

What is a cheque? How long does it take to cash one?

A cheque is piece of paper with your banking/account information. When signed, it authorizes the bank to withdraw money from your account.

If you cash (or deposit) a cheque from the government, the money will be available in your account immediately.

If it's not a government cheque, the first \$100 should be available to you immediately and the rest after 4 business days (5 if you are using an ATM to deposit the cheque; remember weekends are not business days). Banks call this 'a hold'. They want to make sure that whoever wrote the cheque has enough money in their account to cover it.

If you receive cheques regularly and you've been a customer with your bank for a while, ask the bank if they can lift the hold.

Cash your cheques as soon as you receive them - it's your money starting from the date written on the cheque. After 6 months cheques get 'stale' - they can still be cashed but need to be certified.