

## **Disclosure Document Program**

A service provided by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO or Office) is the acceptance and preservation for two years of “Disclosure Documents” as evidence of the date of conception of an invention.

A paper disclosing an invention (called a Disclosure Document) and signed by the inventor or inventors may be forwarded to the USPTO by the inventor (or by any one of the inventors when there are joint inventors), by the owner of the invention, or by the attorney or agent of the inventor(s) or owner. The Disclosure Document will be retained for two years, and then be destroyed unless it is referred to in a separate letter in a related patent application filed within those two years.

**THE DISCLOSURE DOCUMENT IS NOT A PATENT APPLICATION. THE DATE OF ITS RECEIPT IN THE USPTO WILL NOT BECOME THE EFFECTIVE FILING DATE OF ANY PATENT APPLICATION SUBSEQUENTLY FILED.**

These documents will be kept in confidence by the USPTO without publication in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 122(b), effective November 29, 2000.

This program does not diminish the value of the conventional, witnessed, permanently bound, and page-numbered laboratory notebook or notarized records as evidence of conception of an invention, but it should provide a more credible form of evidence than that provided by the mailing of a disclosure to oneself or another person by registered mail.

### **WARNING to Inventors**

The two-year retention period is not a “grace period” during which the inventor can wait to file his or her patent application without possible loss of benefits. It must be recognized that, in establishing priority of invention, an affidavit or testimony referring to a Disclosure Document must usually also establish diligence in completing the invention or in filing the patent application after the filing of the Disclosure Document.

Inventors are also reminded that any public use or sale in the United States or publication of the invention anywhere in the world more than one year prior to the filing of a patent application on that invention will prohibit the granting of an U. S. patent on it. Foreign patent laws in this regard may be much more restrictive than U.S. laws.

For more information about Disclosure Documents, please visit the USPTO Web site at [www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/disdo.html](http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/disdo.html).