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# IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUERY

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LIBRARY  
OF  
CONGRESS

## GAMES

COPYRIGHT  
OFFICE

101 Independence  
Avenue, S.E.

Washington, D.C.  
20559-6000

The idea for a game is not protected by copyright. The same is true of the name or title given to the game and of the method or methods for playing it.

Copyright protects only the particular manner of an author's expression in literary, artistic, or musical form. Copyright protection does not extend to any idea, system, method, device, or trademark material involved in the development, merchandising, or playing of a game. Once a game has been made public, nothing in the copyright law prevents others from developing another game based on similar principles.

Some material prepared in connection with a game may be subject to copyright if it contains a sufficient amount of literary or pictorial expression. For example, the text matter describing the rules of the game, or the pictorial matter appearing on the game-board or container, may be registrable.

In order to register the copyrightable portions of a game, you must send the Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 101 Independence Avenue S.E., Washington, D.C. 20559-6000, the following elements **in the same envelope or package**:

1. A completed application form. If your game includes any written element, such as instructions or directions, we recommend using Form TX, which can be used to register all copyrightable parts of the game, including any pictorial elements. When the copyrightable elements of the game consist predominantly of pictorial matter, Form VA should be used.
2. A nonrefundable filing fee of \$30\*.
3. A deposit of the material to be registered. The deposit requirements will vary depending on whether the work has been published at the time of registration.

If the game is *published*, the proper deposit is one complete copy of the work. If, however, the game is published in a box larger than 12 x 24 x 6 inches (or a total of 1728 cubic inches) then identifying material must be submitted in lieu of the entire game. (See "identifying material" below). If the game is published and contains fewer than three 3-dimensional elements, then identifying material for those parts must be submitted in lieu of those parts.

If the game is *unpublished*, either one copy of the game OR identifying material should be deposited.

*Identifying material* deposited to represent the game or its 3-dimensional parts shall usually consist of photographs, photostats, slides, drawings, or other 2-dimensional representations of the work. The identifying material shall include as many pieces as necessary to show the entire copyrightable content of the work including the copyright notice if it appears on the work. All pieces of identifying material other than transparencies must be no less than 3 x 3 inches in size, and not more than 9 x 12 inches, but preferably 8 x 10 inches. At least one piece of identifying material must, on its front, back, or mount, indicate the title of the work and an exact measurement of one or more dimensions of the work.

Sincerely yours,

Register of Copyrights

**\* Fees are effective through June 30, 2002. For the latest fee information, write the Copyright Office, check the Copyright Office Website at [www.loc.gov/copyright](http://www.loc.gov/copyright), or call (202) 707-3000.**

Enclosures

## How Long Does Copyright Registration Take?

A copyright registration is effective on the date of receipt in the Copyright Office of 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 by the Copyright Office to process an application varies from time to time, depending on the amount of material received. Remember that it takes a number of days for mail to reach the Copyright Office and for the certificate of registration to reach the recipient after being mailed from the Copyright Office.

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

- A letter or telephone 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 8 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 Ave., S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

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 in Washington, D.C. 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 to the originator.**

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

Frequently requested Copyright Office circulars, announcements, and recently proposed as well as final regulations 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, you may 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.