



The New Color of Money
Safer. Smarter. More Secure.

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Safer, Smarter, More Secure \$50 Bill Issued
Banks to Begin Distributing the Redesigned Note Today

WASHINGTON – September 28, 2004 – Newly redesigned \$50 notes arrive at banks beginning today ready to make their way into circulation and consumer wallets. Today marks the day the Federal Reserve System distributes the new note to banks and thus into the public’s hands.

To mark the occasion, officials from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Federal Reserve Board and the U.S. Secret Service were on hand for the first transaction using the newly redesigned \$50 note. Paying homage to the symbol of freedom featured in the note’s new design, the U.S. flag, the officials used one of the first new \$50 notes to buy an American flag from the Alamo Flag shop in Washington, D.C.’s Union Station.

The \$50 note includes enhanced security features, subtle background colors of blue and red, images of a waving American flag and a small metallic silver-blue star. The new design is part of the U.S. government’s ongoing efforts to stay ahead of counterfeiting and protect the integrity of U.S. currency.

“The stability and integrity of U.S. paper currency is something the U.S. government takes very seriously,” said Brian Roseboro, Under Secretary for Domestic Finance at the Department of the Treasury. “We believe that redesigning the currency regularly and enhancing security features is the way to keep U.S. currency safe and secure from would-be counterfeiters.”



“A combination of factors keep currency counterfeiting at low levels,” said Bruce Townsend, Deputy Assistant Director of the U.S. Secret Service’s Office of Investigations. “Improved worldwide cooperation in law enforcement, improvements in currency design, like those in the new \$50 notes that will begin circulating today, and a better-informed public all contribute to our success in the fight against counterfeiting.”

The government is supporting the new currency’s issue with a public education program designed to inform people in the U.S. and overseas about updated security features and ensure a smooth introduction of each newly designed note into circulation.

“As we introduce these beautiful new notes, we want to emphasize that the older design \$50 notes will remain in circulation for some time to come and will remain legal tender,” said Louise Roseman, the Federal Reserve Board’s Director of Federal Reserve Bank Operations and Payment Systems.

The new \$50 note is the second denomination in the Series 2004 currency, the most secure series of notes in U.S. history. The first denomination in the series to be redesigned was the \$20 note, which began circulating in October 2003.

“The next denomination in the series will be a new \$10 note,” said Ferguson. “We are currently working on the design and expect to unveil it in the spring of 2005.” The \$100 note is also slated to be redesigned, but a timetable for its introduction is not yet set. The government has no plans to redesign the \$5 note at this time, and the \$1 and \$2 notes will not be redesigned.

Public Education

Because the improved security features are more effective if the public knows about them, the U.S. government is undertaking a broad, worldwide public education program. This program will ensure that people all over the world know the new currency is coming, and help them recognize and use the security features. The outreach includes cash handlers, merchants, business and industry associations and the media. There is nearly \$700 billion in circulation worldwide, and as much as two-thirds of U.S. currency is held outside the United States.

A variety of training materials – such as posters, training videos and brochures – is available in 24 languages. The materials can be downloaded or ordered through www.moneyfactory.com/newmoney.

Since the Treasury’s Bureau of Engraving and Printing began taking orders in May 2003, more than 52 million pieces of training materials have been ordered by businesses and other organizations to help them train their cash-handling employees about the notes’ enhanced security features.

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While consumers should not use color to check the authenticity of their currency (relying instead on user-friendly security features – see below), color does add complexity to the note, making counterfeiting more difficult. Different colors are being used for different denominations, which will help everyone – particularly those who are visually impaired – to tell denominations apart.

Security Features

The new \$50 design retains three important security features that were first introduced in the 1990s and are easy for consumers and merchants alike to check:

- *Watermark:* A faint image, similar to the portrait, which is part of the paper itself and is visible from both sides when held up to the light.
- *Security thread:* Also visible from both sides when held up to the light, this vertical strip of plastic is embedded in the paper and spells out the denomination in tiny print.
- *Color-shifting ink:* The numeral in the lower right corner on the face of the note, indicating its denomination, changes color from copper to green when the note is tilted.

Counterfeiting: Increasingly Digital

Counterfeiting has been kept at low levels through a combination of improvements in security features, aggressive law enforcement and education efforts to inform the public about how to check their currency. About 1 in 25,000 \$50 notes is a counterfeit, according to the Federal Reserve.

However, since 1995, digitally produced counterfeit notes have increased from one percent of all counterfeits detected in the U.S. to 40 percent. To stay ahead of counterfeiters as advances in technology make digital counterfeiting of currency easier and cheaper, the government expects to redesign the currency about every seven to ten years.