



FORT BRAGG POLICE DEPARTMENT

250 Cypress Street
Fort Bragg, CA 95437-5437

MARK PUTHUFF
Chief of Police

(707) 961-2800
Fax: (707) 961-2806

PRESS RELEASE

Releasing Officer: **Officer Jeanine Gregory**
Date of Release: **November 2, 2009**
Location of Incident: **Various Businesses in Fort Bragg**
Crime or Incident: **Counterfeit Monies**

Circumstances:

Over the last two months, the community of Fort Bragg has been defrauded with counterfeit one hundred dollar bills. As technology changes, so do the criminals as they create more innovative ways to defraud hard working citizens and business owners alike.

In an effort to assist with educating the public and increasing the knowledge of counterfeit billing, we hope to decrease the amount of fraud in our small, hard working town. Here are some helpful tips so you or your business does not become the next victim.

The following information is recommended by the United States Secret Service and can be found at www.secretservice.gov.

Know Your Money:

- If you receive a counterfeit:
 - Do not return it to the passer.
 - Delay the passer if possible.
 - Observe the passer's description, as well as that of any companions, and the license plate numbers of any vehicles used.
 - Contact your local Law Enforcement Agency or United States Secret Service Field Office. These numbers can be found on the inside front page of your local telephone directory.
 - Write your initials and the date in the white border areas of the suspect note.
 - Limit the handling of the note. Carefully place it in a protective covering, such as an envelope.
 - Surrender the note or coin only to a properly identified Law Enforcement Officer or a US Secret Service special agent.

The counterfeit bills that local businesses have been receiving are washed or bleached-out five dollar bills, with a one hundred dollar bill reprinted over it. When a business receives a large bill such as a fifty or one hundred, oftentimes a special marking pen is used to validate its authenticity. This method can no longer be used because the original bill is real, so the marking pen will not turn color, indicating the bill to be a counterfeit.

In order to protect yourself from receiving a counterfeit bill, hold the bill up to a light source and look at the watermark face. The counterfeit bills our local businesses have received have a watermark face of Abraham Lincoln, but on the front of the bill it is Benjamin Franklin. These faces should match. The metal strip will be present in the bill, but upon closer observation it will read a different denomination than that on the front of the bill. Always double check the watermark and metal strip for authenticity.

It's the Law

Manufacturing counterfeit United States currency or altering genuine currency to increase its value is a violation of Title 18, Section 471 of the United States Code and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to 15 years, or both.

Possession of counterfeit United States obligations with fraudulent intent is a violation on Title 18, Section 472 of the United States Code and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to 15 years, or both.