

# GARAGE SALES

## How to Spot Counterfeit Money

Most retail spots take cards nowadays, but with a garage sale, cash is still king. Don't start to count up your cash, however, before you've checked and made sure any bills, especially large bills, are real legal tender. Look for these things to make sure your money is real.

### CHECK THE DENOMINATION

The Federal Reserve issues \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 bills. There are about \$12 billion in \$1 bills in circulation and \$183 billion in \$20. You should be on the lookout for fake bills in anything over \$10.

### CHECK THE DESIGN

On real money, the portrait should look like they pop out of the background. Fake bills usually look dull and flat. Borders should be clear and unbroken, not blurry. The logo of the Federal Reserve and the U.S. Treasury should be distinct, sharp and clear. If you see uneven or blurry



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logos, the bill may be fake.

There should also be a watermark that's visible when you hold it up to a light. It's usually a portrait similar to the one on the bill. These water-

marks aren't printed but are in fact a feature of the paper the money is printed on and therefore very difficult to fake. They should always appear on the right side of the bill.

### CHECK THE SERIAL NUMBERS

Real serial numbers are evenly spaced and printed in the same color ink as the Treasury seal. On fake bills,

the serial numbers may be different colors and unevenly spaced.

### CHECK THE PAPER

Real currency is printed on cotton pulp paper that has tiny red and blue fibers embedded in the paper. Counterfeiters try to get around this by printing red and blue lines on their bills, but it's pretty easy to see the difference. Currency paper, which is made from cotton pulp, also has a distinctive feel. Real money is also printed with color-shifting ink that sets it apart from fake bills. On some fake bills, you can use a counterfeit pen, available at office supply stores, to check the paper.

### CHECK THE PRINTING

Real bills have crisp, clean printing that's slightly raised. Run your fingernail carefully down the note. You should feel a slight vibration from the raised printing. Real money also has a thin, micro-printed strip running from top to bottom. In \$10 and \$50 bills, the strip is to the right of the portrait. In \$5, \$20 and \$100 bills, it's on the left. It says USA (DENOMINATION). Under ultraviolet light, this security thread will glow. It's blue for \$5, orange in \$10, green for \$20, yellow in a \$50 bill, and red or pink in the \$100 bill.

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### SELLER'S TIP

#### Have Plenty of Cash, Keep an Eye on It

Have plenty of cash on hand to make change with. Recruit someone whose job it is to keep an eye on the cash box and check people out at your sale.

## AD SPACE