



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I have a banknote that is a slightly different colour – is it counterfeit?

A banknote with a slightly different colour is not necessarily an indicator that it is counterfeit. As banknotes circulate, colour may start to degrade depending on the treatment they sustain.

We recommend that you look at a range of security features to assist with identifying a counterfeit banknote. The Reserve Bank of Australia has a [Counterfeit Detection Guide](#) that is made available to the public and can be found on our website.

I have a \$5 banknote that is different to the usual design – is it counterfeit?

The Reserve Bank is currently upgrading the security of Australia's banknotes to ensure they remain secure against counterfeiting. The first denomination – the new \$5 banknote – was issued in September 2016. More information about the [upgrade program](#) and the [security features](#) on the banknote can be found on our website.

The first polymer \$5 banknotes were produced in 1992. The original \$5 banknotes were much lighter in colour compared to current \$5 banknotes. In 1995, the Reserve Bank issued a brighter \$5 banknote in response to some concerns that it was difficult to distinguish from the \$10 banknote, particularly in poor lighting conditions. The new \$5 banknote also included two minor design changes: the style of the denomination numeral was brought into line with the bolder style on the other denominations and orientation bands were added along the top and bottom edges of the banknote. Both designs have the same [security features](#).

A commemorative banknote was also issued in 2001. More information about this banknote can be found on our [website](#).

I have a banknote that is shorter than normal – is it counterfeit?

There are many quality-control processes in place to minimise variations in the size of banknotes; however, slight differences can occur during the manufacturing process. We do not recommend using the dimensions of a banknote to determine the authenticity of a banknote.

We recommend that you look at a range of security features to assist with identifying a counterfeit banknote. The Reserve Bank of Australia has a [Counterfeit Detection Guide](#) that is made available to the public and can be found on our website.

I can't see the UV fluorescent patch on a banknote – is it counterfeit?

The intensity of the fluorescent patch when viewed under UV light can vary according to the ambient lighting conditions and the wavelength of the UV light source. As banknotes circulate, wear can also degrade the fluorescent emission. This tends to have a greater impact on the fluorescent patch than on the fluorescence of the serial number. To confirm authenticity, it would be necessary to examine other security features on the banknote.

How can I tell when a banknote was printed?

The first two numbers of a serial number identify the year a banknote was printed. For example, a \$50 banknote with a serial number DB 99 572038 indicates the banknote was printed in 1999. A \$50 banknote with a serial number DB 03 572038 indicates the banknote was printed in 2003.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call
1800 633 220 (8.30 am – 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday)

Email
banknotes@rba.gov.au

Website
banknotes.rba.gov.au



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Why are printed names of people featured on some banknotes and not others?

Printed names were added to the design of Australia's banknotes to make it easier for the public to identify the famous Australians featured on them. A banknote without the name of the person underneath the portrait is not necessarily counterfeit. In 2002, printed names were added to \$10 and \$20 banknotes. In 2003 printed names were added to \$50 banknotes, and in 2008 they were added to \$100 banknotes.

To determine the year a banknote was printed, look at the first two numbers of the serial number. For example, 99 means the banknote was printed in 1999, while 03 means the banknote was printed in 2003.

Are the signatures of the RBA Governor and Secretary to the Treasury in a different order on some banknotes?

The order of the signatures on Australian banknotes was changed in 2002. Since then, the Governor's signature has been printed above that of the Secretary to the Treasury. The order of the signatures is not a determining factor when assessing whether a banknote is genuine.

Is it legal to reproduce images of Australian banknotes?

The legislation relevant to banknote reproductions includes the *Crimes (Currency) Act 1981* and the *Copyright Act 1968*. The Reserve Bank of Australia's reproduction guidelines are intended to assist those who wish to reproduce or create images of banknotes to minimise the risk of noncompliance with the relevant legislation. The reproduction guidelines can be viewed [here](#).

What should I do with a counterfeit banknote?

Please view the [Suspect Banknotes](#) pdf on the Law Enforcement portal.

What should I do with a damaged banknote?

Please view the [Damaged Banknotes](#) section of the Banknotes website.

Where can I get copies of the RBA's counterfeit detection guide?

To request copies of the RBA's counterfeit detection guide, call 1800 633 220 (8.30 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday) or email banknotes@rba.gov.au.

I am putting together a police media release regarding counterfeiting. Can you provide any assistance or advice?

If you would like any assistance or advice from the RBA in preparing a media release relating to counterfeit currency, please call 1800 633 220 (8.30 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday) or email banknotes@rba.gov.au.

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