



Hiring an intellectual property professional

Intellectual property (IP) represents some of the most important and valuable business assets that can impact competition, financing and international growth. While IP can seem like a complex subject, there are many resources at your disposal to help you.

An **IP professional**, such as a patent agent, a trademark agent or an IP lawyer, can help you identify and file your IP, assist with the development of a strategy, and help you budget to protect and enforce your IP in Canada and around the world. They can also advise on proper use of IP to maintain rights, marking, licensing, assignment and other strategies to maximize the value of your IP.

Choose your IP professional

Consult and use the **Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO)'s list of registered Canadian patent or trademark agents**. Only the individuals or firms listed on CIPO's website are qualified and entitled to act on your behalf with CIPO. These agents often have access to an extensive network in foreign jurisdictions to better assist you and they can also help you avoid any misleading services or scams.

Speak with professionals to find the right person or firm for the job. Contacting an IP professional early on can ensure you avoid potential costly mistakes. Make sure that they understand your business strategy, your area of technology and that they will be able to help you secure your IP rights in the countries where you wish to obtain protection.

Questions you may wish to ask:

- ? What information should be gathered and brought to the first meeting? How much does it cost and what are the timelines? What should I do or avoid doing before a first meeting to discuss my case?
- ? For **trademark agents**: Ask them to outline their experience in applying for trademarks.
- ? For **patent agents**: Ask them to outline their experience in applying for patents. Do I qualify as a small entity? Should I pay for accelerated examination? Does the fast-tracked patent application for clean technology apply to my invention?

Prior to consulting with an IP professional

Understand the different types of IP to help you prepare for the first consultation. Get a handle on the fundamentals of IP by visiting CIPO's website. You can also contact our Client Service Centre to speak with an information officer or one of our IP advisors.

Do a **quick search** of your inventions, trademarks and creations in the countries of interest to you to give you a preliminary view of rights owned by others that might affect the protection of your IP. Search the web, the online Canadian patents, trademarks, industrial designs or copyrights databases and databases from other countries and regions.

Consider in **which countries** your IP rights should be protected. Your business strategy might take you beyond Canada. Consult our *Doing business abroad* guides to help you learn about protecting your IP in foreign markets.

Cost will vary depending on your needs and the nature and complexity of the work required. The following is for information purposes only:

Approximate cost range for Canada*	CIPO fees (administrative fees)				IP agent fees***
	Filing	Examination	Registration	Maintenance / Renewal	
Trademark	\$250		\$200	\$350	\$500 – \$2,000
Patent	\$400**	\$800**	\$300**	\$100 – \$4,800**	\$5000 – \$25,000
Industrial design		\$400		\$350	\$500 – \$2,000
Copyright	\$50				\$0 – \$500

* Thinking of using the international filing system? Please consult an expert to better understand what other fees will apply.
** Reduced fees for small entities, please refer to the CIPO website.
*** IP agent costs vary based on the complexity of the work and the experience of the agent. Most agent work is charged hourly.

Ask your trademark or patent agent for detailed estimates on professional fees and disbursements, government fees, and likely timing of expenses to help you budget accordingly.

Also, you may consider discussing payment schedules or arrangements. The IP agent fees cover services such as searching, drafting, preparing and filing of your application, refining and resubmitting the application, and preparing and filing of formal documentation.

To find out more about registered Canadian IP agents, please visit
www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/ipprofessional
or contact our Client Service Centre at 1-866-997-1936.

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