



Protect Yourself from Fraudulent Checks and Cryptocurrency Kiosks

Fraudsters are getting more creative, and one of the latest schemes involves a dangerous combination of fake checks and cryptocurrency kiosks. These scams can be detrimental to victims, causing not only significant monetary loss but also emotional damage. It's important to understand how this scam works so you can protect yourself and others.

How the Scam Works

- **The Setup:** It might start with an *investment or loan opportunity, or even a relationship*. The scammer, often posing as a love interest, a new friend, financial advisor, or just someone in need, gains your trust over a short amount of time. They might meet you through *social media, dating apps, or other online platforms*.
- **The Check:** Once they've built trust, the scammer tells you they need help *moving money, making a purchase, or making a payment*. In recent incidents we've seen, the *victim is mailed several checks for an account that either belongs to the scammer or has been opened in their name*. They appear to be legitimate, as they may arrive in a book or be printed on real check stock.
- **The Request:** The scammer *asks you to deposit the check* into your primary bank account. They assure you that the check is good and will likely share a very convincing story about why they can't do the transaction themselves.
- **The Withdrawal:** After you deposit the check, the scammer urges you to quickly *withdraw the money*. They'll pressure you to immediately *take the cash to a cryptocurrency kiosk*, where you'll convert the funds into cryptocurrency. Often they'll provide you with a *QR code* to use for this deposit and may have you provide a copy of your *driver's license* beforehand, saying that *they're setting up a "wallet" for you to use*.
- **The Trap:** *Here's the catch: the checks are fake*. It may take days for the bank to realize the check is fraudulent. By the time you're notified, the money you withdrew and sent is gone. *You're left owing the bank the full amount, and the scammer disappears*.

How to Protect Yourself

- **Verify Before You Act:** If someone asks you to deposit a check for them, contact your bank immediately and *tell them the truth about everything that's happened*. Staff at the bank are trained to help with these situations and will usually know right away if the story you've been told is tied to a scam.
- **Say "NO" to Strangers:** *Never* agree to deposit checks or handle money for someone you don't know well or have never met in person.
- **Educate Yourself:** Stay informed about the latest scams and the stories that accompany them. The more you know, the less likely you are to fall victim.