



HALLMARKING IN THE UK

Introduction

The UK has had laws relating to the compulsory, independent hallmarking of Gold and Silver products for over 700 years. These laws have an impact on anyone selling products into or within the UK. The following is intended as an overview of the situation and the implications for the supplier. The basic starting point is that products made from Gold, Silver, Platinum and Palladium, have to be independently hallmarked before being placed on the market and described as such. Palladium hallmarking became compulsory on January 1st 2010.

There may also be VAT and Duty implications for exporters to the UK; information on these points can be obtained from H M Customs and Excise, their contact details are listed at the end of the document.

Implications for Importers into the UK and Exporters to the UK

Before your goods can be offered for sale they have to have been tested and hallmarked at a UK Assay Office. Unless they are exempt because:

- a) **The product weighs less than**
 - 1.00 gram for Gold
 - 7.78 grams for Silver
 - 0.5 grams for Platinum
 - 1.00 gram for Palladium

- b) **The product has already been tested and hallmarked** in a country which is a signatory to the International Convention on Hallmarking and it bears the Convention "Common Control Mark".

The following countries are signatories to the convention: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

Testing & Hallmarking

UK Hallmarks consist of a minimum of three symbols.

Sponsor's mark	
Fineness mark	
Assay Office mark	

The fineness mark indicates that the article has been tested and is of at least the fineness stated.

X-ray Fluorescence instruments are used to analyze the precious metal content of articles submitted for hallmarking. Some products are plated to give an even or uniform surface finish. In order to analyze the material it may be necessary to remove some of the plating to expose the surfaces to be tested.

No negative tolerances are allowed in the UK, and all parts of the article must be of the same fineness.

The following fineness's are permitted in the UK:

Gold:	999, 990, 916, 750, 585, 375
Silver:	999, 958, 925, 800
Platinum:	999, 950, 900, 850
Palladium:	999, 950, 500

How Do I Get My Goods Hallmarked?

Through the importer

Many of the importers and purchasers of goods are registered with an Assay Office and import goods unhallmarked and then get them hallmarked themselves before they sell them. In many instances exporters to the UK set up a UK sales office or have a UK agent who effectively is the importer of the product, and they often deal with hallmarking issues on behalf of the exporter.

By the exporter

Some companies that export to the UK send goods to be hallmarked before supplying them to their customer. To do this they need to **register** a sponsor's mark at an Assay Office. This is a simple administrative process. A sponsor mark is a symbol to provide traceability back to the company supplying the goods. The mark consists of the initial letters of the company surrounded by a shield unique to that particular manufacturer, importer or retailer. Several organizations may have the same initials but each will have a distinctive surround.

The sponsor's mark can be struck on your goods either prior to hallmarking either by the manufacturer or by the Assay Office.

Once you are registered your goods can be sent to the Assay Office for testing and marking. On completion the goods can be returned to a UK address. If goods need to be returned to an overseas address, the customer will be required to make the necessary carriage arrangements.

A fee is charged for registration and for making a sponsor's punch. In addition, a charge is made for each item hallmarked.

Registration	£60.00 plus vat - Registrations are valid for 10 years.
Sponsor's punches	from £70 plus VAT - for up to two initials.

For a price list please visit www.theassayoffice.co.uk

Contacts:

H M Customs and Excise
www.hmce.gov.uk

Assay Office Birmingham
1 Moreton Street
Birmingham B1 3AX

Tel: 0845 010 9000
International calls
+44 208 929 0152

Tel: 0121 236 6951