

## FACTS ABOUT COPYRIGHTS

Copyright is a widely misunderstood concept. The fact is, everything you've ever written, from your school notes to family bulletins, is yours, and unless you copied it from a copyrighted source, you own the copyright. This simple legal principle is accepted in most free-world countries, but it's almost useless to you in a court of law without some sort of proof.

The simplest way to assert copyright is to print (C) Your Name, Year. You'll notice we use this notification on much of our material. It is not necessary to add the legal warning which we use, however.

You can protect your copyright cheaply, and with a high degree of legal protection, by sealing the item to be copyrighted in a tamper-proof envelope, stamping the envelope over any point where the envelope could be opened, having your postal clerk postmark the stamps over the seal points, and mailing it back to yourself.

Label the envelope for future reference, and if you can, smudge the fresh postmark ink so there's a gray blotch between stamp and envelope. It can be scrutinized in court for tampering, and any half-decent forensic scientist will be able to shoot down any zealous attorney who tries to prove you faked it. You can copyright whole books this way for under \$2.00.

You are not strictly required to register your copyright, but it is the best protection, and if you do wish to copyright, write to:

Register of Copyrights. Library of Congress, Washington. DC 20059 (U.S.) or: Supply and Services Canada, Publishing Center, Mail Order Section, Hull QC K1A 0S1 for a copy of the Copyright Act in Canada, and Industrial Design Branch, Bureau of Corporate Affairs, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, Ottawa, ON K1A 0C9 for general inquiries.

It costs money to register a copyright, so unless you really require solid protection, or demand confidentiality, it may not be worth your while.