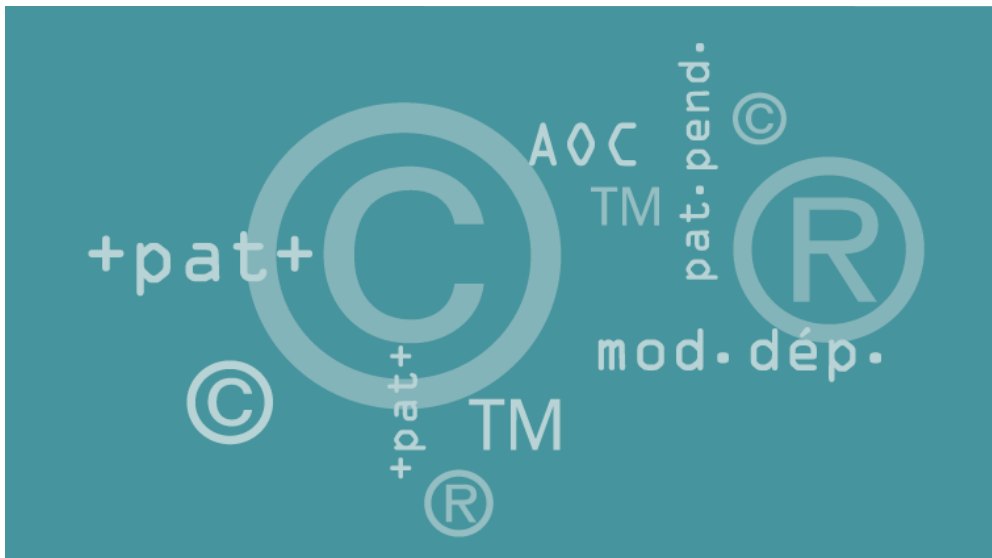


# Invent, produce, market

*Intellectual property in the innovation process:  
A guideline for innovative and creative minds*



## Preface

Protecting intellectual property can be decisive for small and medium-sized innovative businesses—but the how-to information is often missing. To help you get started with intellectual property rights, we have focused this guide around a typical innovation process: As it guides you through the essential phases of the process, you will learn valuable facts about patents, trademarks, designs and copyrights. If you desire more detailed information, you can click on any of the numerous links to further sources.

Still have questions? We are glad to answer them for you and appreciate comments of any kind. Contact us, we're here for you!

We wish you all the best as you turn your ideas into successful products.

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property

# Important information and imprint

**The guideline – an online tool**

This guideline has been created for the internet and can be accessed at [www.ige.ch](http://www.ige.ch) in English, German, French and Italian.

**No substitute for expert advice**

Intellectual property law is complex. This guide cannot indicate all the details, exceptions and special cases. The information included are not legally binding and do not replace the advice of a specialist.

**Prepared with care but no guarantee**

The content in these pages has been created with great care. However, we cannot guarantee its correctness, completeness nor currentness. We also take no responsibility for the content or currency of the external links included here.

**Swiss information for all**

The information in this guideline refers to the existing situation in Switzerland if not otherwise noted. For readability we have used the male pronoun only.

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# Idea

You have a great idea and want to follow through. How should you proceed? Think carefully about your idea first!

## ■ Can ideas be protected?

Ideas, as such, cannot be protected, however, under certain conditions the concrete form of the idea can be:

- Technical solutions to a problem can be protected by a patent (e.g., heatable ski boots)
- The name of a product or a logo can be protected by registering a trademark (e.g., Ricola)
- A product form can be protected by depositing a design (e.g., Colani bottle)
- Literary works, art and computer programs are protected by copyrights

An idea alone is not patentable, but the exact instructions for arriving at the solution to a technical problem are. The realization of the idea must be accurately described.

Discoveries, aesthetic forms, and business systems are not considered inventions in Switzerland and thus cannot be patented. A discovery refers to finding something which already exists and simply describing it, or, in other words, an invention expands the technical possibilities of mankind while a discovery only expands our knowledge.

More examples of what is not patentable is under «No protection for».

### Good to know

- Computer programs, as such, are not patentable, but, inventions based on such programs are (for example, electronic steering). More information on computer-based inventions can be found on page 14 of our patent examination guidelines (available in [German](#), pdf 707 KB, and [French](#), pdf 589 KB).

### Further information

- [What is intellectual property?](#)
- [No protection for?](#)

## ■ Keep it secret!

Keep your idea to yourself, especially if you want to protect it as intellectual property.

- Keep your invention secret as long as you have not applied for a patent. If you make your invention public in any form before you apply for a patent, it is no longer patentable. To be patentable, an invention must be novel (among other things). An invention is novel when no one anywhere in the world has heard of it before the application date. If you expose your invention at an exhibit or in a scientific publication before you file your patent application, it becomes so-called “prior art” and is no longer considered novel when you apply for a patent.
- The same is true for protecting designs. A design must be new in order for it to be protected.
- A trademark should also be unpublished before you apply for registration. If not, someone else can register it in their name. Trademark rights are reserved for whoever registers first.

## ■ Do your research!

Try to find out whether your idea or something similar has already been done. Do searches in internet databases, search the technical, scientific and patent literature, and inform yourself at trade exhibits and by looking through product catalogs.

Patents reflect the innovations which are being developed. Patent databases contain a huge amount of information about technological developments for products and processes—often long before these are on the market or in use. You can use this information to avoid beginning development on something which has already been developed. Patent information can also inspire new ideas or other solutions.

If you've never searched for information before, we can help you through our Assisted Patent Search service. You can also go straight to a professional. This person can search specific patent databases as well as the technical literature for solutions identical or similar to yours.

If you have already filed a patent application, you may, for information purpose, request a “Search for a Swiss Patent Application”.

**Good to know**

- Research is valuable at any point in the innovation process. For example, you can find solutions for technical problems, keep informed of new technical developments, search for suppliers or licensing partners, avoid infringement, check the validity of a patent, or even look for the translation of a patent.

**Resources**

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): The official publication of Swiss patents, trademarks, and designs contains information on published Swiss applications and Swiss patents as well as granted European patents effective in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.
- [www.espacenet.com](http://www.espacenet.com): The online database of the European Patent Organisation containing over a million patent documents from all over the world.
- [www.depatisnet.de](http://www.depatisnet.de): Search for patent documents throughout the world with the online service of the German Patent and Trademark Office.
- [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int): The [digital library](#) of the World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva (for patents, trademarks, and designs).
- [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov): The [online database](#) of the patent and trademark office of the U.S.A.

You can also use Google [www.google.ch](http://www.google.ch) or other search machines. Many other [patent and trademark offices](#) have online databases which you can access from their websites.

**Searches**

- [Assisted Patent Search](#): Make use of the expertise of a patent expert at our office in Bern for a half day: Accompanied by an expert, you search online databases and get a first overview of the state of the art for your idea or invention.
- [Professional searches](#): A technology and patent search by a specialist can help you determine the state of the art in a particular technology sector.
- [Search for a Swiss Patent Application](#): You will receive a search report containing a list of the most relevant documents. In this report, the significance of the various documents in terms of the patent claims they refer to is also indicated.

**■ If you find**

If you find documents, in particular patent documents, or an identical or similar product, various options are possible depending on your goal:

- You purchase the product and save the costs of development.
- Do you want to produce the product yourself? Is the product patented? Find out whether there are patents protecting it and if so, in which countries they are valid or whether the protection has already expired (legal status). If the patent is still valid in countries in which you want to conduct business, you need to negotiate with the owner about using his invention. Maybe you can obtain a license to produce it. If the patent is already expired, you can use the technical information freely.
- You can also improve the product. You do not need the permission of the patent owner to improve a patented product. You can also use patent protected information as a foundation from which to pursue your own research and development. What is illegal is commercially using a patented invention. If you wish to market the results of your further development, you need to determine to what extent the rights of the owner of the basic patent – or other patents – might overlap. It may be necessary to pay licensing fees in order to use your invention. The further development on the invention might also be patentable if you fulfill the necessary conditions. In particular, the further development must be clearly separate from the original invention.
- Or you circumvent the patents you found: You can apply other technologies and solve the problem in a different way. An professional search can show you where you risk infringing on other patents and where you have room to develop for your own invention.

**Resources**

- [www.espacenet.com](http://www.espacenet.com): Millions of patent documents from all over the world are contained in the online database of the European Patent Organisation. You can determine whether a patent is valid and in which country (legal status) by looking at the register of INPADOC legal status. To confirm the information you find, we recommend querying the foreign office. We can gladly assist you with this. Note the information regarding patent register searches.
- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): The official publication of Swiss patents, trademarks, and designs contains information on published Swiss applications and Swiss patents as well as granted European patents effective in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

**Searches**

- [Patent register searches](#)
- [Professional searches](#): Do you want to know whether a patent is protected and in which country (legal status) or whether your invention could infringe on the rights of others when it is produced and marketed? Searches done by specialists can give you answers!

**■ If you don't find**

No description of your idea or your solution? It is too early to tell if your idea is truly novel. To find what you're looking for in the mass of available data, research experience, patent expertise, and knowledge of the specific field is essential. A search specialist might be able to find relevant documents for you in specialized databases. It is possible that competitors have purposely withheld a solution from patenting. In such a case – when others have neither publicized nor applied for a patent – your invention is considered novel and nothing would hinder patenting it.

Keep going with your research and begin developing a proto-type soon!

**Searches**

- [Providers of professional technology and patent searches](#)

**■ Realistic project?**

Make sure you develop a product that people want and for which you can create a demand! Your product must also be realizable: Can you produce it yourself? Or do you need to find partners and distributors?

**Further information**

- [European Patent Office: Seven Deadly Mistakes for an Inventor](#)

**■ To protect or not?**

Do you want to protect your invention by a patent? Consider this question early enough. Until you've decided it, we advise you to keep your idea secret.

The exact date on which you apply for a patent can be decisive. Some areas of technology are fiercely competitive and new technologies appear on the market with lightning speed. Whoever first applies for a patent for an invention secures the rights to it.

**Further information**

What can be protected and how?

- An [overview of protective rights](#)
- [Protection strategy](#)

# Product development

Make your idea real. Set goals for yourself and review your progress regularly.

## ■ Proto-type

Develop a proto-type. Work out the details in drawings and plans, and describe the solution precisely. This helps you determine how realistic your idea is and to uncover any weaknesses.

### Good to know

- In case a conflict arises at a later date, you will be able to prove the date of your invention (e.g., the steps in your inventive process). Date the drawings and plans, put them in a sealed envelope, and then mail them to yourself (do not open the envelope!). You can also have the documents notarized.

## ■ Co-operation

Cooperating with partners on the development phase can shorten the time needed and lead to more thoroughly thought-out solutions.

If several people have worked together on an invention, the patent rights are jointly owned. This is provided for in the patent law. We recommend defining the relationships and intellectual property rights contractually.

You don't know how to utilize your invention yourself? Technology transfer (TT) offices can find partners in business or research for you.

### Good to know

- Do you want to protect your invention or design? Then file your application for protection before you tell someone else about it and destroy the «novelty» (a condition for protection). Or, you can sign a confidentiality agreement with your partners. Patent attorneys (or other specialists) can help you.

### Support

- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

### Further information

- [www.switt.ch](http://www.switt.ch): To find links to technology transfer offices, you can go to the website of the Association of the Swiss Professionals for Academic Technology Transfer.
- [www.kti-cti.ch](http://www.kti-cti.ch): The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) supports projects in research and development among schools of higher education and businesses. Further information can be found at CTI/OPET, the innovation promotion agency.

## ■ Technical problems

Have you come up against technical problems? Look through the patent literature. Among the millions of patent documents, you can find already made solutions or be inspired to make a solution. Pay attention to patent information in other technology sectors as well.

Have you recently done searches? Searches are only snap shots! Every 30 seconds a new patent is being published somewhere in the world.

### Resources

- [www.espacenet.com](http://www.espacenet.com): Millions of patent documents from all over the world are contained in the online database of the European Patent Organisation.

### Further information

- [Technology and patent information](#)



**Searches**

- [Assisted Patent Searches](#): Make use of the expertise of one of our patent experts in Bern for a half day: Accompanied by an expert, you search online databases and get a first overview of the state of the art for your idea or invention.
- [Professional searches](#): A technology and patent search by a specialist can give you information about the state of the art in your technology sector.

**■ Business plan**

A rough concept or business plan can show how and with what resources you intend to realize your idea. It also forces you to thoroughly think through your idea and helps you determine how realistic it is. If you know your strengths and weaknesses you can decide whether and how to proceed.

A business plan defines your strategy, the type of business, financing, market, projected turn-over, competitors, marketing and intellectual protection strategy.

A business plan is often essential if you want to sell your idea or find a partner for the production or marketing of your product.

**Further information**

- [www.gruenden.ch](http://www.gruenden.ch): For information on setting up a company in the Canton of Zurich.
- [www.kmu.admin.ch](http://www.kmu.admin.ch): Information for entrepreneurs (G/f/I only).

**Resources**

- [www.venturelab.ch](http://www.venturelab.ch): Professional, free support for exceptional business ideas. Venturelab is a federal initiative (G/F/I only).

**■ Starting a company**

Do you want to start a new business for your new product?

The cantonal commercial registry is responsible for registering new businesses in the commercial register.

Observe the basics for creating a business name and then determine whether it is still available.

Did you know that a protected trademark and a business name can conflict with each other? That's why we advise you before registering your name with the commercial registry to make sure that no identical or similar name is already protected as a trademark. You can have a search provider make a search for you.

Entering your business name in the commercial register does not automatically protect it as a trademark. Trademark protection derives only from entering a sign in the trademark register at the Institute. The commercial register offers only limited protection from other people using a business name for their products, so it can be worthwhile to also register your business name as a trademark.

**Further information**

- [Why protect a firm name as a trademark as well?](#)
- Information sheet on areas of potential conflict between signs, only available in [German](#) (pdf 83 KB), [French](#) (pdf 80 KB) and [Italian](#) (pdf 81 KB).
- [www.zefix.ch](http://www.zefix.ch): Central Commercial Registry. The website also has links to the cantonal commercial registries.
- [www.bj.admin.ch](http://www.bj.admin.ch): the website of the Federal Office of Justice [with information regarding firm protection](#).
- [www.gruenden.ch](http://www.gruenden.ch): A wealth of information for entrepreneurs from the founding platform of the Canton of Zurich.
- [www.kmu.admin.ch](http://www.kmu.admin.ch): Information for businesses from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco).
- [www.kmuadmin.ch](http://www.kmuadmin.ch): Federal office for entrepreneurs (D/f/I only).

**Support**

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)

**Searches**

- [Professional searches](#): Searches for identical or similar trademarks protected in Switzerland can be carried out by a variety of professional providers.

## ■ Internet presence

Do you want your business to be online? You can register domain names for .ch (Switzerland) and .li (Lichtenstein) at the SWITCH foundation registration office.

Find out if the domain name you want is available. At the SWITCH website you can search for names that have already been taken. Or you can order a domain name search with us.

Did you know that a protected trademark and a business name can conflict with each other? Before you register your domain name, we recommend that you determine whether identical or similar names have already been registered as trademarks. You can have a search provider make a search for you.

Caution: If you want to patent your invention or protect the design of your product, we highly recommend not putting your website online until you've filed for protection. Publishing information about your product destroys the novelty of it and makes the invention or design ineligible for protection.

### Further information

- [Legal information about domain names](#)
- Information sheet on areas of potential conflict between signs, only available in [German](#) (pdf 83 KB), [French](#) (pdf 80 KB) and [Italian](#) (pdf 81 KB).
- [www.switch.ch](http://www.switch.ch): Registration office for domain names for .ch and .li.
- [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) (ICANN): Register domain names for .com, .net, .org, .biz, .info, and .name at one of the registration offices recognized by ICANN.

### Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): Newly registered trademarks as well as modifications to registered trademarks are published on Swissreg. Here you can also do an initial search for nationally registered trademarks in Switzerland. Please note that searching this database cannot replace a professional search because no trademark similarity searches are possible and the database does not include international trademarks with extension in Switzerland.

### Searches

- [Professional searches](#): Searches for identical or similar trademarks protected in Switzerland can be carried out by a variety of professional providers.

## ■ Trademarks

Give your product a name!

Will you create a special calligraphy or logo design?

Product names and logos can also be registered as trademarks. This gives you the exclusive right to use a certain sign for specific goods and services or to grant someone else the right to use it (i.e., licensing).

If you have someone else design your logo, you should clarify in writing who will own the final rights to it and how they will be managed. Be sure not to create a sign that is the same or similar to one registered as a trademark by a competitor.

### Further information

- [Trademark protection](#)
- [Trademark information for beginners](#)

## ■ Everything legal?

Determine whether you need to follow legal restrictions. Certain products (e.g., medicines, chemicals, and agricultural fertilizers and pesticides) must be approved by a federal agency (such as swissmedic or the Federal Office of Public Health) in order to protect public health, the environment or other important resources before they can be produced or marketed. Patent owners also require approval in order to bring certain products onto the market. This is because a patent does not automatically confer on its owner the right to use an invention. The patent law does not govern whether and under which conditions an invention may be used. For that there is other applicable legislation, such as a federal drug act or gene technology act.

### Further information

- <http://bewilligungen.kmuinfo.ch>: Overview of the approval procedure, cantonal procedure, and regulated professions (website of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs; D/F only).

## ■ Don't infringe!

Don't infringe on the rights of others. Patent, trademark, design and copyright infringements can be punished: with a monetary penalty of up to CHF 100,080,000 or even, in the worst case, up to five years custodial sentence and a monetary fine. In addition, you may have to pay damages. Even if things don't get so far you stand to lose a lot. For instance, if you lose an infringement case, you have to stop production and destroy any existing products, marketing materials and office documents.

We recommend clarifying the following before beginning production:

- Does your product tangent other patents?  
Professional searches can help you avoid possible risks of patent infringement. Discuss how to proceed with an expert.
- Does the name of your product or logo infringe on older trademark rights?  
A similarity search finds out whether earlier trademark rights exist.
- Searches for similar or identical trademarks can find earlier trademark rights if they exist.

Don't forget: This is true whether you've protected your intellectual property or not! Even if you don't own any intellectual property rights, you can still end up in litigation over other patents, trademarks, or designs.

### Support

- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)
- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)

### Searches

- [Professional searches](#): Searches for identical or similar trademarks protected in Switzerland can be carried out by a variety of professional providers.

# Protection strategy

You have invested a lot of energy and money in developing your product. That's why it is also worth paying money to protect it. The federal government is there to provide you with protective rights such as patents, trademarks and designs.

## ■ Define your strategy

How do you want to protect and defend your intellectual property long-term? Weigh the costs and advantages and define a protective strategy. Decide what you want to protect, in which countries, for how long, whether and how you want to monitor your protective rights, how you can defend them, and, just in case, how you want to assign them.

Here are a few questions you should think about:

- What do you want to protect? Invention, trademark, or design? Or all three simultaneously? Do you want to patent the opening mechanism for the umbrella? Protect the form of the handle or the pattern of the fabric as a design? Or do you want to register the name of the umbrella as a trademark?
- How do you want to protect your invention?
  - **You can keep the invention secret,** which is, to a certain extent, a cheap, permanent form of protection. However, someone else can discover your solution and use it freely.
  - **You can protect the invention with a patent.** As a patent owner, you can commercially use your invention and prohibit others from the economic utilization (e.g., producing, selling, or importing) of your invention for a maximum of 20 years. This allows you to recoup the money you invested in development and to make a profit. In return, so to speak, you must accurately describe your invention and disclose it (in Switzerland, inventions are electronically published at [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch) 18 months after the date of filing, or, if applicable, the priority date). Patent protection promotes technological progress by allowing the state of the art of a technology to be disseminated. Others can freely access the knowledge and use it as a starting point for advancing their own research. Whatever is not published in the patent application and thus kept secret is not protected.
  - **Or, you can publish an invention without patenting it.** This prevents someone else from obtaining a viable patent for your invention. When an invention has already been published, it is no longer considered novel and thus is not patentable.
- How to decide in which countries to protect your intellectual property? Which markets are feasible and interesting for your product? Are you prepared to defend your rights in these countries?

We recommend that you consult a specialist (patent or trademark attorney) for developing an effective intellectual property strategy.

### Good to know

- There is another defense against counterfeiting without patent, trademark, or design rights: Manufacturers are also protected against counterfeiting through the Federal Law on Unfair Competition. This law protects primarily against a conduct of business which is contrary to good faith-practices or immoral. Acts which are considered unfair and illegal are things such as deceiving and misleading consumers. The unfair competition law can be used to proceed against counterfeiting and copying ([Federal Law on Unfair Competition](#))
- [Copyrights are no substitute for patent protection.](#)

### Further information

- What is [intellectual property](#)?

### Support

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)
- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

## ■ Protective rights are assets

As soon as you have applied or filed for protection, you can sell, license (i.e., 'lease'), or pledge your rights.

When you sell your rights, you transfer them to someone else. You can sell a protective right from the start, for instance, when you don't want to market it yourself. This way you immediately receive the agreed upon sum, independently of the future value of the title. Or you can wait and transfer the protective right after the resulting product has been successfully marketed. Under licensing, the title owner (licensor) retains his rights. But he makes an agreement with the licensee on the manner and time period for which the protective right may be used and how the benefits will be managed.

We recommend retaining a specialized attorney for negotiating and writing sale and licensing contracts. If you own the rights it might be easier to find investors. A protective title can also be used as a collateral for investors under certain conditions.

### Good to know

- Who owns the rights to an invention or design created as part of an employment relationship? First, check if the employment contract deals with this issue. If it doesn't, then [article 332 of the Swiss Obligation Code](#) is applicable. According to this law, inventions and designs belong to the employer if they are made in fulfillment of contractual obligations. Inventions and designs created during regular work time but not under the contractual obligations must be offered to the employer. Then the employer can decide whether he wants to obtain the invention or design in question.
- Including intellectual property in the bookkeeping is an important and complex subject. Consult a financial expert or auditing office.

### Support

- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)
- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)
- [Swiss Bar Association](#)

# Patents

A patent is a protective title granted by the state for an invention. It gives the owner protection from another person commercially using (i.e., producing, applying, selling or importing) his invention without permission for a maximum of 20 years. For example: The inventor of a ball-point pen can prevent someone else from producing ball-point pens without his permission based on his patent. However, he can also allow production against some kind of recompensation.

Legally, an invention is a new solution to a technological problem. Products (such as heatable ski boots, or chemical compounds such as aspirin) and processes (such as a process for freeze-drying coffee) can be patented.

Patent protection is only valid in those countries where a patent has been granted. It expires 20 years after the application date. Thereafter, the invention belongs to the public domain and can be used by anyone.

## Good to know

- Patented products or their packaging can be graphically identified, for example, by the federal cross and the patent number (+69255) and even information about the country in which the patent was granted (CH patent 69255). If a patent application has been filed for an invention, the symbols 'pat.pend.' or 'patent pending' can be used. It is an offence to misuse these symbols.
- A patent does not automatically confer its owner the right to use his invention. Other laws, such as those covering medicines or artificial reproduction, regulate whether an invention can be used. In many cases, approval must be obtained.

## Further information

- [Patent protection](#)

## Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): The official publication of Swiss patents, trademarks, and designs contains information on published Swiss applications and Swiss patents as well as granted European patents effective in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.
- [www.espacenet.com](http://www.espacenet.com): Millions of patent documents from all over the world are contained in the online database of the European Patent Organisation.

## ■ Protection Requirements

An invention must meet three criteria in order to be patentable.

### 1. Industrial application:

The invention must be manufacturable or applicable in some commercial sector (including agriculture). This condition is met by most inventions.

### 2. Novelty:

The invention must be novel. An invention is considered novel when it is not already part of the state of the art. State of the art includes anything which has been made public through writing, orally, by use, or any other means anywhere in the world previous to the date of the patent application.

### 3. Non-obviousness:

The solution to a problem is considered inventive, if, based on the current state of the art, it is not obvious for an ordinary person skilled in the art. Using another type of material instead of the type usually used (e.g., using aluminium instead of steel) is evident for an ordinary person skilled in the art and therefore not an inventive development. An indication of an inventive step is the unexpected quality of a product or the surprising effect of a process.

## ■ No protection for

These things are not patentable:

- Ideas, concepts, discoveries, scientific theories and mathematical methods
- Rules for games, lottery systems, teaching methods and organizational flow charts
- Diagnostic, therapies and surgery procedures used for humans or animals
- Plant varieties, animal breeds, and other primarily biological procedures for breeding plants or animals (However, biotechnological inventions, such as extracting human insulin from yeast cells, are patentable. The cultivation of new plant variety can be protected under plant variety protection.)
- Forms (These can be protected as designs or under copyrights.)
- Computer programs as such (these come under copyright). However, inventions which depend on a computer program are patentable (e.g., electronic steering)

- Inventions, the application of which would go against public morality or law (e.g., procedures for cloning humans)

**Good to know**

- Many things which are not patentable in other countries can be patented in the United States of America because of a different approach. The US Patent and Trademark Office ([www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)), for example, grants patents for computer programs and business methods.

**Further information**

- Patent examination guidelines in [French](#) (pdf 589 KB) or [German](#) (pdf 707 KB) Chapter 2, page 17, contains a list of all the things which cannot be patented as well as further information regarding patenting computer implemented inventions.
- [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch): [Federal Act on New Plant Varieties](#)

■ **Filing a patent application**

To find out how to apply for a patent and what the procedure is, go to our page «Protection in Switzerland».

Important:

- An invention must be novel in order for it to be protected. In Switzerland, however, the patent examination does not include novelty. This means that it is possible to have a patent granted for an invention which is not novel (e.g., a patent for a record player). However, this makes it possible for someone else to contest the novelty of your invention, and your patent could be revoked (declared invalid). Perhaps you want to extend protection for your invention to other countries. When an application to the European Patent Office (EPO) is submitted and processed, the invention is examined for novelty – and will be rejected if it doesn't meet the requirement. We recommend strongly that you determine the novelty of your invention first. If you have applied for a patent, you can have us conduct a Prior Art Search for Swiss Patent Application. Novelty is also examined for in the European and PCT procedures. For information about patent protection abroad, look at our page «Protection Abroad».
- The material examination for a patent application usually takes place 3-4 years after the application has been filed. In the meantime, i.e., 18 months after the filing date (or, if applicable, the priority date), the patent application is electronically published at [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch). If any weaknesses have been discovered in the patent application, you must rectify them (e.g., revise the technical claims) without, however, going beyond the content of the original documents submitted. If all deficiencies have been corrected, the patent is granted.
- We recommend that you draw up the technical specifications with a patent attorney. Prepare the patent claims very carefully because these define exactly what will be protected and what not (scope of protection).

**Further information**

- [Protection in Switzerland](#)
- [Protection abroad](#)
- Guidelines to the patent application (in German) - [free of charge](#)
- [Information sheet: how to draw up the technical documents \(in German\)](#)

**Resources**

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): The official publication of Swiss patents, trademarks, and designs contains information on published Swiss applications and Swiss patents as well as granted European patents effective in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.
- [www.espacenet.com](http://www.espacenet.com): The online database of the European Patent Organisation containing millions of patent documents from all over the world.

**Support**

- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

**Searches**

- [Prior Art Search for a Swiss Patent Application](#)
- [Professional searches](#): A search for the state of the art in your technology sector can provide a good basis for preparing the technical documents.

■ **Protection abroad**

There are a couple of possibilities to protect your invention abroad: Filing directly in the country of interest, filing a European application, or filing an international one. For information, see our page «Protection Abroad».

**Caution:**

- Don't miss the priority deadline when you extend protection abroad. The 12-month deadline begins the date of your national patent application filing. During this period, you can file for a patent abroad and claim the date of your first application.

**Further information**

- [Protection abroad](#)

**Help**

- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

## ■ Costs

Several things determine the cost of patent protection:

- Possible translations of the patent application for the various countries (Patents are usually granted in the national language and thus translation costs can be very high!)
- Retaining a patent attorney
- The countries in which protection is sought
- Patent and technology searches
- Number of patent claims
- Patent fees

Usually the fees are the smallest portion of the total cost. A valid patent for Switzerland and Liechtenstein costs CHF 200 for the application and CHF 500 for the examination. Starting five years after the date of filing and up to 20 years after, annual renewal fees are due. For the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year they are CHF 100; for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> year, CHF 200; and as of the 9<sup>th</sup> year, CHF 310 annually. More information on fees is in our fee schedule.

**Further information**

- [Patent fees \(Switzerland and international\)](#)
- [www.epo.org](http://www.epo.org): The European Patent Office (EPO) can tell you the average cost of a European patent and a so-called Euro-PCT patent. (For an explanation of these two application/granting procedures, go to the page «[Protection Abroad](#)»).



# Trademarks

Technically, a trademark is a protected sign which distinguishes the products or services of one business from another.

Basically, any graphic representations can be used as trademarks under the law: For example, words (e.g., Victorinox), combinations of letters (e.g., ABB), combinations of numbers (e.g., 501), graphic images (e.g., the SBB logo), three-dimensional forms (e.g., the Mercedes star), slogans (e.g., «Cats would buy Whiskas»), any combination of these elements, and a series of tones (acoustic trademarks, e.g., the Ricola jingle).

Trademark protection derives from entering it in the trademark register. You must indicate for which products (goods and services classes) you want to register and use the sign. As a trademark owner you can prevent others from using an identical or similar sign for the same or similar goods and services.

## Good to know

- It is often wrongly assumed that the name of a business is automatically protected as a trademark. But a company can register its name as a trademark and thus be protected if it meets the register conditions. Read our webpage on «[Trademarks](#)».
- It is not compulsory to use the ® sign in Switzerland and it makes no difference in the owner's rights. However, it can alert other people to the fact that the trademark is registered and it can help prevent infringement cases. Using the registered trademark sign without having actually registered the mark is an offense.

## Further information

- [Information for beginners](#)
- [Trademarks](#)

## Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): The official publication of Swiss patents, trademarks, and designs contains information on nationally registered trademarks.

## ■ Grounds for refusal

- Signs which belong to the public domain must remain available to everyone and cannot be registered. This includes, for instance, single letters or numbers or abbreviations which have a meaning and a descriptive character (e.g., 4x4, GTI). A sign may also not be purely descriptive of a characteristic, quality, type or place of production (generic names). For instance, «apple» cannot be registered for a type of apple or fruit but it can be registered for a computer without a problem.
- A trademark may also not be misleading or deceptive regarding properties such as source or quality. For example, the trademark «GoldArt» cannot be registered for goods which are not made of gold or gilded with gold.
- A trademark also may not go against public morality or the law.

## Further information

- You can see examples of problematical signs which would be refused during examination as well as our examination guidelines at our webpage [Examination practice](#).
- [Information on the use and protection of indications of source](#)

## ■ Search first!

Search first! Conflict can arise when you register a sign (trademark) that is identical with or similar to a sign that has already been registered for similar or identical goods and services. The consequence is that your trademark could be contested during the opposition period (3 months after the publication of a trademark) or even as part of a litigation process later on. You would be responsible for cancelling your trademark and liable for damages.

The trademark owner is responsible for avoiding infringement. During the trademark application examination, we do not check if other registered marks could be confused with yours. We recommend that you have a professional search for similar trademarks done before you apply for registration. Doing your own searches in online trademark databases can be insufficient in some cases. For instance, if you want to search for the sign e-sapi, there could be uncountable variations such as isapi, elsap, etc. A search expert uses specialized tools to recognize similar signs in professional trademark databases.

## Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): Swissreg publishes newly registered trademarks as well as modifications to previously

registered marks. It is also possible to conduct preliminary searches for nationally registered trademarks. Such a search is not a substitute for a professional search when considering a trademark registration because Swissreg does not allow similarity searches and the database does not contain international trademarks with extension in Switzerland.

- [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int): Search for international trademarks in [Madrid Express](#), the online database of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
- [www.oami.europa.eu](http://www.oami.europa.eu): Search for Community trademarks in the [database](#) of the Office of the European Union Trade Marks and Designs (OHIM) in Alicante. Community trademarks are registered at OHIM and are valid throughout the European Union.

#### Searches

- [Professional searches](#): Searches for identical or similar trademarks protected in Switzerland can be carried out by a variety of professional providers.

## ■ Trademark registration

To register a trademark, send us the completed form per post or fax, or use the electronic application system under e-trademark.

Further information can be found on our webpage Protection in Switzerland or in our guidelines Registering Trademarks (in German, French or Italian) which we gladly mail free of charge.

Individuals and firms domiciled outside of Switzerland must use an agent in Switzerland to represent them. In general, we recommend retaining a specialist for your trademark registration as trademark law and practice is complex.

#### Further information

- [Registering trademarks in Switzerland](#)
- Instructions for registering a trademark (in German) – [order](#) free of charge

#### Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): Swissreg publishes newly registered trademarks as well as modifications to previously registered marks. It is also possible to conduct preliminary search for national registered trademarks. Such a search is not a substitute for a professional search when considering a trademark registration because Swissreg does not allow similarity searches and the database does not contain international trademarks with extension in Switzerland.
- <https://e-trademark.ige.ch>: Online trademark registration

#### Support

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)

#### Searches

- [Professional searches](#): Searches for identical or similar trademarks protected in Switzerland can be carried out by a variety of professional providers.

## ■ Protection abroad

There are several possibilities to protect your trademark abroad: You can register directly in the country of interest or at a regional trademark office (e.g., the Office of the European Union Trademarks and Designs, in Alicante), or you can register internationally through the so-called Madrid System.

For an international registration you must first register your trademark in Switzerland. Don't miss the priority deadline: If you plan to register your trademark for other countries using the Swiss priority date, we recommend that you apply for the international registration at the same time as the national registration (or, within 4 months at the latest).

#### Further information

- [Trademark protection abroad](#)

#### Support

- [Trade mark consultants and agents in Switzerland](#)

#### Searches

- [Providers of domestic and international trademark searches](#)

## ■ Costs

The trademark registration fee in Switzerland is CHF 550, including three classes of goods and services, for 10 years. The fees for renewing trademark protection for another 10 years are CHF 550. More information on fees can be found in our fee schedule.

Several things are involved in the cost of trademark protection

- Trademark searches
- The number of goods and services classes
- The countries in which protection is sought
- Retaining a trade mark consultants

### Further information

- [Schedule of most important fees](#)

# Designs

A design is the visible form of a two-dimensional (patterns, such as fabric designs) or three-dimensional (models such as tooth brushes or locomotives) object. The uniqueness of a design is achieved through the use of lines, contours, colors, surfaces and materials.

The owner of the right to a design can prohibit others from using products with the same or similar design for commercial purposes, i.e., producing, importing, and exporting.

## Further information

- [Designs](#)

## ■ Requirements for protection

Creations which meet these conditions benefit from designs protection

- The design must be new. This condition has been met when no other identical design has been published before filing for protection.
- The design must exhibit uniqueness. This condition is met when the design sufficiently differs from existing designs in significant points.
- The design may not go against public morality or law.

Applications for design protection are not examined for newness in Switzerland. We recommend that you check specialty stores, look at the competition, go to exhibitions and look at the trade literature to see if identical or similar designs already exist.

## ■ No protection for

Not protected are designs which

- are purely functional (e.g., the threads on a screw)
- Offend public morality or order
- Go against the law (e.g., the Federal Law on Protection of Coats of Arms)

The design act does not cover

- Ways of producing (e.g., ways of making clothes)
- Practical uses (e.g., flow charts)
- Technical functions

Such things could possibly be protected by a patent.

## ■ Depositing designs

Depositing a design is very simple. Complete the application form; for each design, attach one or more copies of an appropriate representation; mail it to the Institute via postal service or e-mail. All other information can be found on our webpage Protection in Switzerland or you can order our free brochure «Designs Protection» (in German, French, or Italian).

## Further information

- [Designs protection in Switzerland](#)
- Designs Protection brochure (German, French, Italian) [order](#)

## Support

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)
- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

## ■ Protection abroad

Design protection can be extended to other countries any time after the first filing in a country up to six months later. During this period, the newness is maintained.

There are several possibilities to protect your design abroad: An international filing at the World Intellectual Property Organization; filing at the Office of Harmonization of the Internal Market for all the European Union member countries; or filing directly in the country of interest. Read our webpage [Protection abroad](#).

### Further information

- [Designs protection abroad](#)

## ■ Costs

The basic filing fee for the first design for 5 years is CHF 200.00 including the publication of one illustration. Additional designs deposited with the same application cost CHF 100.00 per design. In addition, you must pay the publication fee of CHF 20 for each illustration in addition to the one included in the basic application fee.

More information on fees can be found in our fee schedule.

Design protection is also determined by:

- The countries in which protection is sought
- Having a representative

### Further information

- [Design protection fees](#)

# Copyrights

Copyrights protect works of literature and art. They protect the expression and not the content of an idea. Thus, it is the concrete work in which an idea finds expression that is protected, not the idea itself.

For example, a scientific treatment of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity is protected as a literary work, but not the theory itself. Copyrights automatically exist the moment a creation comes into existence. No formalities or filing is possible or necessary. No registration for copyrights exists.

Benefits: The copyright owner determines whether, when, and how his work will be used. «To use» means, specifically, reproducing, distributing, making accessible (e.g., putting a work on the internet), performing and presenting, broadcasting and rebroadcasting and adapting (e.g., translating the work)

## Further information

- [Copyrights](#)

## ■ Conditions for protection

Copyright protection is for works that meet the following conditions:

- It can be classified as literature or art
- It is the creative result of an intellectual effort
- It has a individual character

It does not matter how much effort or money has been used to create the work. In each individual cases the court will have to decide if the conditions for protection have been met.

## ■ No protection for

Ideas, mere labor (e.g., putting together a telephone book; rejection of the «sweat of the brow doctrine»), concepts or instructions for humans (e.g., food recipes) do not fall under copyrights, even if they possess an individual character. Laws, ordinances and other governmental decrees as well as decisions, protocols and reports made by officials and public administrators, means of payment, patent documents, and publicized patent applications are also not protected.

## ■ Protection abroad

Every legal system is basically national. Copyrights and neighboring rights protected under Swiss law are protected only in Switzerland. International protection is regulated via international treaties (such as the Bern Convention and the Rome Convention). To determine whether, as a Swiss resident, you are protected in another country, you need to find out whether the country has joined the same treaties as Switzerland.

# Marketing

Congratulations! After all your efforts nothing more should stand in the way of producing and successfully marketing your product.

## ■ Advertising

Once you've deposited your design, applied for a patent for your invention, or registered your trademark, you do not need to keep anything secret. Get the word out about your product and advertise!

Advertising flyers can be copyright protected if they have an individual character. Protection arises automatically with the creation of the work; registration is not required.

Do you want to use your trademark on the internet? This is a special case in legal terms. Trademark protection is territorial: that means that a trademark is only protected in the countries or regions for which it is registered. In contrast, the «world wide web» is not territorial. Conflicts can arise on the internet between similar or identical trademarks registered for protection in different countries. There have been few cases on this and the judicature varies from country to country.

### Good to know

- Is someone else creating your advertising? We recommend that you draw up a written agreement regarding ownership of the copyrights and how they will be compensated the very beginning.

### Caution

- Pictures and names of other people may not be used for advertising without their permission. This is set down in the provisions regarding personality rights in the Swiss civil code.

## ■ Document things!

In case of conflict you have the advantage if you can prove that you have actually made use of your protective rights. Document things such as:

- **The use and marketing of your invention:**  
This is particularly important when the invention is not patented. If you are accused of patent infringement later, it can be useful to have proof of when you marketed your invention. If this occurred before the plaintiff applied for a patent, you can contest the novelty of his patent and have it possibly declared invalid and revoked (an 'invalidity claim').
- **The use of your trademark:**  
If you do not use your registered trademark for five consecutive years, someone else can request that it be fully, or partially (in the case where you use it for only some of the goods and service classes for which it is registered), cancelled. Afterwards you can no longer assert your trademark rights. That's why you need to document your trademark use thoroughly!
- **The use of unregistered signs:**  
If you have been using a sign before someone else applies for trademark registration, that person cannot prevent you from continuing to use the sign in the same way as before.

### Good to know

- Save your documents long enough! Protective rights often last longer than what is legally required for business documents. In case of litigation you might have to prove the entire length of period during which you used it.

# Enforcement

Now is the time to monitor your trademark, and enforce and manage your rights.

## ■ Monitor your competition

Especially successful products are always being imitated or copied. Uncovering activities damaging to your business and taking action is in your best interest.

If you want to stay on top of the newly filed applications or registered trademarks and patents, you can monitor the protective rights register. Check the register regularly or subscribe to a monitoring service with a search provider.

- **Trademark monitoring:** We do not search for identical or similar signs already registered when examining a sign for trademark registration. This means that anyone can, at any time, register a trademark which could be mistaken for yours! Trademark monitoring regularly informs you about potentially confusing signs which have been newly registered or are pending registration. It allows you to promptly react and file opposition against the new sign if necessary. Opposition proceedings are simple and relatively cheap but can only be done within 3 months of publication of a new trademark. Afterwards, a trademark which infringes on your prior trademark can only be declared invalid by a civil court.
- **Technology monitoring** delivers information regarding published patent applications and newly granted patents in your technology sector. It allows you to identify potential patent infringement early and at the same time keeps you up to date on technological developments.

Do you think someone else's patent has been unjustly granted, for example, because the invention does not show novelty or an inventive step, or because the claims disclosures are incomplete? In such a case you can file an invalidity claim at a civil court. A judge will then decide whether the patent in question is valid or not. Contact a patent attorney. In special cases, particularly for biotechnology inventions, you can file opposition with the Institute within nine months of the granting of a patent.

A statistical analysis of patents can reveal the development strategy of a competitor or the trends in a particular technological sector. Patents usually reflect innovative activity, and professionals can extract valuable technological and competitor information from them.

### Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): Swissreg is the official publication for Swiss patents, trademarks and designs.

### Further information

- Information on [opposition procedure trademarks](#)
- Information on [opposition procedure patents](#)

### Searches

- [Providers of professional searches and monitoring](#)

## ■ Export

Protective rights are principally valid only within the territory of the country that granted them. A Swiss patent protects an invention only in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Have you also obtained protection abroad? Before you begin to export, especially if you haven't obtained protection abroad, be certain that you will not be infringing on the rights of anyone in your target market.

### Good to know

Owners of registered trademarks or designs and of copyrights can defend themselves against imported or exported counterfeited or pirated products. Request assistance from the federal customs administration. The customs agents can temporarily impound shipments at the border. For more information and information sheets, go to the website of the Federal Customs Administration ([www.ezv.admin.ch](http://www.ezv.admin.ch)).

### Further information

- [Protective strategies](#)
- [Trademark protection abroad](#)
- [Patent protection abroad](#)
- [Designs protection abroad](#)



**Support**

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)
- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

**Searches**

- [Providers of professional searches for similar or identical trademarks or for identifying potential patent infringements](#)

**■ Monitor register entries**

Are the entries still correct?

Monitor your trademark registration every time you introduce a new product under an existing trademark or modify its appearance. Does the new product fall under the original classes of goods and services? If not, you can make a new application for additional classes of goods and services.

The goods and services classes can be restricted anytime by submitting a written application.

We advise you to have any address changes, licensing agreements, and, above all, transfers of rights entered into the register. This is particularly beneficial in case of a conflict because anyone who is well-intentioned can assume that the register is correct.

**Further information**

- [Schedule of trademark fees](#)
- [Schedule of patent fees](#)

**Resources**

- [Form for registration changes \(trademark\)](#)

**■ Litigation?**

Once you have a presence on the market, you are vulnerable. Your product, service, or trademark can become the object of litigation at any time independent of whether you've protected your intellectual property or not!

A competitor can send you warning (a cease and desist letter). If you are infringing on his rights with your product, product name or design. Protective rights can also be contested in court at any time because they are not guaranteed by the Institute. In such a case, the court decides on the validity of a protective right.

Warning notices and the related deadlines from a competitor are serious. By requesting an excerpt from the register from your opponent you can gauge potential infringement better. In general, you should always consult an attorney in such cases. He can assess the legal status and recommend an effective strategy for responding. Grounds for litigation can often be voided, for example, when the accusing party's protective title isn't valid.

**Good to know**

Searches are the best prevention against rights infringement. Read the section «[Don't infringe](#)».

**Further information**

- [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch): [What are the grounds for revoking a patent?](#) (in German)

**Support**

- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)
- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)

**■ Managing rights**

Successful trademarks, patents, designs, and copyrights are valuable assets that can be traded at any time. They can be sold (transferred) or permission for use can be given to others (e.g., for a licensing fee or for free).

We advise you to have licensing agreements, and, above all, rights transfers, entered into the register. This is particularly beneficial in case of a conflict because anyone of good faith may assume that the register is correct.

Licensing agreements must be carefully negotiated and fixed. An attorney specializing in licensing contracts can

help you.

#### Further information

- [Transferring and licensing trademark rights](#). The page also has a link to the form you need to submit.
- [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int): A comprehensive guide to licensing can be purchased through the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva: [Exchanging Value. Negotiating Technology Licensing Agreements](#).

#### Support

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)
- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)
- [Swiss Bar Association](#)

## ■ Dealing with conflicts

Is someone trying to exploit your trademark? Is your product being copied?

Respond with informed, firm action. Document any imitations and keep track of the surrounding situation. An attorney (patent or trademark) can help you analyze the situation, assess the legality and find an effective strategy for responding. Many cases of infringement occur unintentionally and the parties involved can resolve it outside of court. Often simply sending a cease-and-desist letter indicating the infringing act and describing the legal situation and consequences if the infringement continues is sufficient. The parties involved can also draw up an agreement defining who can legally use the invention, trademark, or design, and how it can be used in the future. Otherwise, litigation proceedings can be initiated against the infringing party.

However, to prevent infringement from occurring in the first place, we recommend monitoring the register (see, Monitor your competition) If a trademark which is identical or similar to yours has been published, as the owner of the prior trademark, you have the right to file an opposition to us within 3 months of publication of the trademark in question. Opposition proceedings are relatively simple and cheap, and determine whether the two trademarks are confusing. If so, the more recent trademark will be cancelled.

Swiss patent law recognizes an opposition procedure which is restricted to the establishment of patentability according to Article 1a, 1b and 2 of the law (i.e., in particular for biotechnology inventions). If the parties involved cannot come to an agreement in case of conflict, they must take it to court.

In case of conflict, registered rights, whether trademark, patent, or design, have an advantage in that they provide clear, officially documented evidence for the scope of protection, the application/filing date, owner, etc.

#### Further information

- [Opposition procedure](#) (trademarks); detailed Information about opposition procedure can also be found in our Trademark Examination Guidelines in [German](#) (pdf, 3000 KB) and [French](#) (pdf, 3000 KB).
- [Opposition procedure](#) (patents)
- [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch): Information on [annulment procedure](#) (in German, French and Italian) (Federal Patent Law)
- [www.promarca.ch](http://www.promarca.ch): The trademark brochure (in [German](#) and [French](#)) (pdf 1,4 and 1 MB) from the Swiss brand name trade association contains information about possible measures to take in cases of intellectual property infringement.
- Information about [counterfeiting and piracy](#).

#### Good to know

- Owners of patents, registered trademarks or designs and copyrights can defend themselves against imported or exported counterfeited or pirated products by requesting assistance from the federal customs administration. The customs agents can temporarily impound suspicious shipments at the border. For more information and fact sheets, go to the website of the Federal Customs Administration ([www.ezv.admin.ch](http://www.ezv.admin.ch)).

#### Resources

- [www.swissreg.ch](http://www.swissreg.ch): The official publication for Swiss patents, trademarks and designs. You can look up trademarks, patents and designs online in the Swiss register of protective titles, for instance, if you want to find out if a particular trademark is protected in Switzerland or a patent is still in force.

#### Support

- [Trade mark consultants in Switzerland](#)
- [Patent attorneys in Switzerland](#)

#### Searches

- [Providers of professional searches and monitoring](#).

## ■ Protection expired?

Protective rights are for a limited time only, except for trademark rights which can be renewed indefinitely in Switzerland. Patent protection lasts a maximum of 20 years, designs protection 25 years. Copyrights last 70 years after the author's death, or 50 years in the case of computer programs.

Even if you don't have registered rights, there are other laws to help against counterfeiters. The federal law against unfair competition protects primarily against a conduct of business which is contrary to good faith-practices or immoral. Unfair and illegal are acts such as deceiving and misleading consumers. If this is the case, the unfair competition law can be used to fight against counterfeiting and imitations.

A cloud on the horizon: Prosecution claims based on the Law on Unfair Competition are usually complicated and expensive. In contrast, registered trademarks, patents, and design rights are much simpler to enforce.

## Any questions?

For questions regarding patents, trademarks, designs, and copyrights, we are available Monday to Friday, 8:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 17:00

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e-mail: [info@ipi.ch](mailto:info@ipi.ch)

What do you think of this guide? Your opinion is important to us! [Feedback Form](#)

Please note that we cannot advise on questions of strategy or cases of conflict. Contact instead a patent or trademark attorney or other intellectual property specialist.

### Further information

- Are you interested in receiving regular information about patent and trademark searches? You can subscribe to our newsletter [ip-search Newsletter](#).
- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has published an informative guide to patents, trademarks and designs for small and medium sized businesses. It can be downloaded directly from the WIPO website ([www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)) as a pdf.