



News & Types: Intellectual Property & Technology Update

USTR Report on Intellectual Property – How Can You Protect Your IP?

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Practices: Intellectual Property & Technology

On April 29, 2025, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (“USTR”) released a special report regarding the adequacy of protection and enforcement that U.S. trading partners provide to intellectual property (“IP”) rights (“Report”). IP laws protect the efforts, investment, and reputation of brands, companies and individuals, and guard consumers from being exposed to counterfeit and potentially harmful products. Companies face economic and reputational risks when IP rights are not protected or enforced.

The Report lists the USTR’s findings regarding more than 100 U.S. trading partners and concerns regarding IP protection and enforcement in such countries. Of such findings, forced technology transfers, and trade secret and trademark protection issues have heavily affected companies.

While the USTR urges other countries to adopt stronger IP-protective policies and laws, companies can separately ensure that their IP rights are protected. In particular, companies should conduct a review of the laws of countries which they seek to do business in, register their trademarks with the appropriate authorities, protect their trade secrets by limiting the extent to which they are disclosed, and ensure that any agreements which the company enters into set forth clear IP rights and are subject to the laws of countries with more favorable IP protections. Although IP is protected differently throughout the world, before engaging in any transaction, companies should also bear in mind where their business partners are located and the governing law of an agreement, as such facts may increase or decrease the level at which a company’s IP is protected.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this article, please contact your Masuda Funai relationship attorney or any member of Masuda Funai’s Intellectual Property and Technology Practice Group.

Masuda Funai is a full-service law firm with offices in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Schaumburg.