

USPTO Announces Changes to Patent Issue Timelines and Design Application Examinations

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This week, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) made two announcements of interest to patent holders and practitioners as part of modernization and efficiency efforts:

Suspension of Expedited Design Application Examinations—On April 14, 2025, the USPTO announced that it has [suspended expedited examination of design applications](#) starting April 17, 2025. This decision follows a 560 percent surge in requests for expedited examination in recent years, driven largely by fraudulent applications. The suspension aligns with the USPTO's ongoing efforts to address issues such as erroneous micro entity certifications and to strengthen protections against threats to the intellectual property system.

Any request for expedited examination of a design application, including renewed requests, submitted on or after the effective date will not be approved. However, the USPTO will refund the associated fee for any request filed on or after this date.

Expedited Patent Issue Dates—Starting May 13, 2025, the USPTO will [accelerate the timeline for patent issue dates](#). As part of the USPTO's modernization efforts, the time between receiving an Issue Notification and the Issue Date will be reduced to roughly two weeks, down from the three-week average seen in recent years.

With this shortened timeframe, Applicants are reminded to file continuing applications before payment of issue fees to ensure copendency, per the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) 211.01(b), subsection I. For those applicants that do not participate in the e-Office Action program, patent issuance may occur before receipt of the Issue Notification.

Patent holders should be aware of these two changes for planning and scheduling purposes.

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