



Counterfeit Currency

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Learn about the anti-counterfeit design features in modern currency through this interactive exhibit.

Have you ever wondered what a *really good* USD counterfeit looks like? And how to detect one? Well, ponder no more and make your way to the Money Museum to check out the permanent counterfeit exhibit!

The exhibit was installed this year in mid-January after a collaboration between the KC museum team, the facilities team, and the Secret Service field office in Kansas City. Its purpose is to provide a more thorough explanation of the anti-counterfeit design elements that are present in today's bills.

This exhibit takes visitors through anti-counterfeit measures like watermarks seen with back-lit bills, UV lights that show security threads and magnetic strips, a tilt table where you can observe the color-shifting ink and feel the different texture of a counterfeit bill printed on normal paper, and the cotton-linen blend of the paper used by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Get the olfactory involved and sniff some shredded money as well. It has a unique smell!

Higher-denomination notes (20s, 50s, and 100s) are the primary focus of the exhibit because they are more commonly counterfeited than smaller banknotes. You'll have the opportunity to see some characteristics that are more convincing than others and learn how to spot a fake bill.

Museumgoers will also learn that the Secret Service is responsible for more than simply the president's security.

The agency which we most commonly associate with the protection of the president was started under Lincoln's administration to crack down on counterfeiting which was a serious economic threat at the time. By the end of the Civil War, nearly one-third of all currency in circulation was counterfeit. Unchecked counterfeit production can devalue currency which is why the BEP continually updates the designs of bills to include new anti-counterfeit features.

Check out this educational display located in the heart of the main gallery. So, the next time you find yourself handling money, you'll be aware of the telltale signs of counterfeit currency thanks to this informative exhibit.

To learn more about the Secret Service and its role in combating counterfeit money, click [here](#). And visit the U.S. Currency Education Program [here](#) to find out more about the design and printing processes as well as the numerous steps being taken to prevent the creation of counterfeit notes.
