

# Group Registration of Unpublished Works

This circular is an introduction to the U.S. Copyright Office’s group registration accommodation for unpublished works. It covers

- Eligibility Requirements
- Registration Procedure
- Deposit Requirements<sup>1</sup>

While the general rule for registration is to submit one application, filing fee, and deposit for each work you want to register, the U.S. Copyright Office has established a group registration option for registering up to ten unpublished works. This option is known as “GRUW,” which stands for “Group Registration of Unpublished Works.” A work is unpublished if no copies have been distributed to the public and no copies have been offered to a group for further distribution, public performance, or public display. To learn more about publication, see [chapter 1900](#) of *The Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices (Third Edition)*.

**NOTE:** The Office discontinued the registration accommodation known as “unpublished collections” on March 15, 2019.

**NOTE:** The Office offers a separate group registration option for registering up to 750 unpublished photographs. For information concerning this option, see *Copyright Registration of Photographs (Circular 42)*.

## Group Registration Eligibility

You may register up to ten unpublished works with the online application for a “Group of Unpublished Works” if the following conditions are met:

- All works must be unpublished.
- All works must be created by the same author or joint authors.
- All of the authors must be named as copyright claimants for all of the works.
- You must identify the authorship that each author or joint author contributed to the works, and the authorship statement for each author and each work must match exactly.

- You must provide a separate title for each individual work.
- Each work must be registered in the same administrative class (*Work of the Performing Arts* or *Sound Recording* or *Work of the Visual Arts* or *Literary Work*).
- You must submit an electronic copy of each work. Each work must be contained in a separate electronic file, the files must be assembled in an orderly form, and they must be uploaded to the electronic registration system in an acceptable file format.

If you do not satisfy any of these conditions, the Office may refuse the group application and you will need to reapply with the appropriate application(s), filing fee(s), and deposit(s).

The following works are not eligible for this group registration option. For more information, see the referenced circulars and *Compendium* sections:

- Compilations, see **chapter 500**, section 508 of the *Compendium*.
- Collective works, see *Multiple Works* (**Circular 34**).
- Architectural works, see *Copyright Registration of Architectural Works* (**Circular 41**).
- Secure tests, see *Copyright Registration of Secure Tests and Secure Test Items* (**Circular 64**).
- Databases, see **chapter 700**, section 727 of the *Compendium*.
- Websites, see *Copyright Registration of Websites and Website Content* (**Circular 66**).

## Sound Recordings and Recorded Works

Sound recordings often contain other separate copyrightable works, such as the music and lyrics from a recorded song or the words of a recorded lecture or book. The copyright in a sound recording covers the recording itself and is distinct from the copyright in the underlying work. For more information, see *Copyright Registration of Sound Recordings* (**Circular 56**).

You may use the group registration option to register up to ten unpublished sound recordings together with the unpublished musical work, literary work, or dramatic work embodied in each recording if all of the following conditions have been met:

- The author/claimant for each sound recording and the work embodied in each recording must be the same person or organization.
- Both works must be embodied in the same electronic audio file.
- When completing the online application, you must select “*Sound Recording*” on the Type of Work screen.

## Examination and Scope of a Group Registration

After the Office receives your application, filing fee, and deposit, it will examine each work in the group to determine if it is copyrightable and to confirm that the legal and formal requirements for registration have been met. If the Office determines that any of these requirements have not been satisfied, it may refuse to register the entire claim.

A registration for a group of unpublished works covers the copyrightable authorship in each work that is submitted, and each copyrightable work is registered as a separate work. If any of the works are

uncopyrightable, the Office will refuse registration for those works and issue a registration for only the copyrightable works in the group.

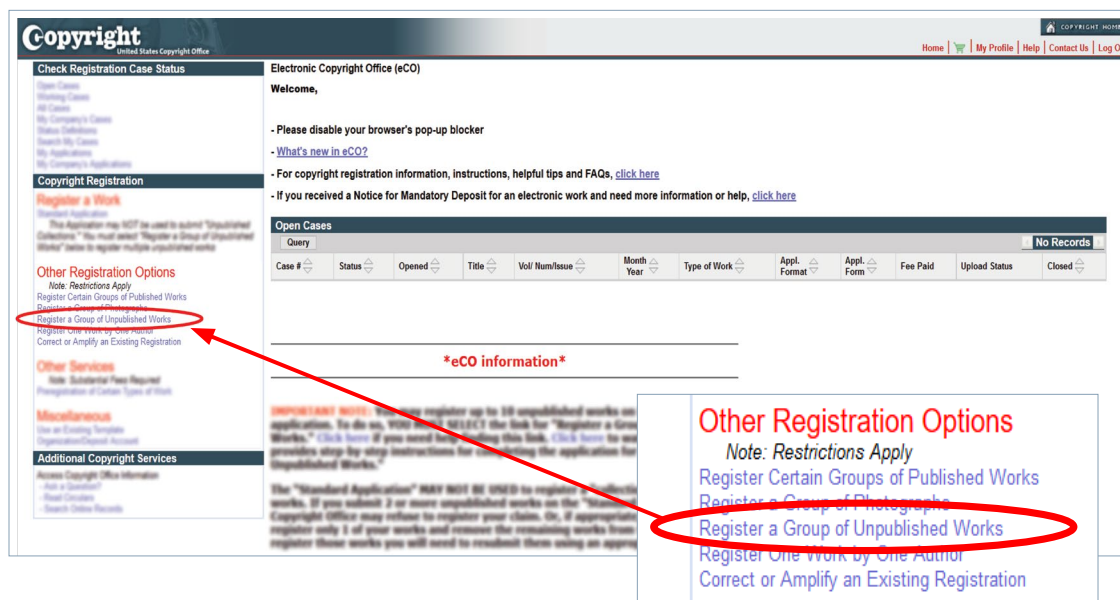
## How to Register a Group of Unpublished Works

To register a claim in two or more unpublished works, you must (1) complete the Copyright Office's online application for a "Group of Unpublished Works," (2) submit a nonrefundable filing fee, and (3) upload an electronic copy of each work in a separate electronic file. This circular highlights issues common to registration of a group of unpublished works. For general registration information or information on registering one work, see Copyright Registration ([Circular 2](#)).

**NOTE:** Copyright Office fees are subject to change. For current fees, see [Copyright Office Fees \(Circular 4\)](#), available on the Office's website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov) or call the Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free).

### Completing the Group Registration Application

To access the application, log into your eCO account. Choose "Register a Group of Unpublished Works" under the heading "Other Registration Options" on the left side of the home screen.



**NOTE:** Applicants are responsible for choosing the correct form, so be sure to read all instructions and the numerous warning messages before proceeding. Once you begin, the electronic registration system is not able to determine whether you selected the correct form or whether your claim will be registered. If you need help choosing the correct form, please visit the Copyright Office's website at [www.copyright.gov/help](http://www.copyright.gov/help).

Mistakes in applications may lead to registration delays or registration refusals, so it is important to complete the application accurately. The Office offers the following resources for applicants who use this group registration option:

- **FAQs.** The Office has prepared answers to frequently asked questions about the group registration option for unpublished works.
- **Help Text.** Instructions for completing the online application for a “Group of Unpublished Works” appear in the onscreen instructions and help text that accompany the application.
- **Video Tutorial.** The Copyright Office offers a video that provides step-by-step instructions for completing this application and uploading electronic copies of your works.

The following tips can also help clarify common points of confusion.

***Type of Work: The Works Must Fit Within the Same Category***

- To begin, select the type of work you are registering. There is a description for each option. Read each description carefully because the questions in the application are based on the type of work you select, and the authorship statement for each work must match exactly. If you select the wrong option, you will need to start over or your registration may be refused.
- Unless you are registering one or more musical works together with one or more sound recordings (see note below), all of the works must fit within one of the categories listed on the “Type of Work” screen.
- If any of the works does not fit within the same category, you should prepare a separate application for those works.

**Important Note for Claims Involving Musical Works and/or Sound Recordings:**

If you are **only** registering a group of musical works (such as music and/or lyrics) and if you are **not** registering the recorded performance of each work, select “*Work of the Performing Arts*” (regardless of whether the works are fixed in printed or audio form).

If you are **only** registering a group of “sound recordings” (such as the performance and/or production authorship contained within a particular recording) select “*Sound Recording*.”

If you are registering **both** the musical works and the recorded performance of each work, select “*Sound Recording*.” Please note, you may register both types of works with the same application only if the author(s) or co-author(s) named in the application created **both** the musical works and the recorded performance of those works.

*Examples:*

- Gerry created three drawings, two paintings, and two illustrations. Gerry may register the works with one group registration application by selecting “*Work of the Visual Arts*” on the Type of Work screen.
- Peter wrote five essays, took two photos, and painted three watercolors. Peter may register the works with two group registration applications: one for the essays by selecting “*Literary Work*” and one for the photos and watercolors by selecting “*Work of the Visual Arts*.”
- Jeff created five poems and five videos. Poems are considered “literary works” and videos are considered “motion pictures” or “audiovisual works.” Jeff may register the works with two

group registration applications: one for the poems by selecting “*Literary Work*” and one for the videos by selecting “*Motion Picture/AV Work*.”

- Mel wrote three original songs and created a music video for each song. Mel may register the works with two group registration applications: one for the songs by selecting “*Work of the Performing Arts*” and one for the music videos by selecting “*Motion Picture/AV Work*.”
- Sarah wrote the music and lyrics for six original songs. Sarah may register her music and lyrics using one group registration application by selecting “*Work of the Performing Arts*.”
- Paulie wrote the music and lyrics for eight original songs, and recorded himself performing each song in his apartment studio. Paulie wants to register his music and lyrics and the recording of each song. He may register these works using one group registration application by selecting “*Sound Recording*.”
- Trey wrote ten original songs and recorded each song in his apartment studio. He previously registered the music and lyrics for each song. Now he wants to register the recorded performance of each song. Trey may register the recordings of those songs using one group registration application by selecting “*Sound Recording*.”
- David took 100 photos and created ten collages that merge his photos with other artwork. David may register the works by using two different group registration options: he will use the application for a “group of unpublished photographs” to register the photographs and the application for a “group of unpublished works” to register the collages and will select “*Work of the Visual Arts*.”

***Titles: Each Work Must Have a Title***

Provide each title in the application on the “Title” screen and double check that each title matches the file name of each work you upload. This step is important:

- If you do not provide a title for a particular work, the Office may remove the work from the application and remove the deposit from the registration record.
- If you provide a title but do not upload an electronic copy of a work, the Office may remove the title and limit the registration to the works you uploaded.
- If the titles and file names do not match, the Office may remove the mismatched titles from the record, communicate with you, or refuse the entire claim.

***Do not*** provide a “collection” title in the application. If you do, the Office will remove it. A title for the entire group will be added automatically. The group title will consist of the first title listed in the application followed by the phrase “and [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9] Other Unpublished Works” (depending on how many titles you enter in the application).

***Authorship: The Authorship Statement for Each Work Must Match Exactly***

- Select the authorship statement from the drop down menu on the “Author/Claimant” screen that best describes the works being registered.
- The authorship statement for all the works in the group must be exactly the same.
- If the works were created by two or more joint authors, the authorship statement for each joint author must be exactly the same.

*Examples:*

- Jaakia and Monica co-wrote four songs. One of the songs contains only music; the rest contain music and lyrics. Jaakia and Monica may register all four songs with one group registration application by selecting “*Work of the Performing Arts*” on the “Type of Work” screen and selecting “unpublished musical works (with or without lyrics)” from the drop-down menu in the “Author Created” field.
- Dembe wrote ten original songs and recorded each song in his home studio. He may register the songs and the recordings of those songs with one group registration application by selecting “*Sound Recording*” on the “Type of Work” screen and selecting “unpublished sound recordings and musical works (with or without lyrics)” from the drop-down menu in the “Author Created” field.

**Author/Claimant: Same Authors, All Listed as Claimants**

Every work in the group must be created or co-created by the same author(s). In all cases, the author or co-authors must be named as the claimant or co-claimants for the works being registered, even if the author(s) do not own all of the rights in those works.

*Examples:*

- Steve and Charlotte co-wrote the music and lyrics for three songs. They may register all three songs with a group registration application naming themselves as co-authors of each work.
- Parvez and Samira co-wrote four songs. Samira wrote three other songs by herself. Parvez and Samira may register the four songs they wrote together with one group application, naming themselves as the co-authors of each song. Samira may register the three songs she wrote by herself with a separate group registration application.
- Larry wrote the music and lyrics for ten original songs. He then made recordings of the songs with the members of his band, “Larry, Don, and Hermione.” Larry may register the songs with one application by selecting “*Work of the Performing Arts*” and naming himself as the author and claimant of the “unpublished musical works (with or without lyrics).” He may register the recordings with another application by selecting “*Sound Recording*” and naming himself, Don, and Hermione as the co-authors and co-claimants of the “unpublished sound recordings.”

If a third party owns one or more of the exclusive rights in a particular work, that information may be added to the Copyright Office’s records by recording a copy of the document that transferred those rights to the third party. For information about recordation, see “Recordation of Transfers and Other Documents” at [www.copyright.gov/recordation/documents/](http://www.copyright.gov/recordation/documents/). Alternatively, the applicant may register each work on an individual basis by submitting a separate Standard Application that names the third party as the copyright claimant for each work (with an appropriate transfer statement explaining how that party obtained ownership of all of the exclusive rights in that work).

*Examples:*

- Sandy hired Liana to design three logos for her new product. Liana transferred her copyright to Sandy in a written agreement. Sandy may register the logos with a group registration application by naming Liana as the author/claimant for each work. Then, Sandy may record the transfer of copyright to reflect current ownership of the logos. If Sandy would prefer to name

herself as the copyright claimant, she should submit a separate Standard Application for each logo, naming Liana as the author and Sandy as the copyright claimant by written agreement.

## Deposit Requirements

To register a group of unpublished works, you must upload an electronic copy of each work.

Each work must be contained in a separate electronic file not exceeding 500 MB and each file must be uploaded in an acceptable file format. The list of acceptable formats is posted on the Office’s [website](http://www.copyright.gov/eco/help-file-types.html) at [www.copyright.gov/eco/help-file-types.html](http://www.copyright.gov/eco/help-file-types.html). **Do not** submit all of the works in one PDF file or the same ZIP file.

On the deposit submission screen, disregard the button marked “create shipping slip” and **do not** mail a physical copy of your works to the Copyright Office. If you fail to upload an electronic copy of your works, the Office will refuse your application and cannot return the physical copies.

### **Titles and File Names Must Match**

The file name for each work uploaded should match the corresponding title listed in the application. If the titles and file names do not match, the Copyright Office may communicate with you, delaying examination of your claim, the Office may remove the mismatched titles from the record, or the Office may refuse to register the claim.

*Examples:*

Annette intends to register three songs titled “The Birthday Party,” “The Dinner Party,” and “The Wedding Party.” She plans to upload these songs in three separate mp3 files. The Office will accept:

<i>Titles listed in the application:</i>	<i>File names for the electronic copies of the works:</i>
The Birthday Party	The_birthday_party.mp3
The Dinner Party	The_dinner_party.mp3
The Wedding Party	The_wedding_party.mp3

The Office will not accept:

<i>Titles listed in the application:</i>	<i>File names for the electronic copies of the works:</i>
The Birthday Party	Grandmas_Turning_80.mp3
The Dinner Party	The_dinner_party.mp3
The Wedding Party	The_wedding_party.mp3

In the second situation, the Office will remove the title “The Birthday Party” from the application and will remove the work “Grandmas\_Turning\_80.mp3” from the deposit. The Office will issue a registration that covers the two remaining songs: “The Dinner Party” and “The Wedding Party.”

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**NOTE**

1. This circular is intended as an overview of copyright registration of a group of unpublished works. The authoritative source for U.S. copyright law is the Copyright Act, codified in Title 17 of the *United States Code*. Copyright Office regulations are codified in Title 37 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Copyright Office practices and procedures are summarized in the third edition of the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*, cited as the *Compendium*. The copyright law, regulations, and the *Compendium* are available on the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).



## **For Further Information**

### ***By Internet***

The copyright law, the *Compendium*, electronic registration, application forms, regulations, and related materials are available on the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

### ***By Email***

To send an email inquiry, click the *Contact Us* link on the Copyright Office website.

### ***By Telephone***

For general information, 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, eastern time, Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. To request application forms or circulars by postal mail, call (202) 707-9100 or 1-877-476-0778 and leave a recorded message.

### ***By Regular Mail***

Write to

Library of Congress  
U.S. Copyright Office  
Outreach and Education Section  
101 Independence Avenue, SE #6304  
Washington, DC 20559-6304

