



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK  
OF DALLAS

WILLIAM H. WALLACE  
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

December 11, 1985

DALLAS, TEXAS 75222

Circular 85-145

**TO:** The Chief Executive Officer of all  
depository institutions in the  
Eleventh Federal Reserve District

**SUBJECT**

**The new look to U.S. Government checks**

**DETAILS**

The U.S. Treasury Department will begin this month issuing government checks that have a substantially different look. The familiar green punched card check is being replaced with an all new colorful paper one. Most people will accept the change without question. Yet some may be confused by the new check or wonder if it is genuine. I'm sure that you will appreciate the importance of your employees and your customers knowing about this change.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attached are a flyer and a fact sheet which describe the new government check.

**MORE INFORMATION**

For more information, please contact Andrew W. Hogwood, Jr., at (214) 651-6341.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William H. Wallace".

# U.S. Government Checks Have A Brand New Look.

U.S. Government checks now look a lot different than they used to. The familiar green punched-card check is being replaced with a brand new paper check.

Most people will automatically accept the change without question. Yet some may be confused by the new check or wonder if it's genuine. That's why it's so important to communicate the facts about the new U.S. Government check.

On the face of the new check is a picture of the Statue of Liberty printed on a multi-colored background. A pattern of the letters "USA" is printed in pale blue on the reverse side. This new design is the product of the latest technology, making government checks much more difficult to alter or counterfeit.

But that's not all. Since the new checks are printed on light-weight paper that costs less to buy and store, they're saving the government \$6 million a year.



The U.S. Government issues about 600 million checks per year. Soon, everyone who receives U.S. Government checks will be getting new ones. Many people already have! The new checks will be used for Social Security payments, tax refunds, Veterans Compensation, federal employee payroll and more.

But what about the *old* checks? If you happen to receive the green or other color punched-card check, there's no problem—it's still good. Cashing the *new* checks should be no problem either. We've told everyone who cashes checks to be on the lookout for the brand new look of U.S. Government checks.

## FACT SHEET

### Security Features U.S. Treasury Paper Check

- o The back of the check contains a pattern of "USA" repeated over the entire check in non-reproducible blue ink, except for the area above the endorsement line. The endorsement line itself is a series of "USA" when magnified. The pattern on the back of the check becomes invisible when microfilmed. When the back of the check is photocopied, the hidden word "VOID" appears on the copy.
- o Safety paper used in the check will show a positive and obvious chemical reaction upon any attempt at alteration of writing on the paper surface using ink eradicators, mechanical erasure, etc.
- o The face of the check, including the Statue of Liberty and seal of the United States Treasury, are clear and sharply printed. Details of the Statue appear engraved and will not be spotted, smeared, or filled in with excessive ink. The entire check will fluoresce when placed under a black light.
- o The pre-printed MICR information along the bottom of the check, consisting of a 4-digit check symbol number and a check digit, an 8-digit transit number and a check digit, and an 8-digit check serial number and a check digit, should be clearly printed. The check symbol and serial number in the MICR line (without check digits) will correspond to the symbol and serial number pre-printed in the upper right hand corner of the check.
- o The patterned background on the front of the check, including the Statue of Liberty silhouette, should be discernable but not bold, and not interfere with the printing on the face of the check.
- o The colors on the face of the check should be pale pastel, changing from light blue on the left, through green in the middle, to light peach on the right.
- o Stains will appear in the name of the payee or in the amount printed on the check if an attempt is made to alter the check in these areas.