

## **How to Detect Bad Checks and Credit Cards**

The Franklin Police Department has assembled the following information to inform merchants on how to detect fraudulent checks and stolen credit cards. With increasing technology it has become much easier for criminals to create fraudulent checks and identification to use stolen credit cards. These tips were created to assist in the detection of these items.

### **Forms of Check Fraud**

Forged Signatures:

- Legitimate blank checks with an imitation of the payer signature.

Forged Endorsements:

- Often involves the use of a stolen check, which is then endorsed and cashed or deposited by someone other than the payee.

Counterfeit Checks:

- Due to the advancement in color copying and desktop publishing capabilities, this is the fastest growing source of fraudulent / fake checks today.

Altered Checks:

- Information on a legitimate check, such as payee or check amount, changed to benefit the perpetrator.

Check Kiting:

- The process of depositing a check in one bank account into a second bank account without the sufficient funds to cover it.

### **How to examine a Check**

Examine date:

- Do not accept checks dated ahead of current date.

Physical appearance:

- Look for poor quality printing, spelling errors and any irregularities.
- Confirm check is not a voucher, coupon, junk mail, money order receipt or simulated check.

Check number:

- Be cautious of any check numbered under "200".

Verify Bank:

- Does the check have the name and address of the bank it is drawn on?
- Are you knowledgeable of this bank?

Amount:

- Check that both numerical and written amounts are legible. Look for signs of alterations.

### **How to detect bad Credit Cards, Traveler's Checks, Store or Gas Cards:**

Physical appearance:

- Look for anything out of place, crooked or improperly spaced.

Check Expiration date:

- Make sure date has not expired.

Feel the card:

- Does the card feel too heavy, too thin, lumpy or rough on the surface or card edge?

Examine name:

- Beware of any irregularities in the lettering or spacing of the name.

Examine back of card:

- All Visa/MC cards have a magnetic strip and signature block on the back.

### **Consider the following when accepting Checks, Credit Cards, Store or Gas Cards for payment:**

Ask for a drivers license or identification card that was issued by official government agency.

- Does name, signature, photograph & physical description match presenter?

Does name on ID match name and signature on Credit Card, Check or Traveler's Check?

Triple check signatures:

- Does it match signature on identification, presented item and receipt?

Accept only local, pre-printed checks with current address and phone number.

Call bank to check validity if necessary or call the 800 number on credit card to verify signer.

When in doubt, request a right thumbprint from the presenter on face of the item. Following the above simple guidelines can reduce your chances of becoming a victim. Any suspicious transactions and/or persons should be immediately reported to the Franklin Police Department or your local law enforcement agency.