

JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE ASSAY OFFICES OF GREAT BRITAIN

TREATMENT OF ARTICLES NOT MEETING DECLARED STANDARDS

The Hallmarking Act 1973 requires that precious metal articles be hallmarked as complying with one of the legal standards. It does not provide for the withdrawal of an article from an Assay Office which fails to meet the declared standard of fineness but which could be marked at a lower standard.

The Assay Offices have in certain instances in the past permitted the return unhallmarked of gold articles which failed to meet one of the standards above 375 (9 carat). The abuse of this concession to the strict terms of the Act has caused its withdrawal with effect from 1st January, 1985.

From that date all articles submitted as:

- (a) 916 (22 carat) will be marked 750 if any part fails to meet the 916 standard or, if, in the opinion of the Assay Office, the use of 750 standard solder is excessive, and provided that no part of the article is below this lower standard.
- (b) 750 (18 carat) will be marked 585 if any part fails to meet the 750 standard or, if the standard of solder used is appropriate to the 585 standard, and provided that no part of the article is below this lower standard.
- (c) 585 (14 carat) will be marked 375 if any part fails to meet the 585 standard or, if the standard of solder used is appropriate to the 375 standard, and provided that no part of the article is below this lower standard.

These regulations will apply to all gold articles submitted whether of British or imported manufacture. The concession permitting the return abroad of imported articles that fail to meet the 375 (9 carat) standard will continue for the time being. However, importers should be aware that the failure of some of their number to provide the documentary proof that this has occurred is causing the British Hallmarking Council to reconsider the matter.

If an Assay Office is of the opinion that failure to meet the declared standard arises from the unwitting use of substandard findings it may permit their substitution in the United Kingdom, by the sponsor or his agent by findings of the standard of fineness of the bulk of the article. The article will then qualify for marking at the declared standard.

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