

How to check for counterfeit notes

While counterfeiting is uncommon, this quick guide will help you identify a genuine Australian currency note. To determine if a suspect note is a counterfeit, it is best to compare it with a note that is known to be genuine.

Look at the note

Genuine notes should each have a clear window—the area around the window is uniformly smooth to touch.

Within the windows are printed shapes and in all notes (except the Queen five-dollar note) there is embossing that is only visible at certain angles.

The clear area is part of the note and not an addition. Within the clear window, look for these features on common notes:

\$5 note—a stylised gum flower

Federation \$5 note—printed mauve area with embossing of the number 5

\$10 note—a windmill and embossing of a wave pattern

\$20 note—a compass with embossing of the number 20

Genuine notes have multi-coloured, fine-line patterns on both sides of the note.

Feel the note

A genuine note is printed on special plastic and has a distinctive feel.

Check that the suspect note is not too thick or too thin.

Try tearing the note. It is difficult to start a tear along an edge of a genuine note. Most counterfeit notes are printed on easily torn paper.

On a genuine note, slightly raised printing is used for the main features.

Hold the note up to the light

A genuine note has images that can only be seen when the note is held up to the light. These include: a seven-point star and the Australian Coat of Arms.

Notes can also be checked with ultraviolet light.