

# check 21

*Important News for all Tri Counties Bank Customers and their Families*

## CHECK 21 Means:

- ▶ **Faster Check Clearing**
- ▶ **Decreased Fraud**
- ▶ **Less Paper**
- ▶ **Increased Security**



### What is Check 21?

American consumers and businesses write millions of checks each month. Today, most of these paper checks must be physically transported between financial institutions before they are cleared, a process that is expensive and time consuming.

**Check 21** (The Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act) is a new federal law which goes into effect on October 28, 2004. The law's goal is to streamline check processing, reduce paper, combat fraud, and improve the nation's financial system overall. It achieves this by creating a new negotiable instrument called a "substitute check." A substitute check will be the legal equivalent of your original check and will include all the information contained on the original check.

### How will Check 21 affect me?

Check 21 will not change the way you currently use or receive paper checks.

After October 28, 2004, if your imaged checks are returned with your monthly account statement, you may begin to notice a combination of original and substitute checks.

Check 21 helps prevent fraud by increasing the efficiency of the check clearing system. As a result, it also reduces the amount of time between the cashing and clearing of a check, known as "float." You should therefore make sure that sufficient funds are always available in your accounts to avoid being overdrawn.

### How do I get my check images?

Tri Counties Bank currently provides check images to customers who request to receive them with their monthly statements. There is a \$2.00 charge per month for receiving check images with your monthly statement.

FREE Check Imaging is available for customers who sign up for **Online Banking** at [tricountiesbank.com](http://tricountiesbank.com), or you can reduce the number of checks you write by signing up for **TCB BillPay**, a service of online banking. For more information or to enroll online, visit [tricountiesbank.com](http://tricountiesbank.com)

### How can I ensure good quality check images?

Since your original check may be replaced with a substitute check, you will want to make sure:

- ▶ **Checks are written legibly**
- ▶ **Avoid light colored inks and gel pens when writing checks**
- ▶ **Keep a black or blue ballpoint pen handy for filling out checks**

### What if I have questions?

For more information about Check 21, visit your Tri Counties Bank branch, call toll free **800-922-8742** or log on to [tricountiesbank.com](http://tricountiesbank.com)!