



## State of Tennessee

David H. Lillard, Jr., State Treasurer

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### **Treasurer Lillard Warns that Fraudulent Check Cases Are on the Rise**

In recent weeks, the Tennessee Treasury Department has received numerous reports of fraudulent activity involving checks that appear to be from the "State of Tennessee," "Tennessee State Treasury" or something similar. The Tennessee Treasury Department processes all checks issued by the State of Tennessee. These fraudulent checks are being used in various schemes to defraud the people who cash the checks by encouraging them to send some portion of the funds to the criminal or criminals who sent the checks.

There are several scams in which the fake checks have been used. In one example, advertisements are placed on web sites such as craigslist.com or local newspapers offering free money or work from home opportunities. Consumers who respond to those ads are given instructions on what to do with the checks. The instructions typically involve asking consumers to cash the checks, then immediately wire money to the check senders. In most cases, the consumers are allowed to keep portions of the funds from the cashed checks.

In other examples, consumers are convinced to accept these checks in return for goods or services rendered during the course of business transactions. The amounts of the checks are often for more money than the cost of the goods and services so the consumers are asked to wire the extra funds back to the check senders or to keep the additional funds. (Consumers are ultimately responsible for covering the amounts in wire transactions.)

Other examples include criminals using bank account information obtained from real State of Tennessee checks to pay for online goods or services.

For consumers, many of the forged checks are nearly impossible to distinguish from authentic state checks. Consumers are urged to be cautious about accepting State of Tennessee checks from anyone other than representatives from state agencies with whom they have some connection or business.

"It is important for people to be very careful about accepting checks from potentially unreliable sources," State Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr. said. "Criminals are always trying to stay one step ahead of efforts to detect them. Consumers should do some homework before agreeing to accept checks from all but the most trusted sources. I encourage people with questions about checks that

appear to be issued by the state to contact our office. The Tennessee Treasury Department maintains a database of every valid state check that is issued. The Treasury Department never requests individuals to wire funds to the department.”

The Treasury Department can validate the authenticity of State of Tennessee checks and provide other information, including check amounts, dates and payees in almost all cases.

If you have questions about a suspicious check, please call (615) 741-1337.

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Media contact: Blake Fontenay, Communications Director, (615) 253-2668 or [blake.fontenay@tn.gov](mailto:blake.fontenay@tn.gov)

[Tennessee Department of the Treasury](#)  
State Capitol Nashville, TN 37243  
Phone: (615) 741-2956