

Coronavirus important update on IPO services

The majority of our services remain unaffected. Rights holders and IP professionals should continue to file using our online services where possible. Please allow additional time for the information you file with us to be dealt with.

We recognise the current challenges faced by many. So, in order to support businesses, rights holders and IP professionals, the following service changes are in place.

London Office

Following the introduction of new restrictions, as part of the national lockdown in England, the IPO's London office has been closed to all but critical workers with immediate effect.

This means that customers are unable to gain access to file in person. It also means that the London post room is not operating so no paperwork will be processed after Thursday 7 January 2021.

If customers need to submit papers by post then Concept House, our Newport office, remains open.

The London office will remain closed at least until 18 February 2021 when current restrictions will be reviewed.

Interrupted days

The period of interrupted days that we declared on 24 March, ended on 29 July. An 'interrupted day' is a day in which the normal course of business at the IPO is not possible.

This meant that most deadlines for

- patents,
- supplementary protection certificates,
- trade marks,
- designs,

and applications for these rights, which fell on an interrupted day were extended.

Temporary fee changes

We know many businesses are in a challenging situation and will look to the IPO for flexibility and support, to maintain their IP and progress their pending applications. Deadlines will once again need to be met and fees paid.

To support those businesses, [temporary fee changes](#) were in place from 30 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 in relation to patents, supplementary protection certificates (SPCs), trade marks and registered designs:

The deadlines for completing actions, requesting extensions of time and paying fees were not affected by these fee changes and must still be complied with.

Renewals

The period of interruption for patents extended all time periods mentioned in the Patents Act and Rules. This wasn't the case for all registered designs and trade marks. This [renewals deadlines table](#) (RTF, 69.7KB) should answer any queries you have regarding your renewal deadline.

We will continue delivering patent correspondence by email until we can provide an enhanced digital solution. We will only send paper documents where we are unable to deliver them by email or where we cannot identify a suitable email address

Filing with us

Customers should use online services and communicate with us digitally. We will continue sending and receiving documents and notifications by email wherever possible.

Forms or correspondence may still be filed with us by post or hand delivered to our Newport office. However, they will take longer than usual to process while access to our offices remains limited. The London office is closed from 7 January 2021 and unable to process forms or correspondence sent by post or hand delivered.

Our fax service has been turned off and we can no longer receive documents through this channel.

Please use our forms@ipo.gov.uk inbox to file any forms that can't be filed online. The only exception is that patent applications made subject to directions under section 22 ("national security") must still be filed by post.

To avoid processing delays

- in the subject line of your email, enter the form number, the IP rights number and (optionally) your own reference. Provide these in the format: FORM NUMBER-IP RIGHTS NUMBER-YOUR REFERENCE for example: TM16-UK00002345678-T1234GBAW
- if you are attaching a document other than a form, for instance a response to an examiner, enter 'OTHER' instead of the form number in the subject line
- attach all files as PDF and attach any supporting documents required to the same email as your form. Include the IP right number in all attachments

- if you have more than one form to file, use a separate email for each form
- do not send copies of your email to any other IPO mailboxes as this will cause duplicate processing, delays and could mean multiple payments being taken
- do not use the forms@ipo.gov.uk inbox for anything other than filing forms and documents. Email other enquiries to information@ipo.gov.uk

We are currently unable to accept payment by cheque.

Do not send copies of your email to any other IPO mailboxes; this causes duplicate processing, may result in you paying fees twice and will result in delays.

Patent related correspondence both before and after publication of the patent application continues to be emailed. The only exception is to patent applications made subject to directions under section 22 ('national security') and to applications where we don't have an email address.

It also covers correspondence relating to supplementary protection certificates and certified office copies of documents. We will use the email address provided on the forms submitted with the particular application or otherwise communicated to the IPO. Any queries on this should be sent to information@ipo.gov.uk

We will accept electronic signatures on forms and other documents.

Certified Office Copies (COCs)

We are now issuing paper COCs by post. The e-mailing of COCs was temporary to ensure customers were able to receive these documents when access to workplaces was limited by the pandemic.

If you still cannot access documents delivered by post, we can provide your COCs digitally if you request it. Please be aware that some IP Offices are no longer accepting priority documents in this format. If you need your COCs to be issued digitally please tell us in the covering letter accompanying your request form.

We will not be issuing duplicated copies (in both paper and digital formats) as a matter of course. For patent COCs we encourage customers to use WIPO's online Priority Document Access Service (PDAS) where possible. This can be selected when filing an application online or by emailing forms@ipo.gov.uk

Uncertified copies of documents are still available for delivery by email as they do not require an official seal and signature. We will still issue paper copies by post when appropriate. You can request an uncertified copy of a document from the Sales Team by emailing sales@ipo.gov.uk and giving your consent to receive it digitally. There is a flat fee of £5 per copy.

We will continue to update this page with any changes to services, as well as providing more details as they develop.

Further information on alterations to services for specific rights: