



Top Six Counterfeit Check or Money Order Schemes

Type of Scheme	Description of the Scheme
Work-at-Home 	<p>You are awarded a job from an online ad. The job requires that you receive checks on behalf of the company, deposit checks into a personal bank account, and wire back the money when the funds are posted. You may keep 5 to 10 percent as your salary.</p>
Overpayment 	<p>You place goods for sale online. The perpetrator poses as a buyer, sends you a check or money order for more than the purchase price, and asks you to wire the excess money to a third party (often someone in a foreign country who allegedly handles shipping logistics). This scheme may be used for large items sales, such as automobiles, motorcycles, or boats.</p>
Sudden Riches 	<p>You receive a letter offering a chance to receive a substantial sum of money (e.g., you won a foreign lottery or are the beneficiary of an estate), but you must pay a tax or fee before receiving it. You receive a check or money order to cover the expense and are instructed to deposit the check and wire the money to a third party, usually in a foreign country.</p>
Love Losses 	<p>You fall in love with someone overseas you have been cyber-dating. Your “soulmate” sends you counterfeit checks or money orders to cover travel expenses and instructs you to deposit them into a bank account and transfer a portion of the funds to an overseas account.</p>
Foreign Business Offer 	<p>You receive an e-mail from a “foreign official” or “business-person” with a proposal: He or she wants to move a large sum of money from a foreign country and needs assistance. You are offered 25 to 40 percent of the proceeds. You receive a substantial check in the mail, which you deposit into your account. The official then wants to send you more money, but says he or she will need about \$40,000 as a bribe or to cover some sort of fees. Believing the previous check has cleared, you wire back the funds.</p>
Rental Schemes 	<p>You post an ad, online or in the newspaper, for a roommate or to sublet an apartment. The respondent supplies a check covering costs such as the first and last month’s rent, utilities, and a security deposit. Shortly after you deposit the payment, you are informed that he or she will not be able to rent the property. You are asked to wire back a partial refund.</p>

What happens in all cases?

You deposit the check into your account and wire the money to the contact (the employer, shipper, cyber-soulmate, businessman, etc.) when the funds are posted to your bank account.

Few consumers realize that, while banks are required to post checks within a matter of days, it generally takes weeks for a check to clear.

Weeks later the bank notifies you that the check was counterfeit or stolen, and you are responsible for the full value of the deposited check.

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