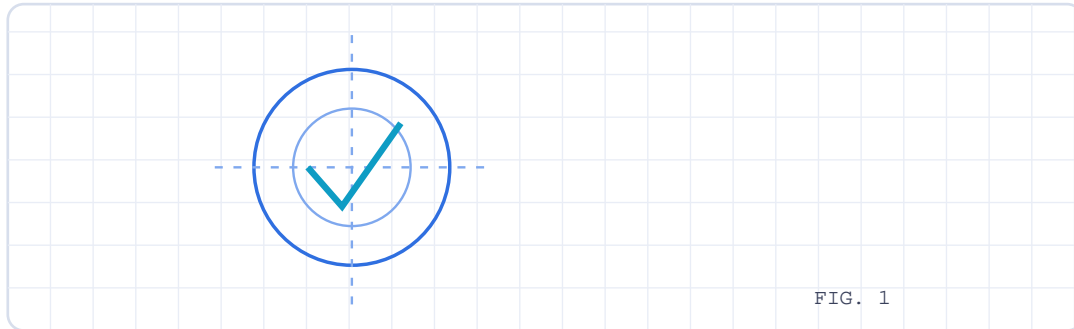


Trademark Clearance Guide

Use this free Trademark Clearance Guide to learn how trademarks are checked in the U.S. and how to do a first-pass search before you file. We also help you connect with a licensed IP professional if you want expert guidance.



What a trademark clearance check does (and what it can't guarantee)

A trademark clearance check is a practical way to see whether a brand name is likely to be too similar to an existing trademark. In the U.S., trademark rights often depend on how marks are used, not only what is filed.

This guide helps you do a first-pass review of common risks before you file. It cannot guarantee the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) will approve your application or that a conflict will not arise later.

If you're launching a product, app, or service, a clearance check can save time and money by reducing obvious conflicts and helping you choose a stronger brand name and accurate description of goods/services.

Step 1: Define your brand and the exact "goods or services" you offer

Trademarks protect brand identifiers for specific goods or services. That means the same name can sometimes be used by different businesses if the goods/services are unrelated and the overall likelihood of confusion is low.

In this step, write down: - The exact brand name as you plan to use it (including spelling and spacing). - Whether it's a logo word mark (text), a design, or both. - The main goods/services you sell or provide, in plain language.

The goal is accuracy. If you're vague or too broad, your application may cover more than you intended, which can increase the chance of refusal.

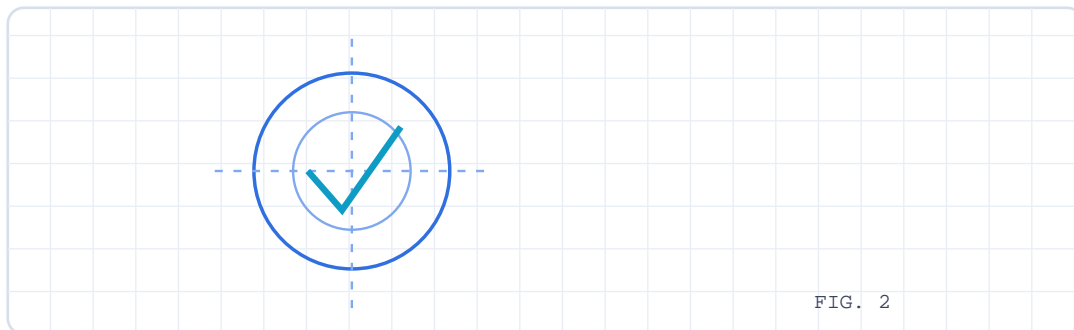


FIG. 2

Step 2: Search the USPTO database for similar marks

The USPTO maintains databases of trademark applications and registrations. Your clearance check should look for similar marks, especially those used for similar goods/services.

Start with the USPTO's Trademark Search tool and search for:

- Exact matches of the brand name.
- Similar-sounding names (for example, variations in spelling).
- Common word components (for example, a shared suffix or prefix).

During your review, also look at how the mark is presented (standard characters vs. special form) and how the goods/services are described.

Step 3: Check “likelihood of confusion” signals

Trademark conflicts often come down to whether consumers are likely to be confused about who provides the goods or services. There isn't one single rule, but clearance checks commonly look for warning signs.

In your review, consider:

- Similarity of the marks in appearance, sound, and meaning.
- Similarity of the goods/services.
- Overlap in where and how the marks are used (for example, online vs. local services).

If you find marks that are very close for similar goods/services, the safer approach is usually to consider a different name or narrow your plan—then re-check.

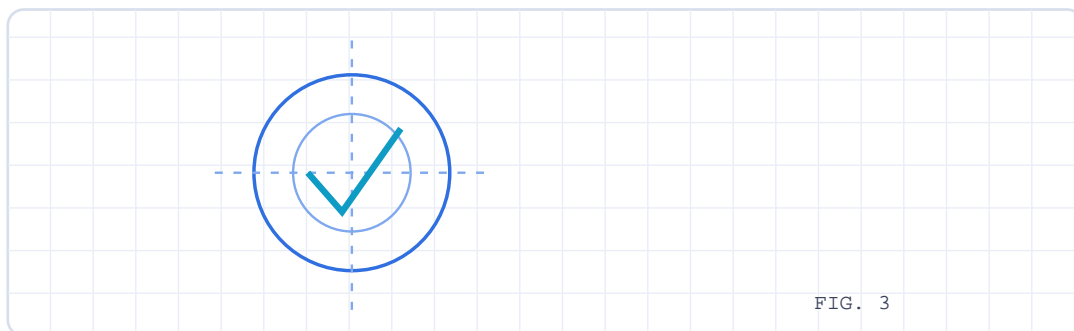


FIG. 3

Step 4: Review related records and evidence of use

Trademarks can be refused even if your exact search doesn't show an obvious match. That's because risk can also come from related uses and older rights.

Look beyond the first page of search results and review: - Pending applications that are still under examination. - Registered marks that cover related goods/services. - Notes about how marks are actually used in commerce (for example, on websites or product listings).

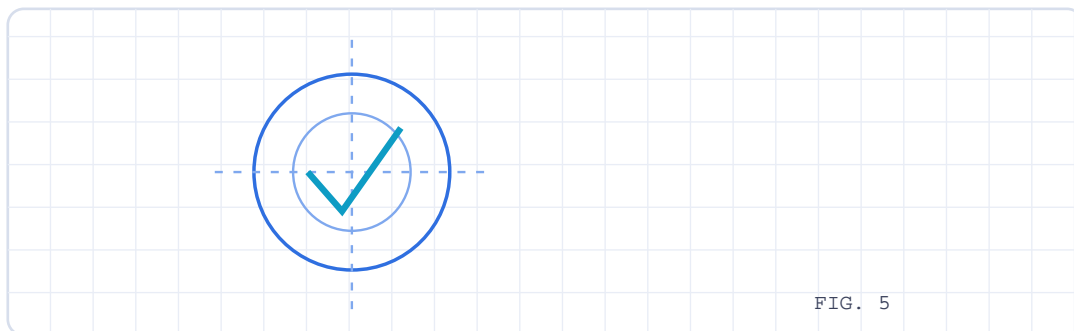
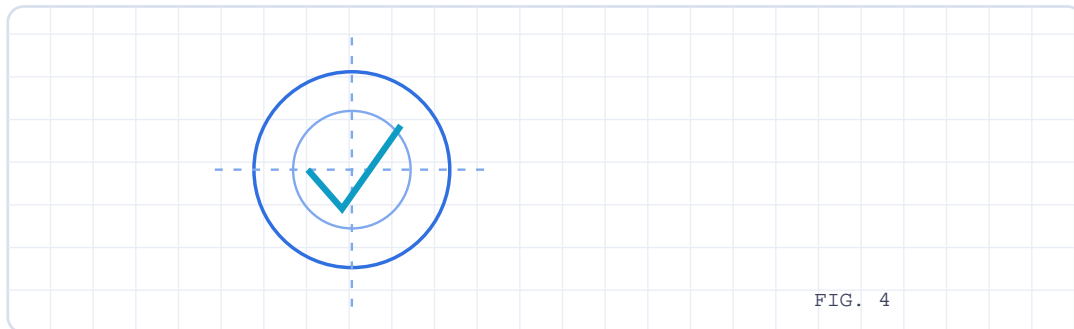
If you have a complicated brand, you may want a licensed professional to help interpret what the search results mean for your specific situation.

Want help interpreting your results?

FiledClaim is a free service that helps you understand U.S. intellectual property (IP) basics and find a licensed patent or IP professional if you want expert guidance. We connect you with a licensed trademark attorney or other qualified professional based on your needs.

If you use the guide and want a next step, you can share a short, non-confidential description of your brand and the general goods/services you offer—without sharing sensitive details that aren't necessary for an initial discussion.

To start, use the tool and then visit [how it works](#) or go to [get matched](#) to find a qualified professional.



IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Download the free Trademark Clearance Guide to do a practical first-pass check for similar U.S. trademarks before you file, then use our tool to connect with a licensed professional if you want help.

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