

Patent Style Notebook Guidelines

Revision 0

- Each engineer should keep a notebook in such a way that one “skilled in the art” can understand what is written and can repeat the work.
- The notebook must be bound. Loose leaf, spiral bound, or any other type permitting page removal or insertion cannot be used. The purpose of this requirement, and most of the following ones, is to minimize the possibility of fraud. It should not be possible to later remove a page and substitute a fraudulent one.
- Number the pages sequentially and sign and date every entry and page. Also, periodically have the entries witnessed by at least one person who is skilled in the art. The witness should read over the entries made since the last witnessing and at the end write “Read and understood by” followed by his or her signature and date. Some companies require two witnesses.
- All entries must be in ink. Permanent black ink is preferred because it doesn't fade and can't be changed without being obvious. There can be no erasures. Crossing out is used instead of erasing.
- Added material such as computer printouts and photographs must be pasted or glued in. No stapling or Scotch tape. There can be no blank spaces in the notebook. X's (cross-hatching) are drawn through spaces. Never skip pages. Entries should be made frequently to show diligence and non-abandonment.
- More information is available in Chapter 15 of *Disciplined Creativity for Engineering* by Robert L. Bailey, Ann Arbor Science, 1978.



Someone on the laboratory staff should sign your notebook at least once a week.