

Blank Forms and Other Works Not Protected by Copyright

Blank forms and similar works designed to record rather than to convey information are not protected by copyright.

To be protected by copyright, a work must contain a certain minimum amount of original literary, pictorial, or musical expression. Copyright does not extend to names, titles, or short phrases or clauses, such as those in column headings and simple checklists. Furthermore, the format, layout, and typography of a work is not protected, nor are works consisting entirely of information that is common property containing no original authorship. Examples include standard calendars, height and weight charts, tape measures, rulers, schedules of sporting events, and lists or tables taken from public documents or other common sources.

Only the actual expression of an author is protected by copyright. The ideas, plans, methods, or systems described or embodied in a work are not protected by copyright. Thus copyright protection cannot be secured for an idea or principle behind a blank form or a similar work or for any of the methods or systems involved in it.

An original literary or pictorial work is copyrightable even when it is published with a blank form or other material not protected by copyright, provided that the requirements of copyright law are met. But copyright protection in such a case would extend only to the original literary or pictorial expression used by the author, not to the blank form or other unprotected aspects of the work. For example, copyright protection for original photographs or an original compilation of terms or phrases published with a blank form would extend only to the photographs or the compilation, not to the blank form.

For Further Information

By Internet

Circulars, announcements, regulations, application forms, and other related materials are available from the Copyright Office website at www.copyright.gov. Claims to copyright can also be registered online at this address.

By Telephone

For general information about copyright, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free). Staff members are on duty from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, eastern time, except federal holidays. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day. To request

paper application forms or circulars, call (202) 707-9100 or 1-877-476-0778 and leave a recorded message.

By Regular Mail

Write to:

*Library of Congress
Copyright Office-COPUBS
101 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20559*