

Counterfeit U. S. Stamps

By John Walter

Our stamp club recently purchased the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Counterfeits 2023*. The 97-page catalogue covers postage issues from 1895 into 2022 (denominated and forever), semi-postal, airmail, postal cards, plus nonpostal and revenue counterfeits.

The catalogue is in the club library and can be signed out for two weeks. Contact **Dave Gehringer** to arrange the sign-out.

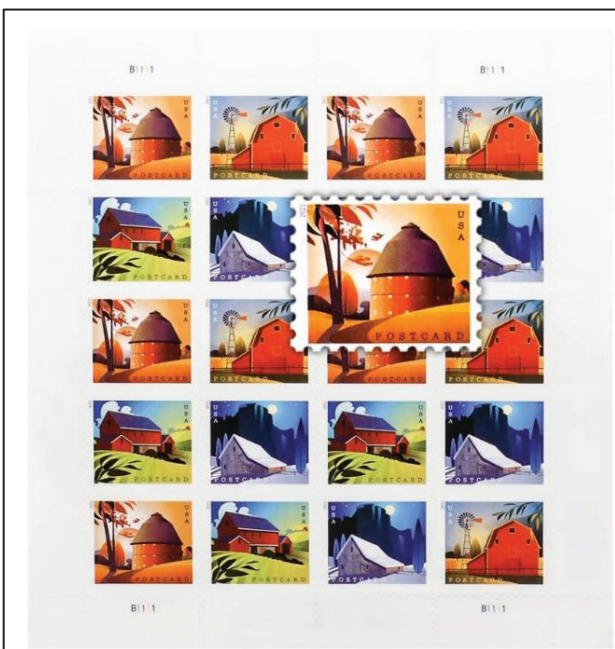
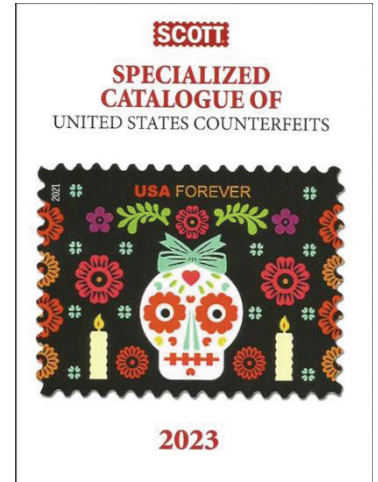
Quoting from the catalogue, "Counterfeiting of United States forever stamps increased exponentially in 2021 with most new issues being faked. Scott catalogue editors have noted within the Postage section of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* what stamp issues are known to exist as counterfeits and have placed that information in footnotes.

"Because of the large number of new forever counterfeits stamps (**more than 300 major numbers in the last year**), Scott editors have decided to only list denominated and earlier counterfeits in the 2023 *Scott U.S. Specialized*."

With the proliferation of these counterfeit stamps, mainly printed and produced in China, you may ask **"What is the USPS doing about the problem?"**

The USPS and Postal Inspectors are fighting back against counterfeit postage. With new changes to the Domestic Mail Manual, items mailed with counterfeit postage will be considered abandoned and are subject to being opened and disposed of at the Postal Service's discretion. Make sure your postage is legitimate. <https://www.uspis.gov/news/scam-article/counterfeit-stamps>

How easy is it to "purchase" counterfeit stamps? Pretty easy with a simple Internet search which I recently did. Most of the fake and counterfeit stamps are advertised in panes of 20 and rolls of 100 for prices from about \$25 to \$30. Most frequently counterfeited stamps are the flag issues. Below are recent images from the Internet advertising these "stamps."



Barns Postcard stamps - 100 (5 panes of 20) for \$25.99



Flag coil roll of 100 - \$29.99

From the U.S. Postal Inspectors Service:

WASHINGTON -- In recent years, a surge in the use of counterfeit postage has been found in the mail stream. The intentional use, or sale, of counterfeit postage is a crime because it seeks to obtain services without payment. This activity reflects an intentional effort to defraud the Postal Service of the funds it needs to provide services to the public.

In response to this problem, the Postal Service is filing a federal register notice about changes to the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®)*, that will allow the Postal Service to treat items found in the mail stream bearing counterfeit postage as abandoned. "As the most trusted government agency in the nation, we will continue to work together with other law enforcement and government agencies to protect the sanctity of the mail," said Chief Postal Inspector Gary Barksdale.

The Postal Service's proposed changes will provide the public notice of the handling of items bearing counterfeit postage. Under the revision to DMM 604.8.4, articles found in the mails with counterfeit postage will be considered abandoned and may be opened and disposed of at the Postal Service's discretion. The mission of the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service is to ensure the safety, security, and integrity of the U.S. Mail. The implementation of these new regulations will continue to support and enhance this mission.

Counterfeit postage is any marking or indicia that has been made, printed, or otherwise created without authorization from the Postal Service that is printed or applied, or otherwise affixed, on an article placed in the mails that indicates or represents that valid postage has been paid to mail the article. Consumers purchasing online items may be surprised to find out that the vendor mailed their goods using counterfeit postage. Under the new regulations, such items will be considered abandoned and disposed.

To report mail fraud or other postal crime: Call: 1-877-876-2455

Criminal Investigations Service Center
Attn: Mail Fraud
433 W. Harrison Street, Room 3255
Chicago, IL 60699-3255

Counterfeit postage is a widespread issue and a risk to Postal Service revenue. Regulations to discourage its use may impact innocent consumers who are unaware they did business with a vendor who mailed their purchase with counterfeit postage. These official USPS links provide information on:

[Avoid Using Counterfeit Postage](#)

[Package Seized by USPS for Counterfeit Postage](#)

[How does USPS Know the Postage is Counterfeit?](#)

[Tracking Not Displayed Due to Counterfeit Postage](#)

[Package Seized by USPIS for Counterfeit Postage](#)

[Can I Pay for Postage to Retrieve Intercepted or Seized Items?](#)

[Scams & Scheme Alerts](#)

[Why can USPS Treat Packages with Counterfeit Postage as Abandoned or Postal Property?](#)

Further references: <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Counterfeit-Postage>