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Mary S. Schaeffer  
Editorial Director

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Check Request Form Diagnostic

Many organizations use check request forms to handle those miscellaneous payment needs that just don't fall into the normal scope of invoice handling. Often the requirements for a check request are not clearly defined. Typically they're used to handle one-time payments or those ongoing required ones, often called recurring payments. Some companies even use them to rush a payment through when the original invoice is thought to be, lost others do when there is no invoice. Sometimes they are employed for one-time vendors and, at other times— well, you get the picture.

Are your check request forms causing problems too? Use this diagnostic to find out.

**The Diagnostic**

1) Do you typically allow multiple payee payments on one payment request form?  Yes  No

**Potential Issue:** Tracking for duplicate payment purposes, GL coding, and possible fraud becomes difficult if not impossible.

2) Do you allow internal company payment requests to be submitted without a specific supplier invoice reference number?  Yes  No

**Potential Issue:** Duplicate payment checking routines are likely not to work.

3) Do you allow your processors to use their own unique descriptions or abbreviations when coding these payments?  Yes  No

**Potential Issue:** Matching becomes difficult if not impossible.

4) Do you use the check or payment request date as the invoice number for these items if there is no invoice number related to the request?  Yes  No

**Potential Issue:** Numerous payments to different vendors will show up any time you try to research an invoice number. Additionally, if

**Obliterate  
Duplicate  
Payments**

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the vendor bills you frequently, such as an overnight mail carrier, you could end up with several payments to the same vendor with the same invoice number.

- 5) If you do use the check date as the invoice number, a practice that is already setting you up for trouble, (oops, I'm giving the answers away), does your process refuse to accept slashes, periods, hyphens, or any other sort of mark that is not a numeric? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Potential Issue:** Online tracking becomes virtually impossible.

### The Correct Answers

You probably realize that answering affirmatively to any of these issues indicates you could have a problem and your process should be tightened up.

Regular readers of *Accounts Payable Now & Tomorrow* know that they should try to limit the use of check request forms fraught as they are with opportunities for duplicate payments. While we realize it's probably not possible to get away from them completely, we do recommend that the number of check request forms used be held to an absolute minimum. Of course, we say the same about rush checks which are often made using check request forms.

Now some readers may think we're making a big deal out of a small matter. But we talked about this with specialist Bob Lovallo of Pin-Point and he does not agree: he helped identify the issues in this diagnostic. He says spending sufficient time and effort in trying to prevent duplicate payments will result in less time and effort trying to detect and recover them later on. **AP N&T**

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Want to know when we update this Duplicate Payment Resource Center with additional diagnostics and articles? Sign Up for Our e-Zine, [e-AP News](http://ap-now.com/e-zinesignup.html). It is a weekly electronic newsletter (e-zine) containing information for professionals interested in payment issues. Delivered by e-mail it is offered free of charge to anyone interested in payment issues. Go to <http://ap-now.com/e-zinesignup.html> to sign up.

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***The newsletter for  
professionals concerned  
about payment issues***



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