

How do you protect copyright?

Under the Act, copyright protection comes into existence automatically when an original work is created and fixed. This means that the work needs to be more than an idea. Registration of copyright is not required and no formal system for the registration of copyright exists in New Zealand.

Copyright labelling

Although not required by law, it is a good idea to include a copyright indicator or notice on a work. Using a copyright indicator lets others know that the work is subject to copyright protection and that consent is not granted for others to copy the work or deal with it in any other way. A more comprehensive notice identifies the owner and talent behind creative work.

New Zealand is party to various international agreements on copyright. The most notable is the Berne Convention administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This international agreement effectively gives reciprocating rights to copyright owners whose work is created in one member country and used in another member country. This means that copyright work created by a New Zealander or resident here is automatically protected in each member country of the convention under the national laws of that country and vice versa.

What is a copyright indicator?

The common format for a copyright indicator is the © symbol followed by the name of the copyright owner and year the copyright work was first created. For example: © Manu Aroha 2008. This is the basic information needed to identify a copyright work.

A copyright notice can include more comprehensive information like contact details of the owner, their legal representative or licensing agency; other IP indicators for registrations and applications like NZ Des. No. 123456 or NZ Pat. Ap. No. 11223344 used or referred to in the work, and acknowledgements to those who contributed to the work.

Record keeping

Since there is no government administered copyright register in New Zealand, it's important to keep track of your own copyright work. Copyright work records can include hard copies of electronic documents, print editions, prototypes, moulds, drawings and log books supporting when a copyright work was first created, and contracts and agreements clarifying copyright ownership.