

Hallmarking of Palladium

Guidance Notes

The Purpose of these Guidance Notes

The purpose of these notes is to give practical guidance in relation to the 2009 amendments to the 1973 Hallmarking Act, specifically the introduction of Palladium as a hallmarking metal. No reliance must be placed on the document for a legal interpretation. The UK Assay Offices are happy to answer questions arising from these Guidance Notes and on any articles or other issues not specifically mentioned.

Why is Palladium being added to the Hallmarking Act?

Palladium is a white precious metal, which, in recent years has grown in popularity amongst jewellery manufacturers, jewellery retailers and jewellery consumers. Palladium has a monetary value, by weight, of somewhere between that of 9ct and 14ct gold.

Like Gold, Platinum and Silver, Palladium is rarely used in its purest form but instead it is normally alloyed with lesser metals in order to achieve a desired strength and durability etc.

It is not possible to detect by sight or by touch the Palladium content of an item. An independent hallmark confirming the authenticity and fineness of the Palladium alloy will protect the trade and the consumer. It will also increase the appeal and potentially the perceived value of Palladium articles.

When will Palladium Hallmarks be available?

Hallmarking of Palladium was introduced on a voluntary basis from 22nd July 2009. The 4 UK Assay Offices will be able to apply the new legally recognised Palladium Hallmark on articles from this date.

From the 1st January 2010 the hallmarking of Palladium will become compulsory.

What should I do if I have existing stock that is not hallmarked?

Retailers can continue to sell Palladium jewellery without a hallmark up until the 1st January 2010.

As of the 1st January 2010 it will be a legal requirement to hallmark all articles consisting of Palladium (subject to certain exemptions) if they are to be described as being partly or wholly made of Palladium.

Brooch in Palladium by Stephen Webster.

Information from The Assay Offices of Great Britain



London



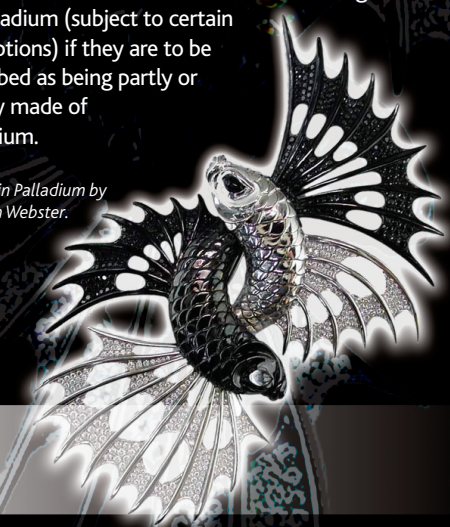
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What needs to be hallmarked?

The main offence under the UK Hallmarking Act 1973 (amended 2009) is based on description. As of the 1st January 2010 it will become an offence for any person in the course of trade or business to:

- Describe an un-hallmarked article as being wholly or partly made of Palladium.
- Supply or offer to supply un-hallmarked articles to which such a description is applied.




Main Exemptions:

Palladium articles below 1 gram in weight will remain exempt from hallmarking. The exemption weight is based on the weight of the precious metal content only, excluding, for example, weight of diamonds, stones etc., except in the case of articles consisting of precious metal and base metal in which case the exemption weight is based on the total metal weight:

- Any article made before 1950 may now be described and sold as Palladium without a hallmark, if the seller can prove that it is of minimum fineness and was manufactured before 1950.
- A full list of exemptions can be obtained from the Assay Offices.

What are the Palladium standards for hallmarking?

The Palladium fineness for UK hallmarking (expressed in parts per thousand by weight) along with the standard of solder permitted to be used, for each individual fineness, is listed below.

Fineness	Permitted solder
	Gold, Silver, Platinum or Palladium (or any combination) with a minimum fineness of 500ppt.
 	Gold, Silver, Platinum or Palladium (or any combination thereof) with a minimum fineness of 700ppt.

What will the Palladium Hallmark look like?

The Palladium Hallmark will be made up of three compulsory symbols and one voluntary symbol:

1. The Sponsor's or Maker's Mark - compulsory



This indicates the maker or sponsor of the article. In the UK this mark consists of one or more letter within a shield. No two marks are the same.

2. Assay Office Mark - compulsory



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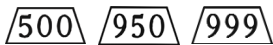
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Indicates the particular Assay Office at which the article was tested and marked. There are currently four Assay Offices in the UK - London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Edinburgh.

3. Fineness (purity) Mark - compulsory



Indicates the Palladium content of the article and that it is not less than the fineness of the article indicated. The fineness is indicated by a millesimal number (parts per thousand) and the metal type is indicated by the shape of the surround.

4. Pictorial symbol- voluntary



In keeping with hallmarking tradition customers can opt to include a pictorial symbol alongside three compulsory symbols. The pictorial symbol for Palladium will be Pallas Athene, the Greek the Goddess of War, Wisdom and Crafts, after whom Palladium was named. The mark has been designed especially for use as part of the new palladium hallmark.

5. Date Letter - Voluntary



An optional date letter may be applied. The letter changes every January 1st. The letter for 2009 is K.