

Helpful Hints for Detecting Counterfeit Bills

While hopefully you never receive a counterfeit bill in payment from a customer who has purchased Fall Products (nuts/candies) or Girl Scout Cookies, these following helpful hints should help you detect a counterfeit bill, so it doesn't happen.

There are 7 denominations in circulation today -- \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50-, and \$100-dollar notes. Each denomination features an American statesman on the front and an image of the nation's history on the back.

Older style notes are never recalled, they are legal tender until they are pulled out of circulation due to detrition. Currency issued in 2004 and later has enhanced security features and incorporate subtle color changes in to the background of the note.

What kind of tools do you need to detect counterfeit bills?

- Knowledge of genuine currency
- Use a genuine note for comparison
- Your Hand
- Light (white or UV/ Blacklight)

Things to Look For:

- A real dollar bill will have Federal Reserve and Treasury Seals that are clear, distinct and sharp. Seals on a counterfeit bill may have uneven, blunt, or broken saw-tooth points.
- Looking at the serial numbers is another way to detect counterfeit money. Serial numbers on a note must be the same color as the Treasury Seal. The numbers on counterfeit bills may not be uniformly spaced or aligned.

One sure way, however, to spot counterfeit bills is if several bills have the same serial number.

- Tilt the note back and forth to observe the color shifting ink. Color shifting ink is located in the right hand corner of the denomination for bills \$10.00 and higher. The color will shift from copper to green on issued notes dated 2004.
- \$100.00 notes have an ink well that will color shift when tilted. The ink well has a bell inside it and it will change from copper to green when shifted.
- Genuine U.S. Currency has a unique feel. The note should feel slightly rough to the touch. Check to see if the note is too soft or smooth, to stiff, too thick or to thin. If the note feels off to you, you have the right to refuse it. But if you know it is fake then you have to report it.

- Real bills have tiny red and blue fibers embedded in the paper, and counterfeiters have tried to replicate those. Ink marks can be printed onto the paper to look like hairs. Counterfeiters have used cat or human hair that is dyed red or blue to embed into the bill. At close inspection, however, it is clear that the hairs are on the surface of the fake bill and not embedded into the paper.

But most people don't even look for the hairs anymore because you have to look really closely. That is why the government put bigger things to look for in [the bills].

- The security thread has a unique glow when held to a UV/Black light:

For series 2004

- \$100.00 Pink
- \$50.00 Yellow
- \$20.00 Green
- \$10.00 Orange
- \$5.00 Blue

- Check for the watermark and the security thread by holding a light behind the bill. The watermark is visible from both sides of the bill and will match to the portrait on the bill.
- The security thread is visible from both sides and will match the denomination of the bill. Newer \$100 dollar notes have a shifting image strip that will move bells in the opposite direction to how you tilt the bill.

What do you do if you have a counterfeit bill?

If you think you've received a counterfeit note, immediately notify the local police.

Place the bill in an envelope and write down the physical characteristics of the person who passed the suspect counterfeit, and if possible write down the person's license plate number and vehicle description on the outside of the envelope. Also put the date and time and place of your booth site.

Store the suspect counterfeit apart from genuine currency and release it as soon as possible to law enforcement authorities.

For resources on American currency, visit www.uscurrency.gov