

COUNTERFEIT MONEY

Counterfeiting money is one of the oldest crimes in history. Although counterfeiting has been substantially reduced since the creation of the Secret Service, this crime continues to represent a serious problem. The Secret Service has noted that many of today's counterfeiters have moved from the "traditional" method of offset printing, which has its own set of required skills, to computer-generated counterfeiting. Today's counterfeiter is able to produce counterfeit currency with basic computer training and skills afforded by public education! Counterfeit passing statistics are likely to increase because of several factors: the instruments of production are more readily available, the capabilities of these machines continue to improve, and the techniques are more readily understood by an increasingly larger segment of the population.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increasing number of our students attempting to pass counterfeit bills on campus. In most cases, these counterfeits were poor quality and readily detected, but the ramifications for the student can be serious.

The United States Secret Service is committed to a policy of zero tolerance and investigates each and every counterfeiting case. Each counterfeiting case, no matter how large or small, carries the serious consequences of incarceration and/or fines.

Manufacturing counterfeit currency is a violation of Title 18, Section 471 of the United States Code and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to 15 years, or both. Printed reproductions, including photographs of paper currency, are violations of Title 18, Section 474 of the United States Code. Violations of this code are also punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to 15 years, or both.

How Do I Spot a Counterfeit?

Look at the money you receive. Compare a suspect bill with a genuine bill of the same denomination, paying attention to the quality of printing and paper characteristics. Look for differences, not similarities.

- **Portrait:** The genuine portrait appears lifelike and stands out distinctly from the background. The counterfeit portrait is usually lifeless and flat. Details merge into the background which is often too dark or mottled.
- **Seals:** On a genuine bill, the saw-tooth points of the Federal Reserve and Treasury seals are clear, distinct, and sharp. The counterfeit seals may have uneven, blunt, or broken saw-tooth points.
- **Border:** The fine lines in the border of a genuine bill are clear and unbroken. On the counterfeit, the lines in the outer margin and scrollwork may be blurred and indistinct.
- **Paper:** Genuine currency paper has tiny red and blue fibers embedded throughout. Often counterfeiters try to simulate these fibers by printing tiny red and blue lines on their paper. Close inspection reveals, however, that on the counterfeit bill the lines are printed on the surface, not embedded in the paper.
- In addition, since 1996 the government has been adding advanced security features to its currency. These enhanced security features make it much more difficult

Portrait: The portrait has been enlarged and moved slightly off center to allow for the addition of a watermark. The portraits have also been redesigned to provide more lifelike detail.

Watermark: A watermark is visible on both sides of the bill when it is held up to a bright light.

Security Thread: A security thread has been added to each bill and can be seen from both sides of the currency when held up to a light.

Color-shifting Ink: All redesigned bills, except the \$5, have a color-shifting ink feature. The number in the lower right corner of the front of the bill looks green when viewed straight on, but black when viewed at an angle.

Microprinting: The redesigned bills feature microprinted words in two areas on the front of the bill.

Fine Line Printing Patterns: The new currency has fine line printing patterns behind the portrait on the front and behind the building on the back.

If You Receive a Counterfeit:

- Do not return it to the student.
- Identify and detain the student, if possible.
- Limit the handling of the currency.
- Carefully place it in an envelope.
- Contact a principal or other administrator and give them the bill.
- The principal must report the incident to contact the accounting department and the accounting department will contact local Secret Service field office (the number for the Austin field office is 512-916-5103).

Surrender the counterfeit only to the accounting department