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1301 Substantially Allowable Case, Special

When an application is in condition for allowance, except as to matters of form, the case will be considered special and prompt action taken to require correction of formal matters. See 710.02 (b) paragraph (a).

1302 Final Review and Preparation for Issue

1302.01 General Review of Disclosure

When an application is apparently ready for allowance, it should be reviewed by the Examiner to make certain that the whole case meets all formal requirements and particularly that the general statement of invention and the descriptive matter are confined to the invention to which the allowed claims are directed and that the language of the claims finds full support and elucidation in the specification. Neglect to give due attention to these matters may lead to confusion as to the scope of the patent.

Frequently the invention as originally described and claimed was of much greater scope than that defined in the claims as allowed. Some or much of the subject matter disclosed may be entirely outside the bounds of the claims accepted by the applicant. In such case the Examiner should require the applicant to modify his general statement of invention and restrict his descriptive matter so as to be in harmony with the claims. However valuable for reference purposes the Examiner may consider the matter which is extraneous to the claimed invention, patents should be confined in their disclosures to the respective inventions patented. (Rule 71.) Of course enough background should be included to make the invention clearly understandable. See 608.01 (d) and 608.01 (e).

There should be a verbal basis in the specification for the terminology used in the claims. Usually the original claims follow the nomenclature of the specification; but sometimes in amending the claims or in adding new claims, applicant employs terms that do not appear in the specification. This may result in uncertainty as to the interpretation to be given such terms. See 608.04.

Where a copending application is referred to in the specification, the Examiner should ascertain whether it has matured into a patent or become abandoned and that fact inserted with appropriate data by Examiner's amendment. If the file wrapper has a retention label (Form PO-150) on it, the application specified on the label should be inspected to see that the case at hand properly complies with Rule 78. See also 202.

The claims should be renumbered as required by Rule 126, and particular attention should be given to claims dependent on previous claims to see that the numbering is consistent. See 608.01 (j) and 608.01 (n).

The title should also be checked. It should be as short and specific as possible. If a satisfactory title is not supplied by the applicant, the Examiner may change the title by Examiner's amendment on or after allowance. See 606 and 606.01.

1302.02 Specification To Be Rewritten if Confused by Erasures and Amendments

The Examiners are directed before passing applications to issue to carefully examine all papers and see that they are in such shape and condition as to reduce to a minimum the possibility of error by the printers. Whenever interlineations or cancellation have been made in the specification or amendments which would lead to confusion and mistake, the Examiners should require the entire portion of specification affected to be rewritten before passing the case to issue. (Order 525, Revised.) See Rule 125 in 608.01 (q).

1302.03 Erasure of Notations Required

"All pencil notes made by the Examiners must be erased when the case is passed to issue." (Order 560, Revised.)

1302.04 Examiner's Amendments and Changes

Except by formal amendment duly signed or as hereinafter provided, no corrections, erasures, or interlineations may be made in the body of written portions of the specification or any other paper filed in the application for patent. [See Rule 121]

Correction of the following obvious errors only may be made with pen by the Examiner of the case who will then initial the sheet margin and assume full responsibility for the change.

1. Misspelled words.
2. Disagreement of a noun with its verb.
3. Inconsistent "case" of a pronoun.

4. Disagreement between a reference character as used in the description and on the drawing. The character may be corrected in the description but only when the Examiner is certain of the propriety of the change.

Other obvious informalities in the application may be corrected by the Examiner, but such corrections must be in the form of an amendment, approved and signed by the Principal Examiner, placed in the file, and made a part of the record. A copy of the amendment is sent to the applicant. The changes specified

in the amendment are entered by the clerk in the regular way.

No other changes may be made by any person in any record of this office without the written approval of the Commissioner of Patents. (Extract from Order 3141.)

Where an application is ready for issue except for a slight defect in the drawing not involving change in structure, the Examiner will note in pencil on the drawing the addition or alteration to be made. He will also prepare an Examiner's Amendment indicating the changes made and send the drawing to the Draftsman for the required correction. (Extract from Order 4009.)

For examples of drawing changes that may be made by Examiner's Amendment, see 608.02 (x).

In reviewing the application all errors should be carefully noted. It is not a matter of importance whether the language is the best that could be chosen; it is, however, essential that it be clear in meaning, and free from errors in syntax.

An Examiner's amendment is usually made at the time a case is being prepared for issue by the Examiner, and a copy of the amendment is mailed with the notice of allowance. However, such amendment may also be necessary after the proof of the patent is read and the case is sent up to the Examiner with a "printer waiting" slip (Form PO-97). A copy of the amendment is sent to applicant even if the application is already in the printer's hands.

1302.04 (a) Title of Invention

Where the title of the invention is not specific to the invention as claimed, the Examiner may change the title by Examiner's Amendment on or after allowance. See 606.01.

1302.04 (b) Cancellation of Non-Statutory Claim

When a case is otherwise in condition for allowance the Examiner may cancel an obviously non-statutory claim such as one to "A device substantially as shown and described." Applicant should be notified of the cancellation of the claim by an Examiner's Amendment. See 706.03 (h).

1302.04 (c) Cancellation of Claims to Non-Elected Invention

See 821.02 (a) and 821.03 (a).

1302.04 (d) Cancellation of Claim Lost in Interference

See 1109.02.

1302.04 (e) Data of Copending Application Referred to Should Be Brought Up to Date

Where a copending application is referred to in the specification of an application which is ready for allowance, the Examiner should ascertain whether said copending application has matured into a patent or has become abandoned and if so, insert by Examiner's Amendment the number and date of the patent or the fact that the case has become abandoned.

This procedure is also followed when an application is referred to the Examiner by the Issue and Gazette Branch in which application there appears a reference to another application by serial number without any statement as to whether the application referred to is patented or abandoned. If it is determined by the Examiner that such case is patented or abandoned he will indicate this fact in the specification by appropriate Examiner's Amendment. See 1309.01.

1302.04 (f) Identification of Claims

In entering an Examiner's Amendment in a claim, the original number, as well as the number of the claim as it appears in the allowed application, should be referred to. (Extract from Notice of Aug. 26, 1929.)

1302.05 Correction of Drawing

Where a case otherwise ready for issue requires correction of the drawing, the Examiner, before sending the file to the Draftsman, should attach thereto a slip indicating that the case is ready for allowance. Slight defects may be corrected on the Examiner's initiative as set forth in 608.02 (x) and an Examiner's Amendment prepared as set forth in 1302.04.

1302.06 Prior Foreign Applications

An applicant will not be required in any case to file a statement setting forth the data of any foreign patent granted him, or to others with his knowledge or consent between the date of execution of his specification and the date of the payment of the final fee. (Order 1239.)

The Examiners are directed on passing to issue any application in which an earlier foreign application, or applications, for the same invention has been filed, to enter, (if entry has not been made) at the bottom of the face of the file wrapper the earliest date of filing in any foreign country and the name of such country; and in the event that more than one foreign application has been filed outside the twelve-month period, the filing date and name of country of each application, will also be

thus entered. The oath should be inspected for these dates. In cases given the benefit of the Boykin Act (Public Law 690) the label pasted on the face of the file wrapper will replace the entry of the date of any foreign application on the file wrapper. (Order 3233, Revised.)

In the case of any foreign application filed more than 12 months prior to the U. S. filing date, the Examiner should ascertain whether it has matured into a patent by a search of the records in the Scientific Library, noting on the inside of the left-hand flap of the wrapper the date of such search. If no evidence that such foreign application has gone to patent is found, it is assumed that no foreign patent has issued and the case is sent to issue. Of course, no search is necessary in the case of a foreign application which qualifies for the right of priority under the provisions of Public Law 690. See 201.13.

1302.07 Interference Search

Assuming that the case is found ready for issue, the Examiner makes an "interference search". To do this, he inspects all the pending drawings (or all the digests of cases if the invention is not susceptible of illustration) in the relevant subclasses of the class in which the application is classified, and all other pertinent classes, whether in his division or elsewhere, in order to ascertain whether any other applicant is claiming substantially the same subject matter as is being allowed in the case in hand. When any of the drawings or digests shows such a condition to be likely, he examines the corresponding file. See 1101.01 (c).

If the search does not disclose any interfering application, the Examiner should prepare the case for issue.

1302.08 Notations on File Wrapper

The Examiner fills out in ink the form at the bottom of the face of the file wrapper.

Examiners will ordinarily designate but one claim on each invention to be published in the Official Gazette in connection with each original or reissued patent. The broadest claim should be selected. When a plurality of inventions are claimed in an application, additional claims to a maximum of five may be designated for publication. (Order 2422, Revised)

The file wrapper bears on the left hand margin the legend: "Division of Application No. ----, Filed ----, 19--." This is to be filled in with the serial number and date of any prior application of which the one in question is a division, a continuation or a substitute, the word "Division" being replaced by "Continua-

tion," and the words "Division of" replaced by "Substitute" as may be required. If the prior application has issued as a patent, the patent number and date should also be supplied. If the application at hand is a division of a division, the data of all cases involved should be given. See 202.02.

If the application under consideration contains any substantial matter in addition to that contained in the prior application, no notation on the margin of the file wrapper is made; but in the case of a continuation-in-part, the letters "C-P" are stamped on the face of the wrapper at the bottom thereof. See 202.02.

Fee-exempt applications are to be endorsed on the file jacket: "Granted under the Act of March 3, 1883 as amended April 30, 1928."

Chapter 200 explains the types of applications here mentioned.

1302.09 Notations on Drawings

On the upper left hand margin of the first sheet of drawing the Examiner completes in ink the following data: "O. G. Fig. ——" indicating the figure which he selects for illustration in the Official Gazette and "class — subclass —" indicating the final official classification of the case. On the lower margin the Examiner writes the allowance mark (=).

1302.10 Classification and Notations on Issue Slip (Form No. 574)

See 903.07 and 903.07 (b).

1302.11 Reference to Assignment Branch

Applications filed by an executor or administrator, or the equivalent, or a guardian of an insane person, or in which an executor or administrator or guardian has intervened; or in which the death of the inventor has been suggested, and also all divisional, continuation, continuation-in-part, substitute and reissue applications must be referred to the Assignment Branch before passing them to issue. (See 409.01 (a) and 306.)

1302.12 Listing of References

In order that a list of all references cited during the prosecution of an application for patent may be available for printing as part of the issued patent, the primary Examiner will have listed at the time the case is being prepared for issue all references which have been cited during the prosecution. These references will be listed on Form PO-98. (Extract from Notice of Dec. 19, 1946.)

Foreign patents are listed by the actual name of the country, as for example "Great Britain" rather

than "British" and "France" rather than "French". The name of the foreign country should not be abbreviated. (Notice of April 2, 1947, Revised.)

The list of the United States patents must be in numerical order and where there is more than one foreign patent from the same country these should be listed in numerical order. (Memorandum of Aug. 5, 1947, Revised.)

In order to avoid possible errors in the listing of references, the following procedure should always be followed:

Whenever a reference has been incorrectly cited in any official paper forming part of an application file, and such citation has been correctly given in an ensuing Office action, the Examiner is directed to correct the error, in ink, in the paper in which the error appears, and place his initials on the margin of such paper, together with a notation of the paper number of the action in which the citation has been correctly given.

In any case, otherwise ready for issue, in which the erroneous citation has not been formally corrected in an official paper, the Examiner is directed to correct the citation by way of an Examiner's amendment. (Notice of May 13, 1948)

Where an applicant in an amendatory paper refers to a reference which is subsequently relied on by the Examiner, such reference shall be cited by the Examiner in the usual manner. (Notice of Dec. 20, 1946)

1302.13 Signing

After revision by the clerk and correction of any discovered informalities, the application file is signed and dated by the Primary Examiner.

1303 Notice of Allowance

After the application file has been signed by the Primary Examiner, the typist fills out the appropriate form of notice of allowance as described in the Clerk's Manual.

When the notice of allowance is mailed its date is also endorsed on the file wrapper. This date must agree with the date of signing by the Primary Examiner.

1303.01 Amendment Received After Allowance

For discussion of amendments filed under Rule 312 see 714.15 to 714.16 (e).

If the amendment contains claims copied from a patent, see 1101.02 (g).

1303.02 Undelivered

In case a notice of allowance is returned; and a new notice is sent, as set forth in 707.13, the file is obtained from the Issue and Gazette

Branch, and the date of sending the notice changed to agree with the date of such remailing.

1303.03 Not Withheld Due to Death of Inventor

The notice of allowance will not be withheld due to death of the inventor even though the executor or administrator has not intervened. See 409.01 (e).

1304 Withholding From Issue of "Secrecy Order" Cases

"Secrecy Order" cases are not sent to issue even when all of the claims have been allowed. They are prepared for issue in the same way as other cases but instead of mailing an ordinary notice of allowance a D-10 Notice is sent. See 107.01.

If the "Secrecy Order" in a case is withdrawn after the D-10 notice is mailed, the case should then be treated like an ordinary application in condition for allowance.

"Special Handling" cases and Government-owned-three-year cases are sent to Div. 70 before allowance. See sections 108 and 109.

1304.01 Amendments After D-10 Notice

For amendments received after D-10 Notice, see 107.01.

1305 Jurisdiction

After the notice of allowance is mailed, the case is sent to the Issue and Gazette Branch. It is then technically no longer within the jurisdiction of the Primary Examiner. However, the Examiner may make Examiner's amendments correcting obvious errors, as, when brought to the attention of the Examiner by the printer, and also may admit amendments under Rule 312 which are confined to matters of form in specification or claims, or to the cancellation of a claim or claims. The Examiner's action on other amendments under Rule 312 consists of a recommendation to the Commissioner.

To regain jurisdiction over the case, the Examiner must write a letter to the Commissioner requesting it. See 1308 and 1308.02.

Once the patent has been granted, the Office has no control over it except for the issuance of a Certificate of Correction as provided for in Rule 322. The applicant may, however, take steps to have the Office change the patent grant in several ways. See Chapter 14.

1306 Public Law 690 Cases

See 201.16 (p), 201.16 (q), 201.16 (u).

1307 Change in Classification of Cases Which Are in Issue

See 903.07.

1308 Withdrawal From Issue

Rule 313 Withdrawal from issue. After the notice of allowance of an application is sent, the case will not be withdrawn from issue except by approval of the Commissioner, and if withdrawn for further action on the part of the Office, a new notice of allowance will be sent if the application is again allowed. When the final fee has been paid, and the patent to be issued has received its date and number, the application will not be withdrawn from issue on account of any mistake or change of purpose of the applicant, his attorney or his agent, nor for the purpose of enabling the inventor to procure a foreign patent, nor for any other reasons except mistake on the part of the Office, or because of fraud or illegality in the application, or for interference. Express abandonment of the application (rule 138) may not be recognized by the Office unless it is actually received by appropriate officials in time to act thereon before the date of issue.

[Old Rule 165]

If the applicant wishes to have the case withdrawn from issue, he must petition the Commissioner. Withdrawal is permitted only for the reasons stated in the rule. For withdrawal procedure by Examiner see 1308.02.

1308.01 Rejection After Allowance

A claim noted as allowable shall thereafter be rejected only with the approval of the Primary Examiner. Great care should be exercised in authorizing such rejection. (Order 3157)

If a reference is found for an allowed claim in an application that is in issue, the Primary Examiner in a letter addressed to the Commissioner requests that the application be withdrawn from issue for the purpose of applying the new reference. This letter should cite the reference, and, if need be, briefly state its application. Upon approval of this request by the Commissioner, the letter is taken to the Issue and Gazette Branch and the application is stamped "Withdrawn" over the allowance signature of the Primary Examiner. It is then returned to the division from which it came; the clerk enters the withdrawal from the issue on her register, and the application is thus restored to its former status as a pending application awaiting action by the Examiner. The Examiner at once writes a letter in the case

stating that the application has been withdrawn from issue, citing the new reference, and rejecting the claims met thereby.

If the Examiner's proposed action is not approved, the letter requesting withdrawal from issue should not be placed in the file.

1308.02 Form of Letter

Where it becomes necessary to withdraw a case from issue for the purpose of rejecting claims, the following letter will serve as a form:

Application of _____ (Date)
 John Doe
 Serial No. 85,963
 Washing Machine Withdrawal from Issue
 Filed Feb. 14, 1933
 Allowed Mar. 6, 1935
 Hon. Commissioner of Patents,
 Sir:

It is requested that the above-entitled application be withdrawn from issue for the purpose of rejecting claims in view of the newly discovered reference, the patent No. _____ to _____
 (Explain, if necessary.)

Respectfully,

Examiner.

A request that a case be withdrawn from issue, should not be transmitted through the docket clerk but should be sent with the file directly to the Commissioner by the Primary Examiner. (Notice of November 16, 1922.)

1308.03 For Interference Purposes

It may be necessary to withdraw a case from issue for reasons connected with an interference. For the procedure to be followed see 1101.01 (o) and 1112.04.

1309 Issue of Patent

The files of allowed cases (not patented files) are kept in the Issue and Gazette Branch, arranged in the order of dates of allowance. When the final fee is paid within the time allowed by law, the drawing is obtained by the Issue and Gazette Branch and the file is given a patent number and date. The file then goes to the Assignment Branch for examination as to assignments after which it is sent to the Government Printing Office for printing of the specification. A bond paper copy of the drawing and specification is ribboned and sealed in the Issue and Gazette Branch and finally signed by the Commissioner or Law Examiner.

1309.01 Companion Case Queries

In those allowed cases in which another application is referred to and no statement has been made

as to whether the other application is patented or abandoned, the Issue and Gazette Branch will send the case to the examining division with a Companion Case Query Slip (Form PO-149) and a retention label (Form PO-150).

Upon receiving such a case the Examiner will promptly check the current status of the application referred to and report the same on the query slip in accordance with the instructions thereon. If the application referred to is patented or abandoned, he will indicate this fact in the specification of the allowed case by appropriate Examiner's amendment. The retention label will be used in the manner indicated on the query slip.

If the pending application is referred to in more than one allowed application, it is not necessary to use more than one retention label. Instead, the Examiner will merely add the necessary data to the label already on the pending application.

Query slips are used at the time the application is being prepared for printing so that the data in the specification of the patent will be as complete as possible. (Memoranda of Dec. 1, 1947 and June 25, 1948, Revised.)

See 1302.04 (e) for Examiner's Amendment to be written in connection with query slips.

1309.02 "Printer Waiting" Cases

After printing of the specification the proof is read by employees of the Government Printing Office. Where apparent error is found, the file with the proof is transmitted to the Examiner, attention being called on an attached "printer waiting" slip (Form PO-97) to the supposed errors.

All "printer waiting" cases must receive immediate attention and be returned to the Issue and Gazette Branch as soon as possible (preferably within three hours). (Extract from Notice of Dec. 6, 1920)

If the Examiner concurs in the criticisms, the errors should, if possible, be corrected in ink and initialed, or be corrected by Examiner's amendment. See 1302.04.

If the required correction cannot be cured by Examiner's amendment, the application may have to be withdrawn from issue. This may sometimes be avoided if the attorney or his representative is in Washington. In such cases, he should be called in immediately, and the error may perhaps be corrected by amendment under Rule 312.

If the Examiner finds the specification correct as it stands, he endorses the slip to that effect.

Cases containing chemical or other formulae, equations and tables are also sent to the Examiner with "printer waiting" slips for checking.

After correction or checking, the application file and proof are returned to the Issue and Gazette Branch. Because it is so important that the file and proof be returned promptly, they must be taken to the Issue and Gazette Branch by a member of the Examining Division and not sent through the envelope messenger service.

1309.03 Protest Against Issue

When a protest is filed against the issuance of a patent the same shall, after consideration by the Examiner, be forwarded to the Supervisory Examiner and shall not be entered in the file of the application to which it refers. (Order 1805, Revised).