



HALLMARKING

The UK's oldest form of CONSUMER PROTECTION

In an age where consumer protection and rights are key concerns for most present-day manufacturers, it is fascinating to note that the hallmark is one of the oldest forms of consumer protection that exists, with a history that dates back as far as 1300.

The original aim of hallmarking was enlightened - to protect the public against fraud and the trader against unfair competition, and those aims hold good today.

Since 1773, Sheffield Assay Office has upheld the highest standards in the assay and marking of precious metal and today continues to provide objectivity and integrity in support of the work of the TSO's.

We are committed to developing a partnership with Trading Standards Offices and provide:

- Gold, silver and platinum analysis
- Identification of forged marks
- Advice, training and support for TSO's
- Joint enforcement exercises with TSO's
- Witness statements

The Hallmarking Act 1973

The Hallmarking Act of 1973 states that it is illegal to describe anything as being GOLD, SILVER or PLATINUM unless it is hallmarked or exempt.

The key checks are as follows:

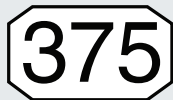
WHO?

Is there a Sponsor's or Makers Mark?



WHAT?

Is the metal and fineness indicated?



WHERE?

Is there an Assay Office Mark??



SHEFFIELD ASSAY OFFICE,
Guardians' Hall, Beulah Road, Hillsborough,
Sheffield S6 2AN



Some items may also feature a date mark, but this has been optional since 1998.

DEALER'S NOTICE

The symbols give the following information:

- who made the article
- what is its guaranteed standard of fineness
- the Assay Office at which the article was tested and marked
- the year in which the article was tested and marked (optional mark)

The law applies to everything SOLD in the UK, regardless of where it may have been manufactured. Exemptions are items which fall beneath the specified weight thresholds which are 1 gram for gold, 7.78 grams for silver and 0.5 grams for platinum; full details of exemptions are featured on our website www.assayoffice.co.uk/Services/Hallmarking.asp and there is a comprehensive fact sheet available to download.

The Hallmarking Act also states that it is illegal to sell items of precious metal jewellery and silverware to the public without displaying the British Hallmarking Council's DEALER'S NOTICE. These are available to purchase from Sheffield Assay Office (see above).

GET THE FACTS!
VISIT www.assayoffice.co.uk

For further information, to arrange officer training or to discuss the possibility of joint enforcement exercises please telephone:
+44 (0)114 231 2121

info@assayoffice.co.uk





ANALYTICAL SERVICES

for Trading Standards

Sheffield Assay Office works closely with Trading Standards in providing a comprehensive range of analytical services designed to ensure integrity of product, consumer safety and retailer protection.

Nickel Testing

In order to protect the public an EC Directive became law in the UK from 20th July 2001, and has since been revised.

Under the EC Nickel Directive 2004/96/EC; SI 2005 No. 2001 any post assembly in contact with body piercings shall not emit nickel at a rate greater than 0.2 microgrammes/cm²/week. The same Directive requires that any component in direct and prolonged contact with unbroken skin shall not emit nickel at a rate greater than 0.5 microgrammes/cm²/week. Nickel release is the key issue.

Sheffield Analytical Services (AS) undertakes chemical analyses and testing of items for nickel release under the EC Directive.

- UKAS accredited
- Confidential and friendly service
- Rapid and accurate results

The Tests

Release reference method - the highest standard of testing. Used to measure release by component part; EN12472 + EN1811

Release QC test - this segregates complete articles into releasing and non releasing; EN12472 + EN1811

Short Test including EN12472 - this test is not recognised under the Directive but may be used in conjunction with accepted methods of testing to support Due Diligence

Spectacles testing to EN12472-2005 including EN1811



DMG Screening

(swab) test - low cost and indicative only; taken from PDCR 12471.

Other Metals

Lead - SAO is approved by the US CPSC for the testing of surface coatings (90ppm/0.009%) and substrates (300ppm/0.03% from August 09 and 100ppm/0.01% from August 11) for Lead content. We also test for migration under EN71 pt3.



Cadmium - We currently test to the Toy Testing regs. EN71 Pt3 where Cadmium must be less than 75ppm released from each component and each colour - components tested separately.

Full details of all the tests available are on our website www.assayoffice.co.uk, together with fact sheets to download.

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