

Overview of the US Patent System Patent Terms

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A utility patent has a term of 20 years, starting from the date the application for patent is filed and provided that the maintenance fees due at 3-1/2, 7-1/2 and 11-1/2 years after issuance fees are paid.

If the patent claims priority to an earlier non-provisional patent, then the term starts to run from the date that the earlier patent was filed.

A design patent lasts 14 years from the date of issuance and requires no maintenance fees to keep in force during the term.

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