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Application process

Searching trademarks

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We've created two new webpages to improve your search experience.

[Getting ready to search - classification and design search codes](#)

Learn how classification and design search codes help you search the Trademark Electronic Search System and how to look up the classes and design search codes that apply to your trademark.

[Using the Trademark Electronic Search System](#)

Choose the best search option and see step-by-step instructions for using the system.

Search trademark database

Before you apply, you should search the USPTO's trademark database ([Trademark Electronic Search System, or TESS](#)) to see if any trademark has already been registered or applied for that is:

- Similar to your trademark
- Used on related products or for related services, and
- Live

A trademark that meets all three criteria will prevent your trademark from being registered because it creates a likelihood of confusion.

[Search our trademark database \(TESS\)](#)

Related

[Using the Trademark Electronic Search System](#)

Choose the best search option and see step-by-

step instructions for using the system.

Get ready to search - classification and design search codes

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Trademark Assistance Center

Assists all customers, from first-time filers to legal professionals and experienced trademark applicants and registrants

What to expect

Searching for conflicting marks before you apply is called a “clearance search.”

Include other sources in your clearance search

Searching is only one part of a thorough clearance search. There may be trademarks that are not in our database that have rights over yours. Check other sources, such as state trademark databases and the internet.

Registration is not guaranteed

We will carefully examine your application to see if your prospective trademark meets the requirements for federal registration. Although this includes doing our own database search, there are many considerations. We may find a conflicting mark or another legal issue that bars your registration.

Consider hiring an attorney

Deciding what to search for and interpreting your results can be complicated. There are many factors to consider in determining [likelihood of confusion](#). We can't advise you on how to do a clearance search for your mark, do one for you, or interpret your search results. However, a private trademark attorney can do all of these things and advise you throughout the application process. See [why hire a private trademark attorney](#) to learn more about what an attorney can do for you and how to find one.

For more information about conducting a clearance search, please watch the news broadcast-style video titled “Searching” (video #3 in the [Trademark Information Network \(TMIN\) series](#)).

Other Resources

Depending on what trademark material you are looking for, there are a number of different areas to perform a Search:

Design Search Code

If your mark includes a design element, you must search using a [design code](#). The USPTO assigns all marks containing design figurative elements a 6-digit numerical code(s) for searching purposes. A design code search is also conducted using [TESS](#).

For assistance in searching with a design code, access the [Design Search Code Manual](#). This manual indexes the categories, divisions, and sections that make up these codes. For example, a five-pointed star would be coded in category 01 (celestial bodies, natural phenomena and geographical maps), division 01 (stars, comets) and section 03 (stars with five points), resulting in a complete [design code](#) of 01.01.03.

[Access Design Codes](#)

US Registration Certificates

Registration Certificates show or determine the ownership of a mark, the date first used in commerce, the registration and serial numbers, and the purposes the mark may be used in. The registration certificate may also be used to determine terms not claimed by an owner.

Public Search Facility

You may conduct a free online search of the USPTO database at the Public Search Facility (Madison East, 1st Floor; 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria, Virginia) between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. USPTO personnel may not conduct trademark searches for the public. Private trademark search firms will conduct searches for a fee. The USPTO cannot aid in the selection of a search firm or an attorney. Search firms are often listed in the yellow page section of telephone directories under the heading "Trademark Search Services" or "Patent and Trademark Search Services."

Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC)

The Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS) is available in [all PTRCs](#). Also, these libraries have CD-ROMS containing the database of registered and pending marks; however, the CD-ROMS do not contain images of the design marks.

[Patent and Trademark Resource Centers](#)

Assignments on the Web (AOTW)

Use [Assignments on the Web \(AOTW\)](#) to search the database of all recorded Trademark Assignment information from 1955 to the present (Trademark Assignments recorded prior to 1955 are maintained at the National Archives and Records Administration). Assignment records can also be searched in the Public Search Facility.

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