

Preservation and Care of Philatelic Materials

Subsidiary Page 24 Watermark Detectors

Clarity is the recommended fluid and was developed at the request of the APS. It has no solvency to affect adhesives, inks, dyes or taggants and leaves no residue on stamps. Benzene and benzine are two common organic solvents used by collectors to help identify watermarks. This is an opportunity to warn collectors never to use Benzene. It is extremely toxic. It penetrates the skin and its toxic fumes are injurious when inhaled. Even in small quantities it is dangerous, causing cancer. Furthermore, it is flammable. Philatelists have no need to use it.

Benzine, a petroleum derivative, is also flammable. While care must be taken not to inhale the fumes, it is not too hazardous. All the same, collectors would be well advised to avoid its use, particularly since much better methods of watermark detection are available today. Another option, Heptane, is flammable and toxic. A third organic solvent used by philatelists is carbon tetrachloride. About the only good thing that can be said about this solvent is that it is non-flammable. It is a carcinogen that is absorbed through the skin and by inhalation. It will cause severe liver damage to the user. Avoid its use.

There are a number of electronic watermark detectors on the market but none work as well as Clarity. The Morley-Bright *Roll-A-Tector* will show the watermark of a stamp on cover, without having to remove the stamp. No fluids, batteries, or chemicals are needed.