

# **MONEY** orders



Money orders issued by the United States Postal Service (USPS) are considered good funds the day after they have been deposited, unless they are fraudulent. Settlement agents who receive a USPS issued money order must review each instrument carefully. The USPS has provided these steps for verifying a money order:

Before accepting a money order, make sure it's real. There are several key things to look at to spot a counterfeit money order.



## Examine the Paper

Real USPS money orders have specific marks and designs to prevent fraud. If you hold the money order up to the light, you should see:

Watermarks of Ben Franklin on the left side repeat top to bottom (circle 1 on image).

On the right of the Franklin watermark, a vertical, multicolored thread with the letters "USPS" weaves in and out of the paper (circle 2 on image).

### Check the Dollar Amounts

If the dollar amount is discolored, it may have been erased, indicating fraud (circle 3 on image).

Make sure the dollar amount is imprinted twice (circle 4 on image).

### See if the dollar value is too large.

Domestic money orders cannot be more than \$1,000.

International money orders cannot be more than \$700 (\$500 for El Salvador or Guyana).

## Suspect a Fake?

If you suspect fraud, call the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at **1.877.876.2455**.

If it appears to be valid, then check the status of the money order by calling the money order verification system at **1.866.459.7822**. Keep in mind, the USPS can only verify a money order 48 hours after it has been issued. This is the safest form of money order to accept.

*Money orders issued by anyone else should be verified by contacting the issuer to verify it is valid and then wait 14 business banking days before disbursing against it, to ensure it has been unconditionally collected. If the money order represents closing funds, it may be necessary for the customer to remit the funds by wire transfer instead.*