

# WHAT TO DO IF CHECK FRAUD HAPPENS: A RESOURCE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES

Discovering transactions on your account that you did not do can be alarming. If you discover unauthorized activity on your account — such as fraudulent checks — act swiftly to minimize potential losses and increase the likelihood of recovery. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you respond promptly if you identify a potentially fraudulent check clearing your account:

## 1 REVIEW ACCOUNT ACTIVITY

- Review transactions to identify any other unauthorized activity on your account.
- Check for changes to contact information, passwords or other account information.



## 2 CONTACT YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

- Contact your financial institution immediately.
- Follow recommendations from your financial institution to remediate the fraud.
- Work with your financial institution to take steps to prevent further fraudulent activity.



## 3 FILE A FRAUD REPORT

- Contact your local police department to file a report.
- Report the fraud to the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov).
- If your check was stolen from the mail, report it to the U.S. Postal Service at [USPIS.gov/report](https://www.uspis.gov/report).
- Report internet-related crimes to the Internet Crimes Complaint Center at [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov).



## 4 MONITOR YOUR CREDIT

- Consider placing fraud alerts and/or a credit freeze with the credit bureaus if your personal information may be compromised.
- Monitor your credit report and report any errors.
- Explore identity theft protection or credit monitoring services.



## 5 PROTECT YOUR ACCOUNTS

- Continuously monitor your account(s) for unusual activity.
- Ask your financial institution about services to prevent check fraud.
- Regularly change your online banking password.
- Use [multi-factor authentication](#).
- Set up alerts to quickly be notified of account activity and transactions.
- Consider exploring alternative payment options instead of checks.



*The check fraud mitigation toolkit was developed by the Federal Reserve to help educate the industry about check fraud and outline potential ways to help detect and mitigate this fraud type. Insights for this toolkit were provided through interviews with industry experts, publicly available research, and team member expertise. This toolkit is not intended to result in any regulatory or reporting requirements, imply any liabilities for fraud loss, or confer any legal status, legal definitions, or legal rights or responsibilities. While use of this toolkit throughout the industry is encouraged, utilization of the toolkit is voluntary at the discretion of each individual entity. Absent written consent, this toolkit may not be used in a manner that suggests the Federal Reserve endorses a third-party product or service.*