

MANUAL OF
PATENT
EXAMINING
PROCEDURE



PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent Office
Washington, D.C. 20231

MANUAL OF PATENT EXAMINING PROCEDURE
Third Edition

Instructions regarding Revision No. 42

The attached revised pages are replacements for those in the Manual having corresponding numbers, or additional pages to be placed in appropriate numerical sequence.

The notation "[R-42]" in the attached pages appears either at the title or at the end of a section that has been revised.

Change Notice 42-2 is incorporated into the Manual by this Revision.

Particular attention is called to the following sections:

Pages vi & vii	Checklist of pages has been revised.
109	Executive Order reference to security markings updated.
506	Indication added that filing date is not withheld because of content of claims.
508.03	Items 4 and 5 have been revised.
707.05(a)	Last paragraph added to indicate procedure in Design Group.
711.03(c)	Clarified.
715.06	Section deleted since it is obsolete.
720-720.05	New sections added relating to Public Use Proceedings.
901.09	New procedure for replacing missing copies indicated.
905.02	Revised procedure for ordering soft copies and cross references indicated.

- 1102.01(a) Completion of form PO-850 clarified.
- 1112.05 Revised sample form PO-850 includes an example of an applicant accorded benefit of a foreign filed application.
- 1208 Clarified to indicate group director has complete discretion as to whether appeal conferences are held.
- 1208.01 Notation added that approval for new grounds of rejection in an examiner's answer should appear on all copies.
- 1214.04, 1214.07 Revised to indicate that director's approval to reopen after Board decision should appear on action.
- 1216.01 A paragraph relating to reopening of prosecution after a court decision has been added.

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MANUAL OF
P A T E N T
E X A M I N I N G
P R O C E D U R E

Original Third Edition, dated November 1961

Latest Revision October 1974



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • PATENT OFFICE

Rev. 42, Oct. 1974

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First Edition, November 1949	Revision 17, July 1968
Revision 1, November 1950	Revision 18, October 1968
Revision 2, December 1951	Revision 19, January 1969
Revision 3, May 1952	Revision 20, April 1969
Second Edition, November 1953	Revision 21, July 1969
Revision 1, April 1955	Revision 22, October 1969
Revision 2, June 1956	Revision 23, January 1970
Revision 3, June 1957	Revision 24, April 1970
Revision 4, July 1958	Revision 25, July 1970
Third Edition, November 1961	Revision 26, October 1970
Revision 1, January 1964	Revision 27, January 1971
Revision 2, November 1964	Revision 28, April 1971
Revision 3, January 1965	Revision 29, July 1971
Revision 4, April 1965	Revision 30, October 1971
Revision 5, July 1965	Revision 31, January 1972
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Revision 12, April 1967	Revision 38, October 1973
Revision 13, July 1967	Revision 39, January 1974
Revision 14, October 1967	Revision 40, April 1974
Revision 15, January 1968	Revision 41, July 1974
Revision 16, April 1968	Revision 42, October 1974

Foreword

This Manual is published to provide Patent Office examiners, applicants, attorneys, agents, and representatives of applicants with a reference work on the practices and procedures relative to the prosecution of applications before the Patent Office. It contains instructions to examiners, as well as other material in the nature of information and interpretation, and outlines the current procedures which the examiners are required or authorized to follow in appropriate cases in the normal examination of application.

Examiners will be governed by the applicable statutes, the Rules of Practice, decisions, and orders and instructions issued by the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioners. Orders and Notices still in force which relate to the subject matter included in this Manual are incorporated in the text. Orders and Notices, or portions thereof, relating to the examiners' duties and functions which have been omitted or not incorporated in the text may be considered obsolete. Interference procedure not directly involving the Primary Examiner is not included in this Manual and, therefore, Orders and Notices relating thereto remain in force.

Subsequent changes in practice and other revisions will be incorporated in the form of substitute or additional pages for the Manual.

Suggestions for improving the form and content of the Manual are always welcome. They should be addressed to:

Commissioner of Patents,
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Introduction

Constitutional Basis

The Constitution of the United States provides:

"ART. 1, SEC. 8. The Congress shall have power . . . To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries."

Statutes

Pursuant to the provision of the Constitution, Congress has over the years passed a number of statutes under which the Patent Office is organized and our patent system is established. The provisions of the statutes can in no way be changed or waived by the Patent Office.

Prior to January 1, 1953, the law relating to patents consisted of various sections of the Revised Statutes of 1874, derived from the Patent Act of 1870 and numerous amendatory and additional acts.

By an Act of Congress approved July 19, 1952, which came into effect on January 1, 1953, the patent laws were revised and codified into their present form. With certain exceptions applying to applications filed and patents issued before January 1, 1953, this law governs all cases in the Patent Office. The patent law is Title 35 of the United States Code, which contains 96 sections numbered from 1 to 293, with gaps in the numbering between various chapters of the title. In referring to a particular section of the patent code the citation is given, for example, as, 35 U.S.C. 31. The pamphlet "Patent Laws" (available from the Superintendent of Documents for 75 cents) reprints the patent code and some additional statutes.

35 U.S.C. 1 Establishment. The Patent Office shall continue as an office in the Department of Commerce, where records, books, drawings, specifications, and other papers and things pertaining to patents and to trademark registrations shall be kept and preserved, except as otherwise provided by law.

Rules of Practice

One of the sections of the patent statute, namely, 35 U.S.C. 6, authorizes the Commissioner of Patents, subject to the approval of the Secretary of Commerce, to establish regula-

tions, not inconsistent with law, for the conduct of proceedings in the Patent Office.

Rule 351. Amendments to rules will be published. All amendments to these rules will be published in the Official Gazette and in the Federal Register.

Rule 352. Publication of notice of proposed amendments. (a) Whenever required by law, and in other cases whenever practicable, notice of proposed amendments to these rules will be published in the Official Gazette and in the Federal Register. If not published with the notice, copies of the text will be furnished to any person requesting the same. All comments, suggestions, and briefs received within a time specified in the notice will be considered before adoption of the proposed amendments which may be modified in the light thereof.

(b) Oral hearings may be held at the discretion of the Commissioner.

These rules and the various amendments were published in the Federal Register. In the Federal Register and in the Code of Federal Regulations these rules are Part 1 of Title 37, Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights, and the individual rules, there called sections, are numbered with the Part number and a decimal point prefixed to the numbers to the rule number; thus section 1.33 in the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is the same as rule 33. A booklet entitled "37 Code of Federal Regulations," published by the Office of the Federal Register, contains all of the patent rules and forms, as well as trademark rules and forms and copyright rules. Persons desiring a copy of the patent rules should order a copy of "37 Code of Federal Regulations" from the Superintendent of Documents.

The primary function of the Rules of Practice is to advise the public of the regulations which have been established in accordance with the statutes and which must be followed before the Office. The Rules of Practice govern the examiners, as well as applicants and their attorneys.

Commissioner's Orders and Notices

From time to time, the Commissioner of Patents has issued Orders and Notices relating to various specific situations that have arisen in operating the Patent Office. Notices and circulars of information or instructions have also been issued by other Office Officials under authority of the Commissioner. Orders and

Notices have served various purposes including directions to the examiners giving them instruction, information, interpretations and the like. Some may be for the information of the public, advising what the Office will do under specified circumstances.

Decisions

In addition to the statutory regulations, the actions taken by the examiner in the examination of applications for patents are to a great extent governed by decisions on prior cases. Applicants dissatisfied with an examiner's action may have it reviewed. In general, that portion of the examiner's action pertaining to objections on formal matters may be reviewed by petition to the Commissioner of Patents (see § 1002) and that portion of the examiner's action pertaining to the rejection of claims on the merits, may be reviewed by appeal to the Board of Appeals (see § 1201). The distinction is set forth in rules 181 and 191. In citing decisions as authority for his actions, the examiner should cite the decision in the manner set forth in § 707.06.

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Classification Definitions. Contain the changes in classification of patents as well as definitions of new and revised classes and sub-classes. Price is based upon size of publication, minimum price 10 cents.

Weekly Class Sheets. Lists showing classification of each patent in the weekly issue of the *Patent Official Gazette*. Annual subscription, \$5.