address to confirm terms:

   Copyright Witness Registration Enquiries
   4 Tavistock Avenue, Didcot, OX11 8NA,
   United Kingdom
   copyrightwitness.com

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8. **Charges and registration limits**
   i. **On-line**
      a. **On-line registration fees**
      The current on-line fees are £99.00 for a 10 year registration, or £59.50 for a 5 year registration.
      b. **On-line registration limits**
      Up to 20 GiB* of data can be included in a single on-line registration deposit submission, and no limit to the amount of files that may be uploaded within each submission.
      (*individual file limit is 4 GiB, but multiple files can be included in a single submission up to the 20 GiB maximum).
      If you have a large number of files, we strongly recommend that you use an archiving program such as WinZip, StuffIt or Tar, to convert your files to a single archive to preserve your directory structure and simplify your upload.
      Please be aware that large files will take a long time to upload, so you may wish to consider a postal application if you have a large amount (i.e. 500MB+) of data to send.
   ii. **Postal applications**
      a. **Registration fees for postal applications**
      The current fees for postal applications are £109.00 for a 10 year registration, or £69.50 for a 5 year registration.
      b. **Included in the fee**
      The standard charges include submissions of CD/DVD/BD or USB drive containing up to 10GB (10240MB) of data, or paper documents, photos or fabric samples up to 20 pages A4/Letter/Foolscap size.
      c. **Charges for items requiring additional processing:**
      - Paper documents/printed materials over 20 pages are charged at £5.00 per 100 pages or part thereof:
        e.g. 21-120 pages = £5.00,
        121-220 pages = £10.00,
        221-320 pages = £15.00, etc.
      - A £5.00 fee also applies if items are larger than A4 size.
      - DVD/BD/CD disc(s), USB Flash drive or USB SSD containing over 10GB of data are charged at £10.00 per 10GB or part thereof:
        e.g. between 10-20GB = £10.00, 20-30GB = £20.00, etc.

9. **For maximum protection, ensure that;**
   i. Your work contains a copyright notice.
   e.g. Copyright © 2026 Joe Smith.
   ii. Once registered, include a statement that your work is registered with Copyright Witness to deter infringement.
   iii. In the case of jointly authored works, you should have an agreement, so that if a member of your collective leaves you are all clear what will happen to the copyright of your work.
   iv. Any significant updates to your work are registered using the registration update form F-08, or the on-line registration update facility available via our website.
   For more information about protecting your work, see our fact sheet P-02 "Protecting Copyright".

10. **What if an infringement is made on your copyright?**
In the event of a copyright dispute, Copyright Witness can act as an impartial independent witness, providing evidence to authenticate your claim.
Copyright Witness can verify when the work was first registered by means of the certificate of registration, and, at your instruction, we can produce copies of the work as proof of the content of your work at the registration date, these can be sent to any address you specify, this may be your solicitor, or the judge/tribunal dealing with your case.

11. **Extending the registration period**
   i. A registration can be extended via our website at any point when it has less than 5 left to run.
   Expired registrations can also be extended/renewed up to 28 days after the expiry date.
   ii. We automatically send reminders via email when the registration expiry date is near and offer the option to extend the registration for a further 5 or 10 year period if required.
   If we do not have a valid email address for you, we will send a reminder by post instead.

   The maximum registration duration at any point is 10 years, but renewal process can be repeated as often as required throughout the life of the work, up to the legal copyright duration (which is normally author's life plus 70 years).

12. **Important notes, exceptions and allowances**
   i. **Registering a collection of works under one title**
   Where a number of items form a larger collective work, you may register all parts together as a single 'work'.
   For example: A web site and artwork. A music album, lyrics and midi files. A single collection of poems.
   In such cases, the work is registered as one item, with one title; this does not affect the copyright of the work in any way, but please ensure this is suitable for your needs.
   Please note: As copyright exists under the name of the author or company/commissioner of the work, work by different authors, organisations or collaborations should be registered separately.
   ii. **Electronic documents with unusual fonts or images**
   If you are registering electronic documents, (e.g. Word, Excel, PDF, etc.), ensure that any graphic files are included or embedded in the documents. Also ensure that any custom fonts are embedded.
   iii. **Extracts, quotes etc.**
   If your work includes some parts which are not your own creation, it may still be possible to register provided you either have permission to use the work, and enclose proof of written permission from the copyright owner of the parts in question, (a photocopy will suffice), or remove any parts that are not your own creation from the copy for registration.
   iv. **Outstanding disputes**
   This service provides evidence in case of future infringement. It will not assist if ownership of the work is already in dispute.

13. **Privacy policy**
Copyright Witness maintains a strict privacy policy.
   - All information submitted will only be used in the function of providing, maintaining and monitoring this service.
   - All client details, registered works or registration details are considered confidential and except where legally required, (i.e. by court order or Police investigation), will not be disclosed to any third party without prior consent.
   - Client details will never be passed onto other companies, mailing lists, etc.
   - All electronic back-ups of works are encrypted, to ensure they cannot be accessed by unauthorised personnel.
   - All personnel dealing directly with client details are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
   - All documents and files containing client data that require disposal, (such as redundant or expired files) are disposed of in a secure manner, normally by shredding and/or incineration.

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This fact sheet should be considered only as an introduction to the ideas of copyright. It should not be treated as a definitive guide, nor should it be considered to cover every area of concern, or be regarded as legal advice.