

## Hot Checks

What do I do with a hot check that I received?

This is a very common question with merchants. If you receive a hot check closed account, or fictitious account, you must send the writer of the check a certified, return receipt requested letter making demand for the value of the check in cash or money order. If the letter is ignored or comes back, you must then take the certified letter you sent to either Judge Tony Polumbo or Judge Mike Parrott's office (it doesn't matter which J.P. court you use) along with the bad check. The judge's office will help you complete the necessary paperwork and give you a packet explaining the hot check law and procedures. After you file the hot check with the judge's office, the judge will issue a warrant for the arrest of the individual that issued it. The warrant is then sent over to my office and entered in our computer where Capt. George Knott assigns it and the warrant is tracked. At any time, we can tell you the status of the warrant and the warrant investigator assigned to it.



We receive anywhere from 2700 to 3000 arrest warrants a month, and have one of the highest arrest and clearance percentages in the county, usually around a 98% success rate. It is very important for everyone who gets a hot check to file it, as usually the same person who wrote you a hot check has written several other merchants in our precinct a hot check.

Timing is important and a great help in catching the check writer. Don't sit on the bad check for months; file it right away. It gives my warrant detectives a better chance of catching them. Always get good identification from the person writing you a check; a social security number does not help us much. Get their Texas Driver's license number, a work phone, home phone, etc.

We work hard at returning the merchant's money from worthless checks; and yearly hundreds of thousands of dollars are recovered and returned. The important thing to remember is to file them as soon as possible to increase your odds of us recovering the money or incarcerating the suspect.

Judge Polumbo in Baytown holds a yearly seminar on hot checks; and it is given to the public. If you would like to attend, call his office for future seminars.

If you need help in filing or information on a check you have filed, call my office at 281-427-4791 and ask for Captain George Knott. He will be happy to answer your questions or send a warrant detective out to help you in filing your hot check. We also have "Hot Check Warning" signs free to the public to place in your business warning hot check writers that you do prosecute the hot check writer.

Thank you,  
Constable Ken Jones