

## Introducing the Check 21 Act

*Important information  
to guide you through  
the changes  
with Check 21.*



# check 21

## Welcome to banking in the 21st Century!



[www.1stconstitution.com](http://www.1stconstitution.com)

**Main Office** 2650 Route 130 & Dey Road  
Cranbury, NJ 08512  
1-609-655-4500

**Village Office** 74 N. Main St. & Westminster Pl.  
Cranbury, NJ 08512  
1-609-395-0605

**Montgomery Office** 947 State Road (Route 206)  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
1-609-683-9090

**Plainsboro Office** Plainsboro Plaza Shopping Center  
10 Schalks Crossing Rd.  
Plainsboro, NJ 08536  
1-609-750-0200

**Princeton Windrows Office** 2000 Windrow Dr.  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
1-609-987-2200

**Hamilton Office** 3659 Nottingham Way.  
Hamilton, NJ 08690  
1-609-631-0400

**Perth Amboy Office** 145 Fayette St.  
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861  
1-732-442-5880

**West Windsor Office** 44 Washington Road  
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550  
1-609-750-9797

**Jamesburg Office** 1 Harrison St.  
Jamesburg, NJ 08831  
1-732-605-0413

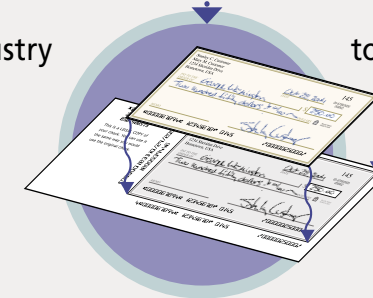
**Fort Lee (Loan Office)** 2050 Center Ave.  
Fort Lee, NJ 07024  
1-201-944-9300

*With Check 21,  
your checking account  
is changing  
for the better.*



Later this year, your monthly statement may include a new form of check called a "substitute check". It's part of an important change in the banking industry referred to as Check 21.

The Check 21 Act is a new law passed by Congress to improve the overall efficiency of our nation's payment system. It will allow checks to be processed faster than ever.



Substitute checks are **the legal equivalent** of the original check.

# Check 21

**SUBSTITUTE CHECKS ARE THE LEGAL EQUIVALENT OF THE ORIGINAL CHECK, FOR ALL PURPOSES.**

**CHECKS MAY CLEAR FASTER**

**NOW MORE THAN EVER DEPOSITS SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE CHECKS ARE WRITTEN TO AVOID OVERDRAFT CHARGES.**

**IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO REVIEW YOUR BANK STATEMENTS MONTHLY.**

## Q Will I continue to receive my checks back?

Yes. If you currently receive cancelled or image checks with your monthly statement you'll notice very little difference. It may include some substitute checks after October 28th.

## Q What is a substitute check?

Beginning October 28, 2004, you may receive a "substitute check" rather than an original cancelled or returned check. This is a legal copy of your check that can be used for proof of payment, the same way you would use the original check. It includes an exact image of the front and back of your check plus other identifying information.

*Substitute checks include the actual images of the front & back of your original check.*

## Q Why create a substitute check?

Check 21 allows checks to be truncated, which means that the original paper check may be removed from the payment system and destroyed. The original check is scanned and can be transmitted electronically. This electronic image can be replaced with a substitute check.

## Q How will Check 21 benefit me?

### ■ **Faster check clearing** –

Funds may make their way through the system quickly and reduce the time you'll wait for checks to clear.

### ■ **Improved check fraud protection** –

Faster settlement of checks means fraudulent activity can be detected sooner.

### ■ **More secure** –

Check 21 will help ensure the continuous flow of money in the event of natural and other disasters, like 9/11.

### ■ **Fewer delays** –

Checks transferred electronically may result in fewer transportation delays due to severe weather.

### ■ **Faster error resolution** –

Several consumer protections are built into the Check 21 Act to ensure the accuracy of your account.

## Q What if I need to prove I paid for something?

No problem. Substitute checks are treated the same as the original check under both state and federal law. If you ever need a copy of your cancelled check, just ask. We can promptly provide you with a copy.

## Q What if there is an error with a substitute check?

For your protection, we will resolve any issue or re-credit your account, usually within 10 working days of a claim involving a substitute check received by consumers. Should you receive a substitute check, more information will be provided explaining the claim process.

## Q Will Check 21 reduce float time?

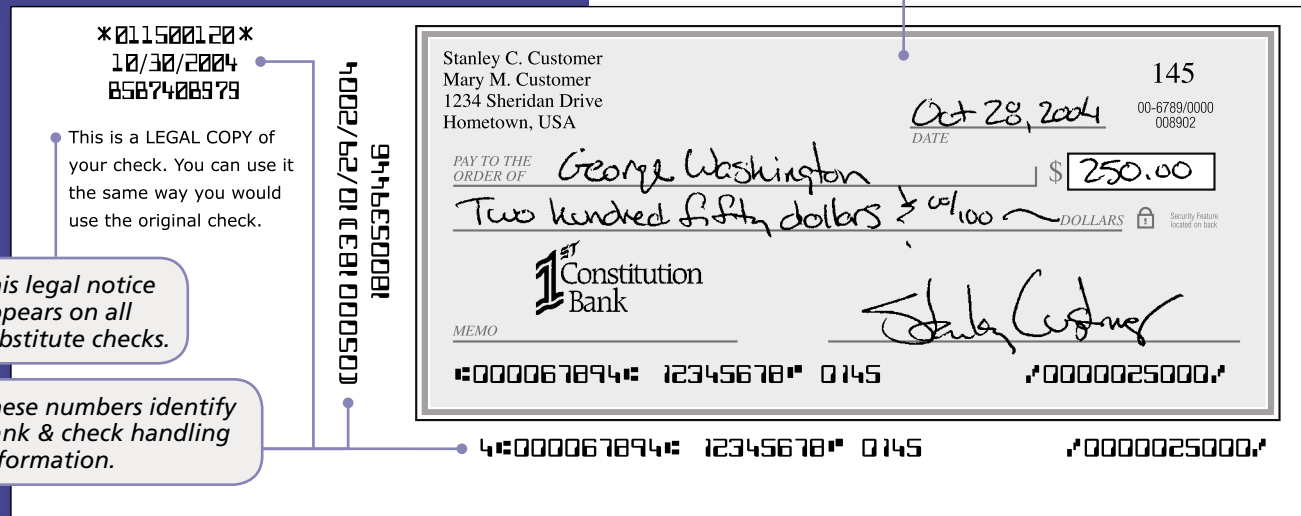
Yes. Funds may make their way through the system very quickly. Now more than ever, make sure you have funds available in your account before you write a check to avoid overdraft charges.

## Q Will there be a fee for substitute checks?

There are no additional fees anticipated as a result of Check 21 or substitute checks.

## Q Will I always receive a substitute check when my original is not available?

Not always. Some retailers and other businesses may choose to convert your check into an electronic ACH payment. This means that the original check is not returned to the bank. Instead, it will appear on your statement just like a debit card item.



*This legal notice appears on all substitute checks.*

*These numbers identify bank & check handling information.*

▲ *This is an example of a substitute check shown at 80% of its actual size.*

## Did you know...

*The first U.S. check was written in 1681 by a Boston businessman to mortgage his land.*

*Checks make up 15 percent of all consumer payments.*

*The average value per check is \$925.*

*Attempted check fraud at U.S. financial institutions totals more than \$10 billion annually.*

*More than 40 billion checks are processed each year, valued at \$39 trillion.*