

WARNING FROM THE USPTO CONCERNING UNOFFICIAL TRADEMARK SOLICITATIONS

Please be aware that private companies not associated with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) often use trademark application and registration information from the USPTO's databases to mail or e-mail trademark-related solicitations. These may include offers: (1) for legal services; (2) for trademark monitoring services; (3) to record trademarks with U.S. Customs and Border Protection; and (4) to "register" trademarks in the company's own private registry.

These companies may use names that resemble the USPTO name, including, for example, the terms "United States" or "U.S." Increasingly, some of the more unscrupulous companies attempt to make their solicitations mimic the look of official government documents rather than the look of a typical commercial or legal solicitation by emphasizing official government data like the USPTO application serial number, the registration number, the International Class(es), filing dates, and other information that is publicly available from USPTO records. Many refer to other government agencies and sections of the U.S. Code. Most require "fees" to be paid.

Some applicants and registrants have reported paying fees to these private companies, mistakenly thinking that they were paying required fees to the USPTO. So, be sure to read trademark-related communications carefully before making a decision about whether to respond. All official correspondence will be from the "United States Patent and Trademark Office" in Alexandria, VA, and if by e-mail, specifically from the domain "@uspto.gov."

If you receive a trademark-related solicitation that you believe is deceptive, you may file an on-line consumer complaint with the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), at www.FTC.gov. Although the FTC does not resolve individual consumer complaints, it may institute, as the nation's consumer protection agency, investigations and prosecutions based on widespread complaints about particular companies or business practices.

The USPTO encourages recipients of misleading communications to contact the USPTO about them by emailing TMFeedback@uspto.gov. When notifying the USPTO about a misleading communication, please also:

1. Include a copy of the misleading communication (including the envelope it came in) if available;
2. Indicate whether the recipient thought the communication was an official U.S. government communication or had to ask an attorney or the USPTO whether it was legitimate;
3. Indicate whether fees were mistakenly paid in response to the communication and, if so, provide a copy of the cancelled check. Please also specify what services, if any, were provided in exchange for the payment made.