



Look, Feel, Tell the Difference

As long as modern technology is available to the general public there may be counterfeit banknotes. Although 99% of counterfeits produced in The Bahamas are of poor quality and are easily detectable with the naked eye, people (on average) pay very little attention to their banknotes and unfortunately sometimes end up with a counterfeit note. We hope the following helps you in determining genuine banknotes from forgeries.

Types of Counterfeits

Two types of counterfeit banknotes generally exist in The Bahamas: (1) **standard** items, which include banknotes scanned and printed or photocopied on regular stationery-type paper and (2) **denominationally up-rated** items which include banknotes scanned and printed or photocopied on genuine banknote paper. Where do counterfeiters get genuine banknote paper on which to print their forgeries? They erode a lower denomination by chemically removing the inks from a \$1 banknote, for example, and overprinting that paper with a higher denomination.

Why Did This Happen?

Traditionally, every denomination of Bahamas banknotes bore the same watermark and thread. Because these were very obvious and simple security features to use, they were usually offered by currency professionals as the features the public ought to look out for in genuine banknotes. Over time, counterfeiters realized that the public were more actively looking for the watermark and thread in banknotes they receive, and decided that, since they could not effectively reproduce them, they would use paper with these features already included. This marked the beginning of denominationally up-rated counterfeits for The Bahamas.

What Did We Do?

On August 3, 2005, the Central Bank launched its *CRISP* (Counterfeit Resistant Integrated Security Product) family of banknotes by releasing the first denomination, *CRISP* \$10, into circulation. *CRISP*, the first family of banknotes in Bahamian history to offer a range of denomination-specific features, was specifically designed to combat denominationally up-rated forgeries. These denomination-specific features will help the public tell whether or not the banknotes in their hands are genuine. *CRISP* banknote paper is also coated with a new sizing agent to help prevent the chemical removal of inks from the paper.

Denomination-Specific Features

1. **Watermark:** Every denomination in the new *CRISP* family will bear a **different** watermark. When held to a light source, the watermark will appear as an opaque, three-dimensional image embedded in the paper. If your banknote does not have this feature, it is likely to be a counterfeit. Check the watermark. On *CRISP* \$10 the watermark is the same as the portrait—it bears an image of Queen Elizabeth II. The other denominations will have their own watermarks.
2. **Highlighted Image (Electrotype):** Every *CRISP* denomination will bear a different electrotype. When held to a light source, a highlighted image appears next to the watermark. On *CRISP* \$10 this electrotype reads “10”. The other denominations will have their own electrotypes.
3. **Security Threads:** Although the security threads will look the same from denomination to denomination in the *CRISP* family, they will be located in different places. Pay attention to the locations of the threads. Notice that *CRISP* \$10 has 2

threads: (1) a wide, shiny, colour-shifting thread that weaves in and out of the paper on the front and (2) a narrow thread embedded into the paper.

4. **Latent Image:** On *CRISP* \$10, in the bottom left-hand quadrant of the ellipse surrounding the Queen's portrait, in the thick blue printing just left of the Queen's shoulder, is a latent image that reads "10". This feature is difficult to see with the naked eye on a genuine banknote, but becomes more obvious once reproduced. Be careful, though, once you locate this image on a genuine banknote you will notice it more easily from then on. The difference is that on a counterfeit note this feature is obvious, while on a genuine note it blends with the background. The latent image will be different on each denomination.
5. **Phosphorescent Feature (BLINK):** This feature is primarily designed for merchants because it requires the use of a black fluorescent lamp. Hold *CRISP* \$10 under a black fluorescent lamp. Immediately a large block-typed numeral reading "10" should appear. This feature will be different on each denomination.

Watermarks, electrotypes, and security threads are incorporated into banknotes at the time the paper is made. These items cannot, therefore, be easily reproduced by counterfeiters. The use of a new coating also makes it more difficult for counterfeiters to remove the inks from lower denominations and reprint higher denominations on the same paper. More importantly, the denomination-specific features described above will be different from denomination to denomination, so pay attention to them. Learn them. Education is your best defense.

Further Help

The Central Bank holds counterfeit detection seminars for merchants and the public twice a year—usually in April and November. Watch for our advertisements in the newspapers in the coming weeks and join us to learn more about your banknotes.

The Central Bank also produces a range of printed information about its [banknotes](#). Visit our website at www.centralbankbahamas.com and browse the Banknotes section or come to our offices at Frederick and Shirley streets to pick up a [CRISP \\$10 brochure](#).

Still need more help about detecting counterfeits? Call our currency services center directly at Ph. Nos. 302-2735, 302-2740, or 302-2737. We're available from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on business days to help you.

You think you have a counterfeit banknote? Call the Commercial Crime Unit of the Royal Bahamas Police Force at Ph. No. 322-2561.