



Compliance and Copyright: What You Need to Know About the Digital Images and Media You Use



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Let us start with the basic definition of copyright, and then a smart rule of thumb for compliance: assume that all online images and digital media content is protected by copyright.

The [Merriam Webster](#) full definition of COPYRIGHT states copyright is the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute the matter and form of something (as a literary, musical, or artistic work). For more information, you can also visit [U.S. Copyright Definitions](#).

Anyone with internet access using a search engine can find the perfect image to use for whatever their need. Search engines like Google and Bing help you locate images and content based on your keyword choices, then return results and provide links. Google Images and Bing Image Search results are not a de facto collection of copyright-free works. Once you find that perfect image, you must take steps before you may legally use it. Some images are marked with copyright information while others are not. If there is a notice, be sure to read it carefully and fully understand its permissions. If there is no information or permission present, you need to contact the creator to request permission to remain compliant with copyright, and on the right side of the law. It is also important to note that some images may be presented with a [creative commons license](#), but that does not guarantee that the person who attached the license to the image is the true owner of its copyright.

At Vital Imagery, we have been providing royalty-free, legally licensed digital images and media content to individuals and businesses globally for over a decade. It is our mission and passion to get everyone the best content possible, the right way, with all the rights and permissions.

[Vital Imagery](#) is a provider of royalty-free digital image content serving customers worldwide with over 25 million images available 24/7. Our content includes clipart, photos, fonts, sounds and animations used by corporate, agency and freelance graphic design professionals, the educational sector, publishing, media and entertainment industries. We also like to pay-it-forward and proudly support [Kiva](#), donating a portion of every subscription purchased to help finance small-businesses around the globe. Please visit [Clipart.com](#), [Animation Factory](#), [iCLIPART.com](#), [iPHOTOS.com](#) and [Clipart.com School Edition](#) for all your digital content needs. For more information about copyright, email legal@vitalimagery.com, call us at 1-800-713-0398 (U.S. & Canada) or 1-519-489-4694 (International).

The access and use of digital images is more prevalent today than ever before. We have all heard the phrase “A picture is worth a thousand words.” However, using unlicensed or improperly licensed images could transform that statement into “That picture will cost you thousands, or tens of thousands, of dollars.” Not to mention the additional, potential problems associated with computer viruses, spam and theft via hacking by internet predators and criminals. It is imperative that the images or digital media content you use always comes from a trusted source for legal and safety reasons.

It is also critical to understand the difference between royalty-free and rights-managed content. A royalty-free license allows you to pay one fee and use the content many times in the formats allowed by the provider’s end-user agreement. Rights-managed content requires ongoing payment for each use as designated by the business agreement entered into with the provider, and within their end-user license agreement parameters. Rights-managed content is select, expensive, rigorously monitored and usually reserved for companies with large budgets or high-end media and advertising campaigns.

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