



GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF THE WORDS GOLD, PLATINUM, PALLADIUM AND SILVER WHEN USED TO DESCRIBE THE COLOUR OF BASE METAL JEWELLERY AND WATCHES.

PREAMBLE

The Assay Offices and the British Hallmarking Council have received a number of consumer and trade enquiries concerning the legitimacy of descriptions being used at point of sale to describe the colour of base metal jewellery and watches.

This guidance refers to instances when the words "gold", "platinum", "palladium" or "silver" are used as adjective to describe the colour of a product and are not intended to imply that the product is wholly or partly made of gold, platinum, palladium or silver.

Schedule 1 of UK Hallmarking Act restricts the use of the words "gold", "silver", "platinum" and "palladium". These descriptions can only be applied to articles wholly or partly made of the respective precious metals. If an article is not wholly or partly made of the respective precious metal S1 of the Act permits the use of the words "gold", "platinum", "palladium" and "silver", provided it is followed by the word 'plated' and the precious-metal plating claimed is factually accurate.

If an article contains no precious metal or is below minimum fineness and the words gold, platinum, palladium or silver are used purely as an adjective to describe colour, then the description must make this clear. The description must not directly or indirectly mislead the consumer into believing the article is wholly or partly made of precious metal.

Examples of misleading descriptions encountered include: "Gold watch", "silver chain", "gold ring" where the adjective was accurate only in relation to colour as the precious-metal content was below the required minimum fineness.

The Technical Committee recommend the British Hallmarking Council issue guidance covering the permitted descriptions for base-metal articles when precious metal is used as an adjective to describe base-metal colour.

GUIDANCE

The guidance should cover the following:

Description

- 1.1 If an article contains no precious metal or is below minimum fineness and the words gold, platinum, palladium or silver are used as an adjective to describe colour then the description must make this clear.
- 1.2 By way of an example, if a base-metal watch, containing no gold, is described as "a gold watch" in order to describe its colour, this would constitute an offence under schedule 1 of the Hallmarking Act.
- 1.3 Suggested examples of how the watch should be described in a way that would not mislead the consumer would be "yellow metal watch" or "gold coloured watch". These descriptions are offered by way of examples only and are not intended as an exhaustive list.

**Technical Committee
March 2015**

Approved by the British Hallmarking Council on 13 April 2015