

Amendments to Form TM 11, Form TM 28 and Form TM 12 (HMD Circular No. 2/2010, dated 20 August 2010)

Amendments may be made to Form TM 11 (Notice of Opposition), Form TM 28 (Application for Revocation or Declaration of Invalidity of Registration of Trade Mark) and Form TM 12 (Counter-Statement) in the course of opposition/revocation/invalidation proceedings before the Registrar if it is fair and reasonable to do so. Depending on when the request to amend is made, different considerations apply.

A. AMENDMENTS BEFORE CLOSE OF PLEADINGS

The Registrar will in appropriate cases generally allow amendments to Form TM 11 and Form TM 28 before pleadings are deemed to be closed. Pleadings are deemed to be closed immediately upon the filing of Form TM 12 (Counter-Statement), or, in the case of an invalidation action where no Counter-Statement is filed, the last date that the Counter-Statement could have been filed.

For avoidance of doubt, amendments to Counter-Statements are always made after the close of pleadings by the foregoing definition. In such instances, B. below applies.

Where the proposed amendments are allowed, the Registrar may grant an extension of time to the other party to file his Counter-Statement and/or award such costs as may be just against the party seeking the amendments.

B. AMENDMENTS AFTER CLOSE OF PLEADINGS

Where amendments are sought after pleadings are deemed to be closed, consent from the other party must first be sought. If there is consent from the other party, the Registrar will in appropriate cases generally allow the amendment and if necessary, issue such directions on the subsequent procedure as is deemed fit.

Where there is no consent, leave of the Registrar must be obtained for any amendment after the close of pleadings. Whether leave would be granted depends on the facts and circumstances of each case. In considering whether to grant leave for the amendments, the Registrar will conduct a balancing exercise, involving a consideration of the public interest that rules relating to procedure are complied with and the need to ensure that there is proper adjudication of a case based on its merits in the interest of justice between the parties. In particular, the Registrar will carefully weigh the following non-exhaustive factors on a case by case basis:

- (i) whether the party seeking the amendment could have claimed the particular ground/defence or cited the additional “earlier trade mark” earlier, when filing Form TM 11, Form TM 28 or Form TM 12
- (ii) whether the amendment is necessitated by the pleading or evidence filed by the other party

- (iii) whether the other party would suffer any real prejudice which cannot be compensated with costs if the amendment is allowed
- (iv) whether allowing the amendment will facilitate the determination of the real question in controversy between the parties or whether the amendment is only a tactical manoeuvre and allowing the amendment would result in prejudice to the other party
- (v) whether the amendment raises grounds or facts which the applicant need not set out in reply, for example, the ground was not raised by the opponent and is therefore inapplicable to the particular proceedings at hand
- (vi) the substantiality of the amendment
- (vii) the stage of the proceedings the amendment is sought.

If leave to amend is granted, the Registrar may issue such necessary directions on the subsequent procedure as is deemed fit, including but not limited to adjourning the case, allowing amendments to be made to the Counter-Statement by the other party, granting extensions of time for the filing of further evidence by both parties as well as awarding such costs as may be just against the party seeking the amendments.