# Copyright for visually impaired persons

Visually impaired persons (VIPs) are able to make, or have made on their behalf, accessible copies of any material which they have lawfully obtained. 'Lawfully obtained' can mean material which has been purchased, borrowed from a friend or library, or which is available for reference in a library - as much material as is needed can be copied.

A VIP can be any of the following:

* a person who is blind or partially-sighted
* a person who has sight-loss which cannot be corrected by lenses
* a person who has a physical disability which makes it impossible for them to use the material either because they are unable to hold it or because they cannot move their eyes

For example, a person who is unable to use their hands due to disability would be able to make accessible copies under this exception.

Temporary copies can also be made, for example, a document can be scanned so that it can be magnified onto a screen to be read. There are several provisions to this exception:

* the material must not already be available in an accessible format. This means that if a large print version of a book is needed it must be certain that there is not one already available for purchase or loan. The RNIB has an [online catalogue](http://librarycatalogue.rnib.org.uk/) of resources available in various accessible formats including braille, large print and audio
* only changes that are necessary to make the material accessible are permitted
* recordings of musical performances cannot be made under this exception, although enlarged photocopies of sheet music can be produced
* any copies must contain a statement declaring that the accessible copy has been made under section 31A of the [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/Ukpga_19880048_en_1)
* copies must be properly acknowledged, for example, referenced bibliographically

Once the copy has been made there are also restrictions on what can be done with it. The VIP who has the copy can keep it for as long as they have access to the original material. They may also pass it on to another VIP, providing that person has the original, or that the original is passed to them with the accessible copy. The copy may also be passed on to a library to hold if that library has the original material and will make the accessible copy available to other VIPs.

For more information on copyright law regarding visually impaired persons see the [RNIB's guidance on the Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002](http://www.rnib.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/accesstoinformation/copyrightcampaign/Pages/Copyright_Act_2002.aspx). More information on the [RNIB copyright campaign](http://www.rnib.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/accesstoinformation/copyrightcampaign/Pages/copyright_campaign.aspx).