

INTRODUCTION

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The primary purpose of this manual is to provide stakeholders with basic information generally useful for litigating inter partes (trial) cases before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. The manual does not modify, amend, or serve as a substitute for any existing statutes, rules, or decisional law and is not binding upon the Board, its reviewing tribunals, the Director, or the USPTO. *Cf., In re Wine Society of America Inc.*, 12 USPQ2d 1139 (TTAB 1989). Rather, the manual describes current practice and procedure under the applicable authority and incorporates amendments to the Trademark Act, Trademark Rules of Practice, Federal Rules, and updates in case law, where applicable, as of March 3, 2023. This manual contains links to a USPTO-created compilation of the Trademark Act and Trademark Rules of Practice that was created for the public's convenience and is not meant to serve as an official legal source. Those using that compilation for legal research should verify their results against the most current official printed editions of the Code of Federal Regulations and United States Code, published Public Laws, and the daily Federal Register, as applicable. The guidelines set forth in the manual do not have the force and effect of law. They have been developed as a matter of internal office management and are not intended to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party against the Office.

The manual is devoted primarily to opposition and cancellation proceedings, the two most common types of trial proceedings before the Board. Nonetheless, the manual includes a chapter of general information useful for all proceedings and chapters on interference proceedings, concurrent use proceedings, ex parte appeals of applications to the Board, and ex parte appeals of registrations to the Board. Updates this year are moderate, largely incorporating relevant case law reflected in TTAB precedential decisions and related court decisions.

The manual is updated periodically.

The manual is intended for use by all members of the public, including those seeking general information about Board proceedings, those involved in a Board proceeding, and those not represented by legal counsel, as well as by attorneys and legal professionals. In acknowledgement of the wide breadth of users, only the most commonly recognized abbreviations are used in case names (e.g., “Co.,” “Corp.,” “Ltd.”) to enhance searching within the manual and to enhance readability. For users who wish to insert case names into a document requiring use of a specific form of citation, please note that case names may need to be modified.

The Board welcomes suggestions for improving the content of the manual. Suggestions and comments should be addressed as follows:

TBMPcomments@uspto.gov, or

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Trademark Trial and Appeal Board

P.O. Box 1451

Alexandria, VA 22313-1451

ATTENTION: TBMP Editor