

## CONSUMERS: FAKE CHECK SCAMS CAN LEAVE YOU OWING MONEY

*Fake check scams have become more prevalent as online auction sites and classified ads have gained popularity. Foothills Bank wants to educate customers by exposing the scam and offering tips to avoid becoming a victim.*

*There are many variations of the fake check scam, but the common thread is a stranger proposing to send the victim a check and have the victim wire money in return. The stranger may be someone offering to buy something you advertised for sale, pay you to work at home, or give you an advance on a sweepstakes you won.*

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*“Regardless of how the contact is initiated, the bottom line is this: if someone you don’t know wants to pay you by check but wants you to wire money back, it’s a scam,” said Jennifer Coffin, VP.”*

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*Today’s technology enables fraudsters to create fake checks that look so real it is often difficult for experts to determine they are fake with the naked eye.*

*Since federal law mandates that banks must make deposited funds available quickly, a customer may be able to withdraw money on a fake check, even if it is a cashier’s check or money order which can be forged as well.*

To avoid becoming a victim, Foothills Bank says customers should remember:

- There is *no* legitimate reason for someone who is giving you money to ask you to wire money back;
- If you are uncertain a check is good, wait until the check has “cleared” to spend the money;
- If a stranger wants to pay you for something, insist on a cashier’s check for the *exact amount*, preferably from a local bank or one with a branch in your area.

For more details about how fake check scams work and how to avoid them

[www.fakechecks.org](http://www.fakechecks.org).