

## Check Fraud Guidelines

Reducing bad check fraud starts with knowing what to look for on each check received. The following tips will help reduce bad checks and the expenses that go with them. Employees should refer any questions to their supervisor.

1. **IS THE CHECK SIGNED?** It isn't against the law to give someone an unsigned check, but an unsigned check isn't worth the paper it's written on. Make sure that every check you receive is signed.
2. **IS THE CHECK IMPRINTED WITH THE CUSTOMER'S NAME AND ADDRESS?** If not, the check writer should have hand-written this information on the face of the check.
3. **DOES THE SIGNATURE MATCH THE NAME ON THE CHECK?** If the signature on the check does not match the name imprinted on the check, the check writer may not be authorized to sign on the account.
4. **IS THE SIGNATURE ILLEGIBLE?** Compare the signature on the check to the signature on the check writer's photo ID. **ALWAYS** ask for a photo ID.
5. **IS THE CORRECT ADDRESS ON THE CHECK?** The address should be the same as the address on the check writer's ID and the bill for payment. If not, request a second form of ID and ask the check writer to put the correct address on the face of his check.
6. **DOES THE BANK'S NAME AND ADDRESS OR CITY AND STATE APPEAR ON THE CHECK?** If the name and address (or city and state) of the financial institution does not appear on the check, suspect forgery and refuse the check.
7. **DOES THE BANK'S IDENTIFICATION NUMBER APPEAR ON THE CHECK?** Every financial institution has a unique identification number. If there is no such number on the check, you should consider the check suspect.
8. **IS THE CHECK NUMBER LOW?** If the check number is low, the account may be new. As a general rule, checks written on new accounts are about **ten times** more likely to bounce than checks written on accounts that have been open for at least one year. (NOTE: At many banks, new accounts can be started with **any** number, so a higher check number does not guarantee that an account isn't new.)
9. **IS THE CHECK DATED?** Make sure that every check you receive has a current date on it. If you receive a check with no date, you can and should write in the correct date. **NEVER** deposit a check that is not dated.
10. **IS THE CHECK POSTDATED?** It isn't illegal to write a postdated check, but if you accept one, it is considered an extension of credit.
11. **IS THE CHECK BACKDATED?** Most banks won't honor a check unless it is fairly current. If a check is backdated six months or more, it is safest to refuse it.
12. **IS THE CHECK WRITTEN IN INK?** Never accept a check written in pencil. Checks should be filled out and signed in ink. (The date, payee, and amount can be typed or imprinted.)
13. **DOES THE AMOUNT EXPRESSED IN NUMBERS MATCH THE AMOUNT EXPRESSED IN WORDS?** If there is a discrepancy between these amounts it is safest to refuse the check.
14. **DOES THE COUNTY NAME APPEAR ON THE PAYEE LINE?** Make sure that the payee line is filled in correctly.
15. **DOES THE CHECK WRITER'S ACCOUNT NUMBER APPEAR ON THE CHECK?** If not, the check writer may not have an account! Some checks that are generated by computers don't show account numbers.)
16. **HAS THE CHECK BEEN ALTERED OR DEFACED?** **Never** accept a check that has been altered or defaced. When accepting cash, also be alert to discoloration or altered bills. Currency could be stolen or counterfeit.