

Crime prevention as

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Board of County Commissioners | Criminal Justice Liaison

## **Counterfeit Money**

Counterfeiting money is one of the oldest crimes in history. At the time of the Civil War, it was estimated that one-third of all currency in circulation was counterfeit. Although counterfeiting has been substantially curtailed since the creation of the Secret Service, counterfeiting is still a very significant problem in the U.S. and has become an alarming problem locally. The Tampa Field Office of The Secret Service gets approximately \$30,000 a week in counterfeit money from the Tampa area alone.

## How do I detect counterfeit money?

One of the ways you can detect counterfeit money is by familiarizing yourself with U.S. currency. Look for differences in the currency, not similarities. Compare a suspect note with a genuine note of the same denomination and series, paying attention to the quality of printing and paper characteristics.

There are several visible differences between real and counterfeit bills. Here are some differences to look for:

**Portraits-** A genuine portrait will appear lifelike and stand out distinctly from the background. A counterfeit portrait usually appears lifeless and flat. Details merge into the background which is often too dark or mottled.

Federal Reserve and Treasury Seals- On a genuine bill, the saw-tooth points of the Federal Reserve and Treasury seals are clear, distinct, and sharp. Counterfeit seals tend to have uneven, blunt or broken sawtooth points.

**Borders-** On a genuine bill, the fine lines in the border are clear and unbroken. On the counterfeit bill, the lines in the outer margin and scrollwork may be blurred or indistinct.

Serial Numbers- Genuine serial numbers have a very distinctive style and are evenly spaced. Serial numbers are printed in the same ink color as the Treasury Seal. On a counterfeit bill, the serial numbers may differ in color or shade of ink from the Treasury seal. The numbers may not be uniformly spaced or aligned.

> **Paper-** Genuine currency paper has tiny red and blue fibers embedded throughout. Counterfeiters usually try to simulate these fibers by printing tiny red and blue lines on their paper. However, upon closer inspection, it is revealed that on the counterfeit note, the lines are printed on the surface, not embedded in the paper.



For more information on the detection of counterfeit money, visit the United States Secret Service website at www.secretservice.gov.

## Resource

If you are a victim of counterfeit crime, contact U.S. Secret Service Tampa Field Office at 813-228-2636.

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners' goals are to reduce property crime, violent crime and overall crime by 2015. These tips are provided by the Hillsborough County Criminal Justice Department. They are intended to increase awareness and help avoid crime. For more information, contact 813-276-2033.