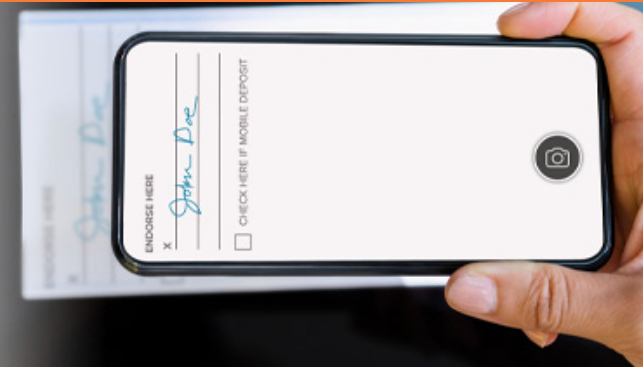


▶ **DUPLICATE** *check cashing*



A real estate agent recently started out the day with a visit to her bank due to a collections letter she received from a check cashing center in her hometown. Someone she hired to perform landscaping on a listing prior to closing decided to deposit the check she gave him using a mobile app. Then, he took that same check to the check cashing center and cashed it again.

This landscaper was new to the agent, she hired him because her regular landscaper was not available at the time. Her bank sent her to the check cashing center, where she explained what the payee of the check had done.

The manager at the check cashing center told her to file a police report, which she had done prior to entering the check cashing center. The manager said the letter was sent to her because the payee on the check was not responding to the multiple phone calls, emails, text messages and certified letters sent to him.

Next, the agent tried to call the collections company that initiated the letter to report the incident as fraud. She could not talk to anyone, because the collections company does not have a fraud department.

These are the lessons she learned:

1. On the back of your checks, there is a box to check if it is a mobile deposit. If the payee does not check it or write in, "for mobile deposit only," check cashing places will cash the check because there is no stopgap to indicate, "Wait. This has already been cashed."
2. Whoever commits fraud when the value of the property misappropriated or taken is more than \$500 (but not more than \$2,500) is guilty of a fourth-degree felony, which is a sentence of up to 18 months in prison and a \$5,000 fine.
3. Real estate agents should use some type of identification verification, such as FOREWARN®. Had she checked out the landscaper, she would have seen he had a past criminal record of fraud.
4. The police officer at the front desk took less than 10 minutes to file the report. When she explained the situation, he looked at her and just shook his head. He asked, "Young guy?" She replied, "Nope, probably late 50s." He responded, "Just so you know, this happens a lot."