



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

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<http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>

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Global 'Fake Check' Seizures Continue Postal Inspectors stress vigilance against counterfeiters

In a continuing effort to crack down on international scammers looking to fatten their wallets while draining the bank accounts of American consumers, law enforcement partners working with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service have seized tens of thousands of additional mailings bound for the United States and containing counterfeit checks.

Today, a team of Canadian and U.S. fraud investigators based in Montreal, Quebec, announced the seizure of more than 50,000 pieces of mail containing fake checks with a face value totaling nearly \$195 million. The announcement was made by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), who spearheaded "Project Colt," a cross-border partnership aimed at disrupting and preventing fraud. Postal Inspectors have been members of the partnership since its inception in 1998, along with other federal agencies in the United States and Canada. Most of the letters were addressed to U.S. recipients. The seizures were made by Canada Post in coordination with the RCMP. No arrests have yet been made, and the investigation is continuing.

The mail contains a letter telling the recipient they've won a cash prize of up to \$50,000 in an international promotional campaign and includes a \$2,000 to \$5,000 check. To collect the full amount of their "prize," the recipient is asked to cash the check and quickly return all or part of the proceeds, usually via wire transfer, to pay for "an international administration fee" of some type. By the time the check is found to be fake, the scammer has the money and the recipient is on the hook to their bank to repay the amount.

"Although more than 600,000 fake checks have been seized since the global initiative to stop these scams began earlier this year, the scammers have not stopped trying," said Chief Postal Inspector Alexander Lazaroff. "We are grateful to the RCMP for continuing to lead this cross-border partnership, which aims to keep these scams from reaching U.S. and Canadian consumers and maintain their confidence in the mail."

Postal Inspectors warn there is no legitimate reason for any contest promoter, business, or organization to send you a check and ask that it be cashed and wired back to them--especially for a promotional campaign or contest you never entered. Learn more about check scams by visiting the Web site www.FakeChecks.org. If you receive a letter containing a check and you suspect fraud, don't cash the check. Instead, report it to Postal Inspectors at www.FakeChecks.org, or by telephoning 1-800-372-8347.

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About the U.S. Postal Inspection Service

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is one of the oldest federal law enforcement agencies in the country. For more than 200 years, Postal Inspectors have protected the U.S. Postal Service, secured the nation's mail system, and ensured public trust in the mail. To learn more, visit <http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>.