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# FAQ

## What is IP?

IP, also called “Intellectual Property,” refers to patent, trademark, copyright, and trade secret rights. It refers to things that are thought of as creations or products of the mind.

## What are patents?

Patents are a form of legal protection for inventions granted by the government that allows the inventor to exclude others from making, selling or using the invention for a given period of time. Patents

## What are trademarks?

Trademarks are used to identify products, services, membership in an organization, or approval from a quality assurance program; to distinguish such products, services or programs from those of others; and to indicate their source. A trademark can be letters and/or numbers, a word or words, a slogan, a single design or visual symbol, a combination of words and designs, or even the shape of a product (such as a Coke bottle), an architectural design, a sound, a smell, or a color. Virtually anything which can serve as an identifier of the source can be a trademark. Trademarks

## What are copyrights?

A copyright is the right of an author to prevent others from copying their creative work. It protects the form in which a creative idea is expressed; it does not protect the underlying idea. For example, if you paint a picture of a bowl of fruit and obtain a copyright, it doesn't prevent someone else from independently painting a picture of a bowl of fruit. Copyrights

## What are trade secrets?

Trade secrets are information that's kept confidential and have commercial value. They can be customer lists, financial data, recipes or formulas, or any of a host of other things that are kept confidential. Trade secrets are protected only as long as they are not generally known. If they aren't "secret," they aren't protected. **Trade Secrets**

## Do you offer a free initial consultation?

We charge a minimal fee for a one-hour initial consultation. In the initial consultation we discuss the likelihood of success of protection (and offer alternatives where they exist) as well as time and total cost involved.

## Do you work outside the intellectual property area, because I have a dispute with my landlord (or possibly a traffic ticket) and I've heard good things about your firm?

No. We only handle intellectual property cases. Our firm is occasionally consulted on other cases where we handle the intellectual property aspect for other attorneys. For instance, we may be brought in on a divorce proceeding where there is a jointly owned patent and we may provide intellectual property opinions for SEC

filings.

## Where do your clients come from and where do you meet them?

We have clients from all over the world, though the vast majority are from North Carolina. Most of our clients prefer to come into our office for the initial consultation, and that usually is helpful. When that is not possible, we hold initial conferences via telephone. Follow-up work generally does not require office visits.

## I know someone applied for a patent/trademark without using an attorney.; Why should I use your firm?

We're pleased they were able to do this without assistance, and we hope if a lawsuit ever occurs, their patent/trademark holds up. We have been doing this for more than 57 years and have the experience to make sure that people get what they want to be safeguarded, protected. People that have used qualified attorneys are more likely to get their patents issued, which is why the United States Patent and Trademark Office recommends using a patent attorney or agent. We are accustomed to catching the common mistakes made by individuals so that you do not waste time and money with an incorrect submission.

## Where are you located?; Do you have multiple locations?

We have only one location, in downtown Durham, at 500 Memorial St, Durham NC, 27701. It was the Durham Dairy Distribution Company's base before Mr. Olive bought the location and had the building constructed.

Directions

## I have other questions; whom do I contact?

Park Rall, our intake specialist, will be happy to answer any questions. Please call the office at (919)683-5514 or you may use the form located on the contact page of this website.