



Copyright Infringement

Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17)

[Copyright Law of the United States | U.S. Copyright Office](#)

Copyright Infringement is the use of works protected by the copyright without permission for a usage where such permission is required. Copyright infringement is illegal and usually a civil issue rather than a criminal one. Penalties for copyright infringement usually include a fine and/or payment to the injured party.

The Copyright Law (Title 17 of the United States Code) in the United States, several exclusive rights are granted to the holder of a copyright, as are listed below:

- Protection of the work;
- To determine and decide how, and under what conditions, the work may be marketed, publicly displayed, reproduced, distributed, etc.
- To produce copies or reproductions of the work and to sell those copies; (including, typically, electronic copies)
- To import or export the work;
- To create derivative works; (works that adapt the original work)
- To perform or display the work publicly;
- To sell or cede these rights to others;
- To transmit or display by radio, video, or internet

Penalties for copyright infringement include civil penalties. In general, anyone found liable for civil copyright infringement may be ordered to pay either actual damages or “statutory” damages affixed at not less than \$750 and not more than \$30,000 per work infringed. For “willful” infringement, a court may award up to \$150,000 per work infringed. A court can, in its discretion, also assess costs and attorneys’ fees. For details, see Title 17, United States Code, Sections 504, 505.

Willful copyright infringement can also result in criminal penalties, including imprisonment of up to five years and fines of up to \$250,000 per offense.

For more information, please see the website to the US Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov especially their FAQs, at www.copyright.gov/help.faq