

Permission for using stamp images.

<https://about.usps.com/doing-business/rights-permissions/stamp-use-information.htm>

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® | About

Stamp Use Information

The U.S. Postal Service® has produced many stamps that contain images on a variety of subjects. This information on stamps and their copyright restrictions can help guide you in obtaining permission for your use of a stamp image.

Availability of Stamp Images
The USPS® does not have electronic files for all stamp images. In some cases, the U.S. Postal Service will not be able to provide the applicant with the stamp image but will grant permission for the use of an image obtained by the applicant.

Co-Owned Stamps (Copyright Restrictions)
In many cases, a stamp image contains elements that are co-owned by the U.S. Postal Service and one or more other entities. The U.S. Postal Service will make every effort to inform applicants of copyrights and other restrictions that may apply, however, it cannot represent or warrant that all stamps images furnished may be freely reproduced in the absence of such notification.

When co-owner information is known to the U.S. Postal Service, permission must be obtained from the co-owner(s) and proof of this must be sent to the Rights and Permissions office. Permission will not be granted without such proof.

In many cases, particularly with older stamps, the U.S. Postal Service does not have information about other potential ownership interests. In these cases the U.S. Postal Service may grant permission for use of the image noting that the permission does not extend to any copyrights, trademarks, or other rights of third parties. The applicant is solely responsible for identifying and obtaining permission from any other third parties that may have an ownership interest in the image.

Federal Duck Stamps
The USPS does not provide permission to use Federal Duck Stamp images. Requests to use Duck Stamp images should be made to the US Fish and Wildlife Service www.fws.gov. Or to purchase Duck Stamps: [Buy Duck Stamps](#) online.

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The art on US postage stamps used to be in the public domain, but since 1970 (when the Post Office Department was privatized) the US Postal Service has been able to claim copyright in stamp designs. It didn't start doing that until 1978, though. So what about pre-1978 stamp designs, then? Can you copy them freely? Yes, as long as you follow these basic rules:

- 1) **Black and white** reproductions of uncanceled US postage stamps are permissible in any size.
- 2) **Color** reproductions of uncanceled US postage stamps must be less than 75% smaller or more than 150% larger than the size of the original stamp.
- 3) **Canceled** US postage stamps may be of any size, whether the reproduction is in color or black and white.

The idea is that you cannot reproduce the uncanceled stamp image **in color in its original size**. It must be either in black and white (where its reproduced size doesn't matter) or less than 75% or greater than 150% of its original size if uncanceled.

The thought in part is to stop piracy or counterfeiting from a color copy of a stamp image in its original size.