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Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, helps citizens understand their government. The FOIA was signed into law in 1966, became effective in 1967, and was most recently updated through the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016. Under the FOIA, agencies shall withhold information from release only if there is an appropriate basis for “exempting” that material from disclosure; see the [complete list of exemptions](#).

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) endeavors to make records available to the public, while protecting information where appropriate under the law.

If you cannot find the records you are looking for in any of the USPTO's publicly-available sources, you can file a FOIA request.

To submit a FOIA request or request records about yourself under the Privacy Act of 1974, you can do so electronically through [FOIA.gov](#) or by email to FOIARequests@uspto.gov. For more information about how to submit a FOIA request, including submission by mail, see [how to submit FOIA request](#).

Privacy Act of 1974 (Privacy Act)

The Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a, lets individuals access records about themselves, and establishes information practices that govern the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of information about individuals that federal agencies maintain in a system of records.

The USPTO's [systems of records notices \(SORNs\)](#), which describe the types of records maintained and the routine uses for such records, are published in the Federal Register. Some USPTO records may also be covered by SORNs of other agencies, for example, the Department of Commerce's department-wide SORNs.

Privacy Act requests may also be submitted to FOIARequests@uspto.gov, and will require confirmation of identity.

Publicly available records and resources

Many of the USPTO's documents are already available to the public. These documents are proactively disclosed in the interest of transparency and public education. They include USPTO final decisions, procurement documents, patent examination data, trademark examination data, bulk data products, research datasets, training materials, and other useful records.

Please explore the www.uspto.gov homepage for information related to Patents, Trademarks, and IP Policy. For your convenience, below are links to frequently requested records and FOIA resources:

Contracts

- [Procurement contracts](#)

Legal decisions

- [Patent Trial and Appeal Board decisions](#)
- [Trademark Trial and Appeal Board decisions](#)
- [Office of Enrollment and Discipline decisions](#)
- [Director Decisions on Patent Rule 90.3 \(or prior Patent Rule 1.304\) Extension of Time Requests](#)
- [Director Decisions on Trademark Rule 2.145\(e\) Extension of Time Requests](#)
- [Commissioner for Patents decisions](#)
- [Commissioner for Trademarks decisions \(petitions\)](#)

Patent and Trademark information and data

- [Search Patents](#)
- [Search Trademarks](#)
- [MPEP: Manual of Patent Examining Procedure](#)
- [TMEP: Trademark Manual of Examining Procedure](#)
- [Patent examination guidance and training materials](#)
- [Acceptable Identification of Goods and Services Manual](#)
- [Design Search Code Manual](#)
- [USPTO datasets](#)
- [Economic research](#)
- [News and updates](#)
- [USPTO annual reports](#)

FOIA and Privacy Act resources

- [How to submit a FOIA or Privacy Act request to the USPTO](#)
- [FOIA and Privacy Act FAQs](#)
- [FOIA exemptions](#)
- [USPTO FOIA and Privacy Act request regulations, 37 C.F.R. Part 102](#)
- [U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy](#)

If you are not sure what you are looking for, a great place to explore is the [USPTO site map](#). Is there a question about the USPTO that you cannot find an answer for? Send questions about USPTO programs and services to the [USPTO Contact Center \(UCC\)](#). Or email webmaster@uspto.gov to suggest USPTO webpages or material you would like featured on the site. While we cannot promise to accommodate all requests, your suggestions will be considered and may lead to improvements on the website.

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