

Guidelines for the Purchase and Use of Specially Printed Cheques

September 2017

Version 1.1

Specially Printed Cheques (i.e. Privately Printed Cheques)

These cheques are usually used by companies and businesses and can be designed to show the customer's name and can also include the customer logo or brand. The layout of these cheques is usually designed to suit accounting software packages to aid machine printing or computer infilling and may be printed in either cut-sheet or continuous form.

These guidelines advise the procedure for customers of Financial Institutions to follow for the purchase and use of Specially Printed Cheques as distinct from customer cheques supplied by Financial Institutions.

DISCLAIMER

This document contains general information only. It may be necessary or appropriate to ensure that measures are taken in addition to, or in substitution for, those appearing in this document having regard to the particular circumstances of the business concerned. To the extent permitted by applicable law, AusPayNet makes no warranties or representations about the suitability, reliability or completeness of the information contained in this document and disclaims all liability in connection with the information contained in this document, or use or reliance on this information, including, without limitation, liability for any loss or damage, however caused, resulting directly or indirectly from the use of or reliance on the information contained in this document. (Amended December 05)

Introduction

This document:

- Is intended for companies and service bureaus seeking an overview of these requirements
- Provides an overview of cheque purchase and printing requirements for specially printed cheques, and the processes involved
- Should be read in conjunction with “Design Specifications for Cheques and Deposit Forms”, which can be downloaded from the www.auspaynet.com.au website, or is available from AusPayNet on request.

If you want an overview of the requirements associated with MICR encoding your own cheques, refer to "[AusPayNet Guidelines for Companies Intending to Issue MICR Encoding Cheques](#)".

If you are interested in printing, handling and storage guidelines for paper used for Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) applications, refer to "[AusPayNet Guidelines for Paper Used for Cheques and other MICR Encoded Documents](#)".

What are specially printed cheques?

Specially printed cheques are commonly used by companies and are usually printed with the company's name and/or logo over a coloured background and other security features. The cheques must be pre-printed by commercial printers.

While you can choose the colour and design of the cheque to suit your company image and/or computing requirements these must be compliant with the design requirements detailed in the “Design Specifications for Cheques and Deposit Forms”

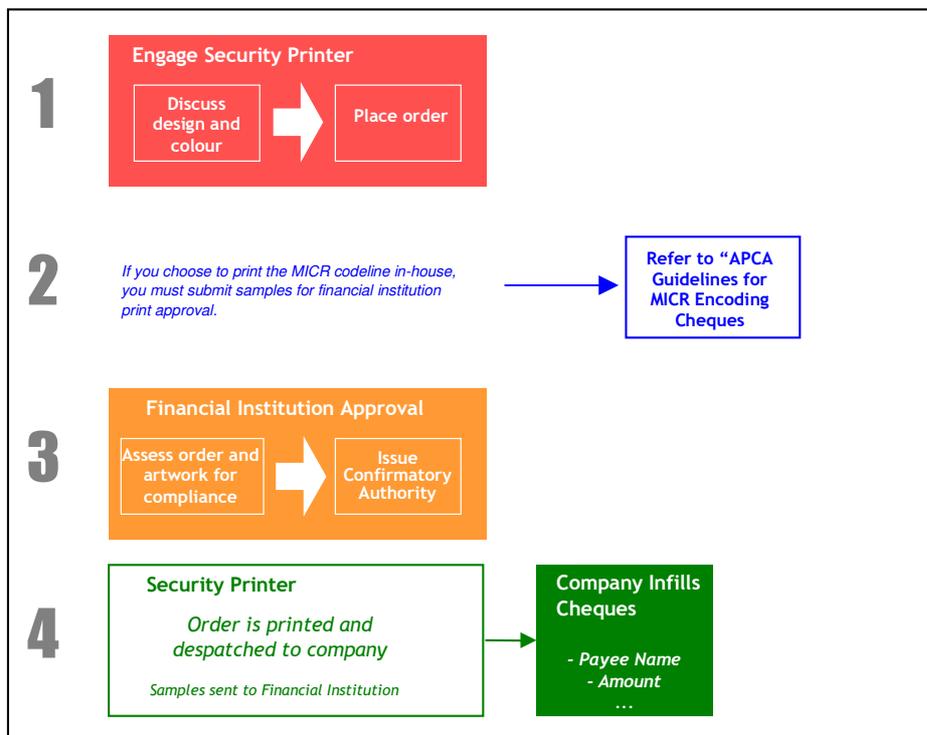
Security printers are best placed to advise you on design and security features that must be incorporated in the cheque stock.

Companies seeking to print the MICR code line in-house should be aware that a different set of rules (outlined in “AusPayNet Guidelines for MICR Encoding Cheques”) apply.

The key point to remember is that all specially printed cheque designs must be approved by your financial institution.

What are the processes involved?

The following diagram outlines the major steps involved in purchasing specially printed cheques.



The following sections provide more information about each of these steps.

1. Advice from Security Printer

Security printers who have experience with cheque printing can provide knowledgeable advice, and reduce the time required for obtaining the necessary approvals.

Discuss your design requirements with your chosen security printer who must be registered with APCA and understands cheque security features.

Your security printer can advise you on style and location of company details and logo as well as requirements and placement of the financial institution’s name, logo and branch domicile.

Cheques are to be printed on sensitised paper for MICR encoded documents. The ink used for the background printing must be solvent reactive or aqueous fugitive. Cheques are also required to include at least one security feature to deter counterfeiting. Your security printer will recommend the most appropriate features for you and advise on the text and location of the security warning band.

2 - MICR Encoding

Most companies purchase their specially printed cheques with the MICR encoding pre-printed.

If you choose to MICR encode your cheques in-house, you must submit samples for financial institution print approval. Refer “APCA Guidelines for MICR Encoding Cheques”.

3 - Get Financial Institution Approval

Your security printer will submit the order and artwork to your financial institution for approval to print.

Your financial institution will assess the details of the order and artwork for compliance and issue the required authority directly to your printer.

For detailed information about financial institution approval and authorisation processes, refer to Appendix E of “Design Specifications for Cheques and Deposit Forms” Publication 11.5.2.

4 - Printing and Infilling

Security Printing of Cheque Stock

Your security printer will print the required cheque stock in terms of the authority provided by your financial institution.

The cheque stock will be despatched as per your instructions and samples provided to your financial institution.

Note that different levels of security apply to base stock used for personal, business or financial institutions (bank) cheques, to guard against alteration and counterfeiting.

For information about cheque security features, refer to Section 6 and Appendix D of “Design Specifications for Cheques and Deposit Forms” (Publication 11.5.2). (Amended December 05)

You can have your commercial printer print your personalised details, such as company name and logo, on the cheque base stock before it is delivered to you.

The commercial printer can also encode (print) the MICR line for you.

Infill Cheques

The areas in a cheque where the amount and payee are to be added are known as “in-fills”. In-fill may be completed by hand or by machine printing. If in-filling is printed by laser printer (or similar technology), then the level of toner adhesion, which determines the permanence of the printing, must be acceptable to the customer’s Financial Institution. (Inserted January 07)

Care must be taken when infilling cheques, to deter fraudulent alteration and the likelihood of theft.

Some points to note are:

- Toners should fuse well with paper, making the characters difficult to remove
- When using window-faced envelopes for mailing cheques, ensure that the window face and the envelope itself does not reveal the contents
- If your design incorporates the use of boxes for the cheque amount, infill *all* of the boxes with “zero” to “nine”, or asterisks (“****”) where it’s inappropriate to insert words
- The Australia Post four state bar code is *not* compatible with the design and security requirements for cheques, and must *not* be printed on cheques. If you want to use the

bar code, you can print it on the accompanying remittance advice, cover letter, or envelope.

Security and Control Procedures

For your own protection, you should implement basic security measures associated with cheques, such as keeping blank cheques in safes or secure cabinets.

For more information about cheque design, refer to “Design Specifications for Cheques and Deposit Forms” (Publication 11.5.2). (Amended December 05)