

Scalping Ticket Scams for Major League Baseball All Star Games

Vending: Ticket Sales in D.C.

DCMR Regulations: 24 DCMR 573

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How to Spot a Fake Ticket

More often than not, a fake physical ticket will be obvious to spot. They are usually printed on low quality paper or the printing will be smudged and faded. However, just because it doesn't obviously look like a fake ticket, doesn't mean it's authentic.

Because of this, it's always sensible to ask to see a physical receipt for the ticket. If they have genuinely bought it firsthand, then this shouldn't be a problem to provide. If they come up with an excuse to avoid having to do so, then another tactic you can use is checking the serial number, or barcode, with the original distributor before you make the purchase.

Not only will this ensure that the ticket is real, it will also help you avoid buying a lost or stolen ticket that has since been cancelled, as companies keep a record of those that have been reported missing.

Choosing the Right Vendor

Obviously, your first port of call is to purchase a ticket from an official seller. Sites, such as Ticketmaster or Live Nation, are always a trustworthy place to start. Although the classic ticket release rush is still a problem on these sites, some vendors are now releasing several batches over time to help ease this issue. Similarly, some have even begun to re-sell tickets from fans that can't make it in an attempt to reduce scalping, so buying these kinds of tickets is a great option to avoid falling victim to a scam.

If you do end up having to turn to Craigslist or eBay, then be sure to look for sellers who are well reviewed. If there are several comments from happy customers and a long history of successful transactions, then you're probably good to go. This option is always preferable to making the purchase on a random website that you've never heard of before.

Making Payments Online

Another unfortunate element of concert ticket scams is that often they're set up in order to collect your payment details and cause even more financial damage. Particularly with tickets sold from fake sites, there's the very real possibility of it being a well thought out data collection scheme.

Because of this, it's wise to be extremely stringent when making these sorts of payments online.

It's always best to opt for trusted payment options, such as PayPal, where you are ensured a significant level of buyer safety; if the transaction is made via direct debit, then it's much harder to get your stolen money back.

Alongside this, running a Virtual Private Network while browsing potential sellers and making payments is essential. This handy piece of software encrypts your data, so even if malicious hackers are piggybacking these fake websites, they won't be able to steal any of your details.

How to spot a fake ticket in hand tips:

Price: Everyone has heard it before: If it looks too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true. However, you would be surprised by the amount of people who could have avoided being scammed.

Scratch test: This is another fairly standard test, so we are mentioning it early in the guide. Scratch a small spot of the ticket with a penny [or your nail]. If the markings smudge, due to a cheap or low quality printing mechanism, than most likely the ticket is a counterfeit. This can be done quickly within a few seconds. An authentic ticket will be a higher quality and will not smudge or scratch too easily.

Physical attributes: A hard stock Ticketmaster ticket has very thin lamination which illuminates in the light, creating a slight glare. If the ticket does not have any laminate qualities and looks overly dull, than it is possible that the ticket is a phony. Scan the ticket closely by eye, and look for any obvious imperfections that would be have been caused by a sloppy, unprofessional or rushed print job. Blurry and asymmetric areas are always a red flag. Big name event tickets will be high quality complete with hi-resolution graphics and will be error-free. Check for any holograms, and it is helpful if you have some previous knowledge of the particular company's holograms beforehand. Also typos, incorrect information, grammatical or punctuation errors are overwhelming indicators the ticket is fraudulent.

Ticketmaster logo: Study the ticket closely. The word "Ticketmaster," may be repeated over and over again, making up the thin, light blue rectangle. This may be outlined by a large white rectangle containing the artists name or the specific event in the center of the ticket. This detail may vary slightly depending on the year made etc, however if there is no colored border around the artist's name or the event, or if the border is incorrectly filled in, than that should raise a red flag.

Bar Code: The bar code is another physical attribute that a lower quality fake may have reproduced incorrectly. Study the bar code for blurry, smeared, smudged lines. If the bar code looks fuzzy in any manner, that should raise a red flag.

Scheduling: Always know the event times and dates beforehand. It sounds like an obvious concept, but you would be surprised at how many fake tickets have incorrect times and dates,

that would be easily spotted if the buyer knew the correct information beforehand.

Seating chart: Floor and seating sections are usually alpha numerical. However, some counterfeiters will modify tickets to sell the illusion premium real estate. Seating arrangements on tickets generally read something like this: Floor 1, Row A. [Both numbers and letters]. However scammer may try to sell tickets that say Floor 1, Row 1. [All numbers] This is a way to produce more tickets with the illusion of front row seating.

City Search: Check the back of the ticket. Some of the latest Ticketmaster tickets feature City search data. If there is nothing on the back it is obviously counterfeit.

Ticketmaster Coloring: The base color for the majority of US Ticketmaster concert and event tickets is white. Other colors like orange, green or blue on it, may be part of the general design, but the base of the ticket will always be white.

Lamp light: If you hold an authentic Ticketmaster ticket up to a strong light source, the white areas of the ticket should now glow blue when reflected in the light source. A real ticket will also illuminate blue outside in the sunlight.

Buying Ticket Tips

- Only buy verified tickets from sites like Ticketmaster as opposed to third party sites.
- The venue is more likely to help you with any issues if it's a verified ticket.
- Buy tickets using a credit card so you can dispute the charges if needed.
- You have a better shot of scoring better seats if you purchase tickets at the box office when they first go on sale.
- You can also try to purchase tickets online while standing in line at the box office to improve your chances.
- Always check with the box office for any tickets still available the day of a concert or event, even if people say it's sold out.

Avoid purchasing from strangers, without exceptions.

But if you choose to purchase, at a minimum, take steps to protect yourself by conducting face to face purchase using the below suggestions.

1. Meet the seller inside of one of MPD's police station opposed to any general location. It's secure & CCTV recorded, and most thieves will shy away from the police. 1D Station is a perfect location because it's within walking distance of National's Park and somewhat convenient to Capitol One Arena.

2. Ask to see a valid state issued ID for the seller, record their name & address, and get a phone number. If the purchase is above board the seller won't have an issue with the request.
3. If you decide to meet the seller at the venue, conduct your purchase in the lobby of the venue which will be recorded and most likely be well staffed with security personnel & police, as previously stated thieves avoid the police.
4. For online purchases, use PayPal or a Credit Card (never your debit card), and avoid GreenDot cards, wire transfers, Western Union, MoneyGram, Instagram or any other exotic payment arrangements because these usually lead to the purchaser being scammed out of their money. And once the money is gone, it's gone.

What to do with a fake ticket:

- . Present it to the venue for authentication
- . Notify Law enforcement