

Updated Notice of Centralized Delivery and Facsimile Transmission Policy for Patent Related Correspondence, and Exceptions Thereto

On December 1, 2003, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office) established a “centralized delivery” policy for patent related correspondence to enable the Office to promptly scan the correspondence into the Office’s image file wrapper (IFW) system. The “centralized delivery” policy requires most patent related correspondence to be: a) faxed to the central facsimile number ((703) 872-9306), b) hand carried or delivered to the Customer Service Window (now located at the Randolph Building, 401 Dulany Street, Alexandria, VA 22314), or c) mailed to the mailing address set forth in 37 CFR 1.1 (e.g., P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450).ⁱ

The “centralized delivery” policy was revised in three follow-up notices.ⁱⁱ In order to provide further updated information, and to provide a single comprehensive statement of the Office’s current “centralized delivery” policy, this notice is issued. This notice replaces all prior Office notices specifying a specific fax number or hand carry address for certain patent related correspondence.

General “Centralized Delivery” Policy: For patent related correspondence, hand carry deliveries must be made to the Customer Service Window, and facsimile transmissions must be sent to the central facsimile number ((703) 872-9306), unless an exception, as noted below, applies. Exceptions to the general policy of “centralized delivery” generally involve situations where special handling of the patent related correspondence is available. All the current exceptions are listed in this notice. Correspondence which is not related to a specific patent or patent application, such as a question on policy, on employment, or other general inquiry, is not covered by this notice.

Below are two lists which set forth all the current exceptions to the “centralized delivery” policy. The first list covers the exceptions for certain hand carried items, and the second list covers the exceptions for certain facsimile transmitted items. Both lists reflect the relocation of most USPTO operations to the Alexandria, Virginia campus.

List I – Exceptions for Certain Hand Carried Correspondence

Current exceptions: Only the following types of correspondence may be delivered (hand-carried) to the specific location provided below instead of the Customer Service Window. If correspondence listed below is carried to the Customer Service Window, the correspondence will be accepted and routed to the appropriate office.

1. Access Requests: Requests for access to patent application files may continue to be hand carried to the File Information Unit (FIU) in Room 2E04, 2900 Crystal Drive (South Tower), Arlington VA 22202. Requests for access to patent application files that are maintained in the Image File Wrapper system and that have not yet been published may also be hand carried to the Public Search Facility on the 1st floor of the Madison East building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria VA 22314.

2. Patent Term Extensions under 35 U.S.C. § 156: Patent term extension applications under 35 U.S.C. 156 (Hatch/Waxman) may be hand-carried to the Office of Patent Legal Administration (OPLA) in Room 07D85, 600 Dulany Street (Madison West building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the OPLA at either (571) 272-7744 or (571) 272-7746 for delivery assistance.

3. Assignments to be Recorded: Assignments may be hand-carried to the Office of Public Records Customer Service Window on the 2nd floor of the South Tower building, 2900 Crystal Drive, Arlington VA 22202.

4. Office of General Counsel: Correspondence for the Office of General Counsel may be hand-carried to the Office of General Counsel in Room 10C20, 600 Dulany Street (Madison East building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison East (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Office of General Counsel at 571-272-7000 for delivery assistance.

5. Solicitor's Office: Correspondence for the Solicitor's Office may be hand-carried to the Solicitor's Office in Room 8C43, 600 Dulany Street (Madison West building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Solicitor's Office at 571-272-9035 for delivery assistance.

6. Interference related correspondence: Correspondence relating to interferences may be hand-carried to the 1st floor lobby of Madison East building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria VA 22314, where a drop-off box for hand-carried documents to be filed with the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences is located. Customers need to pass through the magnetometer and have the materials passed through the x-ray sensors before placing them in the drop-off box. The drop-off box is for Interference related correspondence ONLY. Boxes are not permitted in the drop-off box. Boxed materials should be hand-carried to Madison East, Room 9B55-A using the following procedures. At either guard station (concourse level or 1st floor) in Madison East (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences at 571-272-9797 to obtain authorization to allow entry into the building for delivery to Room 9B55-A. Access to Room 9B55-A is available from 8:30 AM to 4:45 PM only. Documents/boxes hand-carried to the drop-off box or to Room 9B55-A after 4:45 PM (EST) will receive the next day's filing date.

Customers desiring a stamped return receipt for their filing need to personally bring their filing and postcard to Room 9B55-A during the hours stated above, or leave the postcard with the filing (postcard must include correct postage mail stamp and the address where the postcard it to be mailed). The Board will stamp the filing date and mail the postcard to the customer.

7. Secrecy Order: Applications subject to a secrecy order pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 181, or are national security classified, and correspondence related thereto, may be hand-carried to the Licensing and Review location. See 37 CFR Secs. 5.1(c) and 5.2(c). Licensing and review is expected to relocate to the Alexandria campus on April 1, 2005.

Effective April 1, 2005, the Licensing and Review location is: Technology Center 3600, Room 4B31, 501 Dulany Street (Knox building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Knox (near the elevators), the security guard should call Licensing and Review at (571) 272-8203 for delivery assistance.

Prior to April 1, 2005, the Licensing and Review location is: Technology Center 3600, Office of the Director, 2451 Crystal Drive (Crystal Park 5 building), Room 3D07 Arlington, VA 22202.

8. Explicit Foreign Filing License Petitions: Effective April 1, 2005, petitions for foreign filing license pursuant to 37 CFR 5.12(b) for which expedited handling is requested and petitions for retroactive license under 37 CFR 5.25, may be hand-carried to Licensing and Review in Room 4B41, 501 Dulany Street (Knox building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Knox (near the elevators), the security guard should call Licensing and Review at (571) 272-8187 for delivery assistance.

9. Petitions to Withdraw from Issue: Petitions to Withdraw from Issue may be hand carried to the Office of Petitions on the 7th floor of the Madison West building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Office of Petitions at (571) 272-3282 for delivery assistance. Hand carried papers will be accepted between the hours of 8:30 a.m. until 3:45 p.m.

10. Documents requested by the Office of Patent Publication: Documents requested by the Office of Patent Publication may be hand carried to the Office of Patent Publication in Room 8A24, 2900 Crystal Drive (South Tower building), Arlington VA 22202, during business hours.

Elimination of certain previously authorized exceptions: Hand carry delivery to a location other than the Customer Service Window is no longer permitted for the following types of correspondence: (1) correspondence relating to PCT international applications prior to national stage entry (35 U.S.C. 371) [Note: as of January 14, 2005, there no longer is a separate PCT Operations Customer Window]; (2) petitions for express abandonment to avoid publication under 37 CFR 1.138(c); (3) requests to initiate, or related to on-going, ex parte or inter partes reexamination proceedings; (4) design patent applications with a corresponding request for expedited examination under 37 CFR 1.155; and (5) correspondence for the Office of Enrollment and Discipline (OED).

List II - Exceptions for Certain Facsimile Transmitted Correspondence

For each Office location listed below, only the particular type of correspondence indicated may be transmitted to the specific facsimile number at that Office location. All other types of facsimile transmitted correspondence must be sent to the central facsimile number ((703) 872-9306).

1. Office of Initial Patent Examination (OIPE)

Request for corrected Filing Receipt: (703) 746-9195 facsimile number

Response to Notice to File Missing Parts: (703) 746-4060 facsimile number

Note: New applications, correspondence being submitted for the purpose of obtaining an application filing date, and color drawings may NOT be transmitted by facsimile.

OIPE Customer Service telephone number: (703) 308-1202

2. PCT Operations and PCT Legal Administration

Correspondence subsequent to filing in an international application before the U.S. Receiving Office, the U.S. International Searching Authority, or the U.S. International Examining Authority:

Papers in international applications: (703) 305-3230 facsimile number

Response to Decisions on Petition: (571) 273-0459 facsimile number

Note: An international application for patent or a copy of the international application and the basic national fee necessary to enter the national stage, as specified in 37 CFR 1.495(b), may NOT be submitted by facsimile. See 37 CFR 1.6(d)(3) (referencing 37 CFR 1.8(a)(2)(i)(D) and (F)). Subsequent correspondence may be transmitted by facsimile in an application before the U.S. Receiving Office, the U.S. International Searching Authority, or the U.S. International Examining Authority, but it will NOT receive the benefit of any certificate of transmission (or mailing). See 37 CFR 1.8(a)(2)(i)(E). Correspondence during national stage, subsequent to entry, are handled in the same manner as a U.S. national application.

The PCT Help Desk: (571) 273-0419 facsimile number
(703) 305-3257 telephone number

3. Office of Patent Publication

Payment of an issue fee and any required publication fee by authorization to charge a deposit account or credit card, and drawings: (703) 746-4000 facsimile number

Note: Although submission of drawings by facsimile may reduce the quality of the drawings, the Office will generally print the drawings as received.

Office of Patent Publication telephone numbers to check on receipt of payment: (703) 308-6789 or 1-888-786-0101

4. Office of Pre-Grant Publication

Petitions for express abandonment to avoid publication under 37 CFR 1.138(c), and Requests for express abandonment under 37 CFR 1.138: (703) 305-8568 facsimile number

Pre-Grant Publication Division telephone number for questions relating to the publication of patent applications: (703) 605-4283. Questions may also be directed by e-mail to pgpub@uspto.gov.

5. Electronic Business Center (EBC)

Requests for Customer Number Data Change (PTO/SB/124), and Requests for a Customer Number (PTO/SB/125): 571-273-0177 facsimile number

Note: The EBC may also be reached by e-mail at: ebc@uspto.gov.
EBC telephone number for customer service and assistance: (866) 217-9197

6. Assignment Branch

Assignments or other documents affecting title: (703) 306-5995 facsimile number

Note: Customers may submit documents directly into the automated Patent and Trademark Assignment System and receive the resulting recordation notice at their facsimile machine. (Assignment documents submitted through the Electronic Patent Assignment System also permits the recordation notice to be faxed to customers.) Credit card payments to record assignment documents are now accepted, and use of the Credit Card form (PTO-2038) is required for the credit card information to be separated from the assignment records. Only documents with an identified patent application or patent number, a single cover sheet to record a single type of transaction, and the fee paid by an authorization to charge a USPTO deposit account or credit card may be submitted via facsimile. Please refer to the USPTO Web Site, at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/opr/ptasfax.pdf> for more information regarding the submission of assignment documents via facsimile.

Assignment Branch telephone number for assistance: (703) 308-9723

7. Central Reexamination Unit (CRU)

Inter partes reexamination correspondence, except for the initial request: (571) 273-0100 facsimile number

Note: All *ex parte* reexamination correspondence, except for the initial request, may be sent by facsimile transmission to the central facsimile number. Correspondence related to reexamination proceedings will be separately scanned in the CRU.

CRU telephone number for customer service and inquiries: (571) 272-7705

8. Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences

Correspondence related to pending interferences permitted to be transmitted by facsimile (only where expressly authorized, see 37 CFR 1.6(d)(9)): (571) 273-0042 facsimile number

Note: Correspondence should not be transmitted to this number if an interference has not yet been declared.

9. Office of the General Counsel

Correspondence permitted to be transmitted to the Office of General Counsel: (571) 273-0099 facsimile number

10. Office of the Solicitor

Correspondence permitted to be transmitted by facsimile to the Office of the Solicitor: (571) 273-0373 facsimile number

11. Licensing and Review

Petitions for a foreign filing license pursuant to 37 CFR 5.12(b), including a petition for a foreign filing license where there is no corresponding U.S. application (37 CFR 5.13): (571) 273-0185 facsimile number (if the fax is transmitted on or after April 1, 2005) (703) 305-7658 facsimile number (if the fax is transmitted prior to April 1, 2005)

Note: Correspondence to be filed in a patent application subject to a secrecy order under 37 CFR Sec. 5.1 through 5.5 and directly related to the secrecy order content of the application may NOT be transmitted via facsimile. See 37 CFR Sec. 1.6(d)(6).

12. Office of Petitions

Petitions to Withdraw from Issue: (571) 273-0025 facsimile number

Note: All other types of petitions must be directed to the Central Facsimile Number ((703) 872-9306). Any paper other than a Petition to Withdraw from Issue which is sent to the Office of Petitions fax number (instead of the Central Facsimile Number) will be discarded. Petitions sent to the Central Facsimile Number should be marked "Special Processing Submission".

Questions regarding this notice may be e-mailed to PatentPractice@uspto.gov, or directed to the Inventors' Assistance Center by telephone at (800)786-9199, or (703)308-4357.

____ 3/2/05 ____
DATE

_____/s/_____
Joseph J. Rolla
Deputy Commissioner for
Patent Examination Policy

ⁱ Centralized Delivery and Facsimile Transmission Requirements for Patent Application Related Correspondence, 1275 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 200 (Oct. 28, 2003), and Relocation of Customer Service Windows for Patent-Related Correspondence; Establishment of Drop Box in South Tower for Certain Patent-Related Correspondence; Hand Carry and

Mailing Address for Trademark-Related Correspondence, 1291 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 20 (Feb. 1, 2005).

ⁱⁱ Revised Procedures for Papers Requiring Immediate Attention (Hand-carried and Facsimile Transmissions), 1279 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 149 (Feb. 24, 2004); Revised Procedures for Papers Requiring Immediate Attention, 1280 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 917 (Mar. 23, 2004); and Establishment of New Mail Stop L&R; and FAX Number for Requests for Expedited Foreign Filing License, 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 108 (May 18, 2004).