

HALLMARKING:

All of our hallmarking is done by The Birmingham Assay Office.

Gold carat is measured as parts per 24 with 24 carat being pure gold. eg.
18 carat is 18 parts gold per 24. The hallmark shows this proportion as parts per 1000. eg.
18 carat gold is 750 parts per 1000.

The legal standards for gold in the UK are:

375 = 9 carat
585 = 14 carat
750 = 18 carat
916 = 22 carat

950 = All of our platinum is 950

Why Hallmark?

Precious metals used in jewellery and giftware manufacture are always used as an alloy. The precious metal must be mixed with other elements to give it the necessary properties such as flexibility to produce a desirable and durable article.

Even the most experienced jeweller or chemist cannot tell how much precious metal there is in an alloy, just by looking at it, nor whether a thick plating of gold is covering a base metal interior. Due to the high price of precious metals, this offers a huge opportunity for fraud and there has therefore always been a need to protect the public, and honest suppliers, from those who are tempted to cheat them.

Therefore all items being sold as gold, silver or platinum in the UK must be hallmarked to confirm that they meet the legal standard. This cannot be done by the manufacturer or importer; goods must be submitted to one of the four UK Assay Offices, or an Assay Office belonging to the International Convention.

The only items which are exempt are those which are under the legal weight threshold, 1 gram for gold, 0.5 grams for platinum and 7.78 grams for silver.

When an item is received at an Assay office it goes through three processes:

- * SAMPLING to remove a tiny piece of the precious metal for testing
- * ASSAYING to determine whether the precious metal content of the alloy meets the required standard
- * HALLMARKING to apply the appropriate mark to the article