

# GARAGE SALES

## Scams to Watch For

We all know to keep our eyes peeled for the sticky-fingered at our garage and yard sales. But there are more sophisticated scams to watch for as well.

### QUICK CHANGE SCAM

This involves a pair of shoppers, one of whom works to distract you while you're completing the other shopper's purchase. The purchaser may flash a \$20, then hand you a \$10 while you're talking to the first shopper. Then, they will claim you shorted their change and demand extra money. You recall seeing the \$20 and, not wanting to cause a scene, comply.

To avoid this scheme, don't take their money until you can give them their full attention and have their change ready. When they hand you a bill, keep it out in the open, under a paperweight perhaps, until the transaction is completed. That way, there can be no question about what denomination they gave you.

You can also consider using Venmo, PayPal or other digital-only forms of payment.



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Make sure you read and understand the terms and conditions for both taking payments and moving the money to your bank account.

### COUNTERFEIT MONEY

Even with advanced protec-

tion from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, counterfeiters are still going strong and, at a glance, the bills look real. You can find counterfeit detection pens at office supply stores to make sure any bill over \$5 is the real deal. Or, choose not to

accept large bills. Either way will keep you safe from these criminals.

### FULL POCKETS

When you sell items such as nightstands, dressers or bags, make sure they're empty.

Some dishonest shoppers will pick out a larger item with storage, then pack those pockets and drawers with smaller items as they move around your sale.

To avoid being taken advantage of, check pockets, bags, drawers and any other compartments as you check out the customer. Also enlist friends and family to walk around your sale and keep an eye on customers as they shop to watch for regular thievery as well as this more covert brand.

### LOCK IT UP

Do not let anyone in your home, no matter how innocent-seeming or how good their story is. Not even for the bathroom. Not for a drink of water. Not for any reason. If they're having a medical emergency, offer to call 911. Lock the doors and windows that you cannot directly see and even think about stationing someone inside in case a shopper wanders in.

The best-case scenario, this person is really having a medical emergency and is now in your home. At worst, they're looking for small, valuable items to take back out with them or casing your home for a future break-in.

Just tell them no.



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### SELLER'S TIP

#### Enlist Helpers to Watch for Theft

Friends and family not only bring an extra set of hands to your sale to help set up and clean up, but also eyes and ears. Enlist helpers to watch for theft, keep people out of the house and other out-of-bounds areas, and help load heavy items into cars. While most garage sales go smoothly and without any criminal interference, you will want the moral support if you do run into one of these scammers.

## AD SPACE