

MANUAL OF
PATENT
EXAMINING
PROCEDURE

3RD EDITION

Rev. 38



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office

REEL NUMBER 3

BOOK NUMBERS 1218

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Patent Office
Washington, D. C. 20231

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Instructions regarding Revision No. 38

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-38]" in the attached pages appears either at the title or at the end of a section that has been revised.

Louis O. Maassel, Editor
Manual of Patent Examining Procedure

Particular attention is called to the following sections:

Pages	
vi & vii	Updated checklist of pages
711	Clarifies the fact that a person acting in a representative capacity (rule 34a) cannot expressly abandon an application.
802	Rules 141 and 142 added.
803	Emphasis added to indicate that inventions should be able to support separate patents before restriction is required.
809.02(a)	Amended to indicate that all restriction requirements should be made under and by citation of 35 U.S.C. 121.
813	Section on citation of art has been deleted.
819.01	Last sentence rewritten.
1111.04	Rule 5.3(b) added.
1111.09	35 U.S.C. 146 added.

1309 Section on printing practitioners' names on patents added.

1309.01 Amended to clearly indicate that "Printer Waiting" cases should not be returned by mail.

The changes in the other sections relate mainly to form, language, terminology and capitalization.

List of replacement pages:

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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 1973



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • PATENT OFFICE

Rev. 38, Oct. 1973

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The cost per page will be 30¢ (see rules 13(a), 21(b), and 21(t) Rules of Practice).

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First Edition, November 1949

Revision 1, November 1950
Revision 2, December 1951
Revision 3, May 1952

Second Edition, November 1953

Revision 1, April 1955
Revision 2, June 1958
Revision 3, June 1957
Revision 4, July 1958

Third Edition, November 1961

Revision 1, January 1964
Revision 2, November 1964
Revision 3, January 1965
Revision 4, April 1965
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Revision 38, October 1973

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,
Washington, D.C. 20231

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28	Apr. 1971	35	Jan. 1973
30	Oct. 1971	36	Apr. 1973
31	Jan. 1972	37	July 1973
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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 are set forth in a Patent Office booklet entitled "Rules of Practice of the United States Patent Office in Patent Cases" (available from the Superintendent of Documents for \$3.50). 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. Primarily the 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 por-

tion 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.