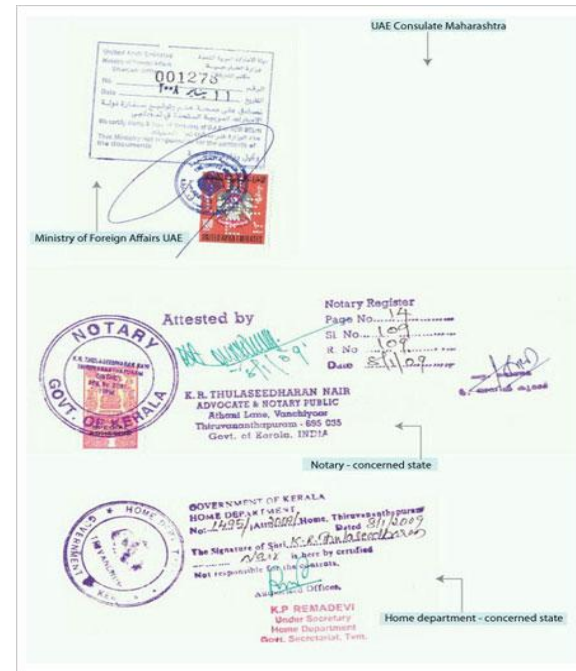


Importance of seals and stamps

- ▶ To indicate the issuing authority.
- ▶ To authenticate documents.
- ▶ To certify copies.
- ▶ To prevent pilferage.

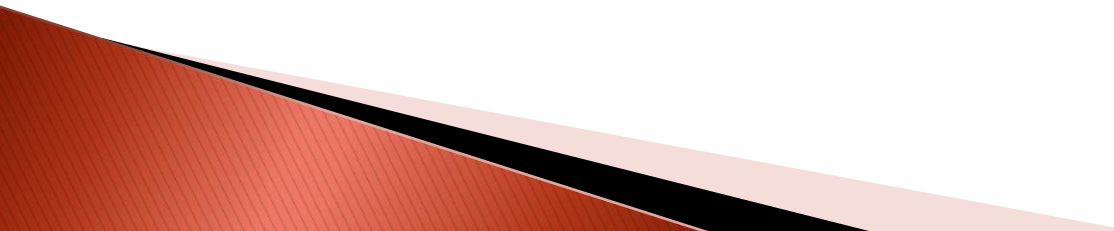


Nature of seals and stamps

- Seals and stamps are usually made from rubber and metals, though they can be made from, wood, plastic, stone or any other material.
- Metal seals and stamps were very common in olden days. They were made from brass, copper, zinc or lead.



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- ▶ The letters and designs were engraved (cut out) on a smooth surface. When the inked seals were impressed on the documents, inkless design or the writings were obtained against the inked background.
 - ▶ Seals with raised letterings and designs were also common. They give inked imprints of writings and designs.
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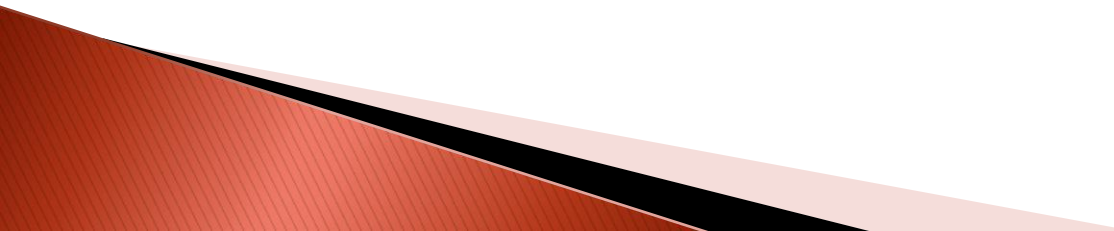


Seal bearing engraved design

Seal bearing raised design

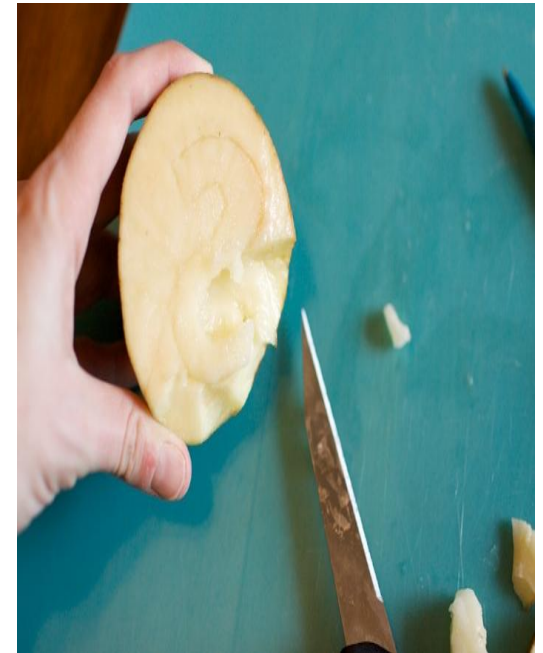


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- ▶ Metal seals are becoming more or less obsolete except for sealing envelopes and packets with sealing wax. They are still on vogue in some courts.
 - ▶ Use of rubber seals is on increase, as they cost less and can be easily manufactured. They are equally efficient and forgery prone.
- 

Forged seals

- ▶ Both metal and rubber seals can be forged frequently. They are easily forged by the following methods:
 1. The simplest and the crudest method to forge a rubber seal is to cut a potato into two and impress one of the model seal impression. The potato pick up the mark and would duplicate the same when impressed on the document.

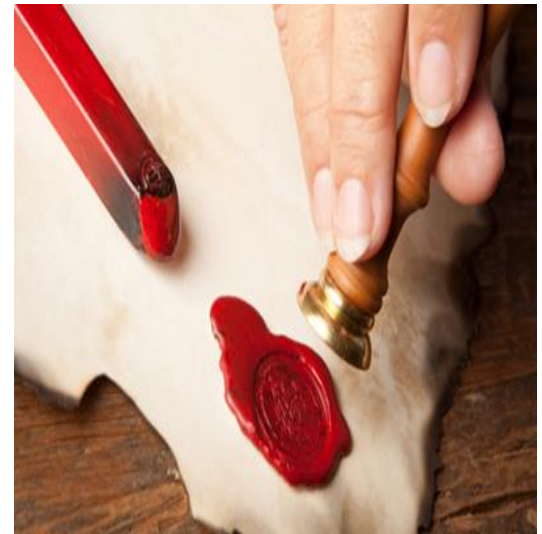


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2. The design on the potato can also be produced by cutting it off with the knife.
 3. Some forgers paint the seal impressions with ink using brush. The effort is unsatisfactory.
 4. Some employ engravers to produce duplicate seals.
 5. Forgers sometimes open sealing wax sealed envelopes, packets fraudulently and then reseal them.
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Methods for opening the wax sealed envelopes

- A. If the thick layer of sealing wax has been used for sealing, a hot wire is passed through the material. The seal as a whole is lifted. Then the contents are either read or removed. The same is then resealed with same seal either by heating the sealing wax or with appropriate adhesive.



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- B. If sealing wax is poor quality, the envelope paper is folded at one edge of the seal to peel it off. After pilferage, the seal is reaffixed at the same place.
- C. A mould of Plaster of Paris is prepared from the available impression of the seal which is to be broken open. The contents are pilfered and the parcel is resealed with prepared POP seal, using fresh sealing wax.



Examination of metallic seals

1. The diameter of the ring of the questioned and specimen seal impressions should be compared.
2. In case of two rings, the diameter of both inner and outer ring should be measured.
3. To obtain the accurate diameter it is usually suggested to record 3 readings and the final result can be calculated by taking the mean of the 3 readings.



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4. The size and design of the letters or symbols should be compared.
 5. Check the layer of sealing wax used in the seal, with a magnifying glass. Lifted and reattached seals will have two layers.
 6. Check for Plaster of Paris particles in the seal impression using a magnifying lens. Their presence indicates resealing
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Contd...

7. Check the sealing wax under UV rays. Different sealing wax will give different fluorescence.
8. Check for additional adhesives, which have been used for reaffixing of a lifted seal on sealing wax, under UV light. Its presence indicates pilfering.

Examination of rubber seal

1. Check the inking of the impressions.
Poor inking may appear due to fraudulent duplication.
2. Look out for extraneous particles from a duplicating device using magnifying lens and UV light.



Contd...

3. Compare the overall dimensions of the questioned seal with the genuine seal. Variation in the dimensions reveal forgery.
 4. Compare inter-letter distances and spatial dispositions. Variations in genuine and questioned seals reveal forgery.
 5. Compare the important features like broken or twisted lines, additional dots, missing strokes, misspellings, shapes and sizes of letters.
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