

JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE ASSAY OFFICES  
OF GREAT BRITAIN

PLATING OF PRECIOUS METAL ARTICLES WITH BASE METAL

1. A practice appears to have grown up whereby some manufacturers are adding a coating of nickel (a base metal) to gold or silver articles after hallmarking.
2. This practice is an "improper alteration" under the Hallmarking Act 1973, and the Assay Offices draw the attention of manufacturers and dealers to the following:
  - (i) It is an offence under the Act to add a coating of nickel or other base metal to a gold, silver or platinum article after it has been hallmarked. Section 5 (1).
  - (ii) It is an offence under the Act for a dealer to supply a gold, silver or platinum article which has been coated with base metal after hall-marking. Sections 1 (1), 2 (4) and 7 (6).
  - (iii) Articles which are exempt from hallmarking by virtue of their weight (for example silver articles under 7.78 grams) cease to be exempt if they are coated with base metal. It is accordingly an offence to apply a description indicating that such articles are wholly or partly made of gold, silver or platinum if they are coated with base metal. Schedule 1, Part II, paragraph 14 B.
3. If a precious metal article which has been plated with base metal is submitted for hallmarking it will be rejected by the Assay Office. Schedule 5, paragraph 2.
4. The coating of a precious metal article with rhodium of a thickness not greater than 2 micrometres is permitted. Section 5 (5).

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