



Hints for Spotting Fake IDs

- Learn your state's IDs (each state follows a particular algorithm for generating a unique number associated with the card holder) and examine IDs for size, shape, design, seals, color, printing style and security features. Look for both obvious signs of forgery, like a font, and more subtle signs, like a less-than-perfect match in the background color of the photo. Also check characters and line spacing for inconsistencies.
- Ask the subject to present secondary picture IDs. If the photo is identical in more than one ID, they are obviously fraudulent.
- Check for tampering by feeling for weight and texture, also for raised edges, irregular surfaces and glue lines by the photo and the birth date.
- Inspect the printing for fuzzy text, smudges, and red-eye in the photo.
- Look for distortions in the complete ID image. When amateur forgers take photos of licenses to mock them up to use as templates, their template photo may have been distorted if taken by a wide-angle lens from close range. This image will seem bowed-out.
- Check for thickness to judge if it was re-laminated. Some forgers will double the lamination to try to pad a fake ID to the approximate thickness of a real one. Inspect them for air pockets between laminates. Look for irregularities and crookedness in the corners and edges. Cutting neat edges manually is something that is very difficult for inexperienced forgers.
- Hold at an angle to spot erasers or alterations.
- Look for holograms, if the ID is supposed to have one. Fake holograms can be created, but a very bad forger might not know that!
- If the date of issuance on the ID is older rather than recent, the ID shouldn't be shiny and scratch-free. Years of usage age an ID, so be suspicious of new-looking IDs.
- When comparing the photo and physical information with the subject, don't forget to calculate their age as well.
- Be suspicious of expired licenses. These may have been discarded by or stolen from the original owner. The same is true of cards marked as duplicates.
- When you suspect a subject's driver's license or other ID is fraudulent, ask for another ID to compare personal information, photos and signatures.
- Ask the subject to sign his or her name to compare it to the signature on the ID. (If you're lucky, a fraudster may sign his or her true name!)
- Ask the subject for his or her birth date or, to make it more challenging for holders of false IDs, ask for the middle name, zodiac sign or high school graduation date to see if this information tracks.
- Ask a companion, separated from the subject, for the name and personal information of the ID holder to compare information.