

## 6 Copyright Tips for Using Google Images

When using images you find through Google Images, always assume they're protected by copyright ... unless and until you learn otherwise. Act on facts — don't just think an old photo or an image without a copyright symbol is free to use. If you don't see permission clearly indicated on the image, then investigate its copyright status **before** you use it. Follow our tips below to maintain copyright compliance.

### Tips for Copyright Compliance When Using Google Images

#### 1. Link to the image (to lower copyright risks)

It's always less risky copyright-wise to link to a photo or other image than it is to copy and paste that image onto your website or social media account.

#### 2. Create your own images (if this is your thing)

When possible, use photos and other images you've taken yourself. If you're employed, your employer may own them, so ask! (Don't forget to obtain a model release from people in your photos.)

#### 3. Use CC-licensed images (but don't be fooled, they're not in the public domain)

Use images that have a [Creative Commons \(CC\) license](#). But read that license to see which uses are allowed and which require permission. Not all CC licenses allow the same uses.

#### 4. Use stock photo images (if you have a budget to do so)

If your budget allows, purchase a license to use images from a stock agency. But only use them in the manner your license allows.

#### 5. Use Google's Advanced Image Search (but know its limitations)

View the "usage rights" drop-down in [Google's Advanced Image Search](#) to choose an appropriate license. Investigate the license to make sure it's legitimate (Google cannot guarantee that the content is legally licensed). If legitimate, follow the terms and conditions in the license.

#### 6. Do a fair use analysis (it's not as easy as it sounds)

[Fair use](#) is a subject principle and provision in the U.S. Copyright Act. You'll need to apply the four fair use factors and make a judgment call (which may also be a risk management issue). If you're outside the U.S., see if your country has a fair use or similar provision, such as fair dealing, which Canada and the UK have.

Please do not rely on the information in this document as legal advice. Seek legal advice where necessary.

Copyright law is complicated. Learn copyright principles and gain the decision-making skills to confidently apply copyright in your library or organization through the online [Copyright Leadership Certificate](#) program.



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