



**GUIDE TO THE *PRECIOUS METALS*
MARKING ACT AND REGULATIONS**



The image features a minimalist, abstract design. The background is split into two main sections: a light gray upper section and a dark gray lower section, separated by a curved white line. On the right side, a white circular element with a metallic ring detail is positioned, overlapping both the light and dark gray areas. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

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This guide provides an outline to the quality and marking requirements of precious metals articles subject to the *Precious Metals Marking Act* and the *Precious Metals Marking Regulations* (hereafter called the Act and Regulations). This document should be read in conjunction with the Act and Regulations which will govern.

1.1 Objectives of the Legislation

The Act and Regulations seek:

- to ensure that the information provided to consumers on the quality of a precious metal article is not misleading or deceptive; and
- to provide for the uniform description and quality marking of precious metal articles, including jewellery, hollow ware, watches, spectacle frames, flatware, etc. in the Canadian marketplace thereby assisting consumers with their purchasing decisions.

1.2 Prohibitions

Section 10 of the Act

The Act prohibits:

- a dealer from applying a mark to a plated article guaranteeing the durability or wear of the precious metal plating for a period of time.
- a dealer from selling, importing into Canada or advertising any precious metal article in a manner which is false or misleading as to the precious metal content.

1.3 Dealer Responsibility

A dealer must ensure that:

- (a) any representation as to the quality of the article is factual;
- (b) when an article is quality marked, a registered Canadian trade-mark (or a trade-mark for which an application has been made) must also be applied. The dealer should be able to provide a proof that his trade-mark is registered if requested by an inspector.
- (c) any quality mark applied to an article is as prescribed by the Regulations; and
- (d) where applicable, all mandatory marks are applied.

Apply

In relation to a mark, includes any application or attachment thereof to, or any use thereof on, in connection with or in relation to

- (a) an article,
- (b) anything attached to an article,
- (c) anything to which an article is attached,
- (d) anything in or on which an article is, or
- (e) anything so used or placed as to lead to a reasonable belief that the mark thereon is meant to be taken as a mark on an article;

Article

Means any article of merchandise, and includes any portion of any article of merchandise, whether a distinct part thereof or not, other than an article or a part thereof designated by the Regulations;

Dealer

Means a person who is a manufacturer or an importer of any article to which this Act applies and any person who traffics by wholesale or retail in any such article and includes any director, manager, officer or agent of that person;

Mark

Includes any mark, sign, device, imprint, stamp, brand, label, ticket, letter, word or figure;

Plated article

Means an article composed of any substance on the surface of which a layer or plating of a precious metal is deposited or plated by means of a chemical, electrical, mechanical or metallurgical process or by means of a combination of any of those processes; and an article composed of an inferior metal to the surface of which a covering or sheeting of a precious metal is fixed by brazing, soldering or by any mechanical means;

Precious metal

Means gold, palladium, platinum and silver and an alloy of any of those metals and any other metal and an alloy thereof that is designated by the Regulations as a precious metal for the purposes of this Act;

Precious metal article

Means an article wholly or partly, or purporting to be wholly or partly, composed of a precious metal and includes a plated article, and the word “article” when used in association with the name of a precious metal has a corresponding meaning;

Quality mark

Means a mark indicating or purporting to indicate the quality, quantity, fineness, weight, thickness, proportion or kind of precious metal in an article;

Sell

Includes

- (a) sell, offer for sale, expose for sale and have in possession for sale,
- (b) distribute or offer, whether as a premium or prize, and
- (c) display in such manner as to lead to a reasonable belief that the article so displayed is intended for sale.

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UNAUTHORIZED MARKINGS

Section 3 of the Act

Except as authorized by this Act, no dealer shall apply to an article, or bring into Canada an article that has applied to it, a mark that suggests or indicates that the article is a precious metal article.



It is not mandatory to mark or advertise a precious metal article for quality –“14K” for gold, for example, or “sterling silver”. Any mark or advertisement which does, however, refer to the quality of a precious metal article must be factual and in the manner prescribed.

4.1 Subsection 4(1) of the Act

A quality mark that truly and correctly indicates the quality of the precious metal may be applied to an article if the precious metal content meets the standards provided in the Regulations.

4.2 Subsection 4(2) of the Act

A quality mark applied to a precious metal article must be a mark authorized by the Regulations and must be applied in a manner authorized by the Regulations.

4.3 Trade-mark

Subsection 4(3) of the Act

Where a quality mark is applied to a precious metal article it must also bear a trade-mark that has either been applied for or registered with the Registrar of Trade-marks in Canada. For information contact the Canadian Intellectual Property Office, Industry Canada.

4.4 Hallmark

Paragraph 4(4)(a) of the Act

If a precious metal article is hallmarked in accordance with the laws of the United Kingdom, it does not require a trade-mark, and a quality mark may be applied as per the Regulations.

4.5 Foreign Government Mark

Paragraph 4(4)(b) of the Act

If a precious metal article has a foreign government mark applied to it according to the laws of the foreign country, which truly and correctly indicates the quality of the precious metal, it does not require a trade-mark and may have a quality mark applied to it as per the Regulations.

4.6 Other Marks

Subsection 4(5) of the Act

Other marks may be applied such as:

- (a) numerals intended to identify the article or pattern and not calculated to mislead or deceive;
- (b) the name or initials of a dealer; and
- (c) any other mark not calculated to mislead or deceive.

4.7 National Mark

Section 5 of the Act

The national mark is represented by a maple leaf surrounded by the letter “C”.



The Commissioner of Competition can authorize a dealer to apply the national mark to an article which is wholly manufactured in Canada, is composed of a precious metal of a quality prescribed in the Regulations and has a quality mark as per section 4 of the Act (i.e. the article must bear a registered trade-mark).

Written requests for the authority to use this mark on qualifying precious metal articles should be addressed to:

Commissioner of Competition
Competition Bureau
50 Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0C9

5.1 Subsection 5(1) of the Regulations

Subject to subsections:

10(1) of the Regulations which refers to the quality marks for spectacle frames having a gold plating of at least 10K;

11(6) of the Regulations which requires that the name of the base metal be stamped on the article in conjunction with the trade-mark where less than 10% by weight of the base metal in an article of gold-plated or silver-plated flatware is pure nickel, and;

12(1) of the Regulations for plated hollow ware, a quality mark may be applied to a precious metal article by any method.

5.2 Subsection 5(2) of the Regulations

Where a quality mark is stamped, branded, engraved or imprinted on a precious metal article, the trade-mark must be applied by the same method as the quality mark.

5.3 Subsection 5(3) of the Regulations

Where only part of an article is composed of a precious metal plating of a quality specified in section 7, 8 or 9 and a quality mark is applied to the article, the name of the part to which the quality mark is applicable must be applied immediately before or after the mark. Section 7 deals with plated articles other than watch cases, spectacle frames, flatware and hollow ware; section 8 deals with watch cases other than bracelet watch cases; and section 9 deals with bracelet watch cases.

5.4 Subsection 5(4) of the Regulations

A statement of the thickness of the plating of the precious metal may be made if it is expressed as a whole numeral and followed immediately by the word “micrometres”, or the symbol, “ μm ”, or the word “micron”, or the symbol “ μ ”.

ARTICLES OTHER THAN PLATED ARTICLES

Section 6 Regulations and table thereto

6.1 Gold

“karat”, “carat”, “Karat”, “Carat”, “Kt.”, “Ct.”, “K”, “C” or a decimal designation may be used to express the quality of gold of an article having a minimum quality of 9K or higher.

Gold articles having a quality of 10K, 14K, 18K may alternatively be marked as .417, .583, .750 respectively.

6.2 Silver

“silver”, “sterling silver”, “sterling”, “argent”, “argent sterling” or any abbreviations thereof (e.g., “ster.”, or “STG”) or “.925” are quality marks provided for any article which contains at least 925 parts pure silver in 1,000 parts by weight.

6.3 Platinum

“platinum”, “plat.”, or “platine” are quality marks provided for any article which contains at least 95 percent platinum or for an alloy of platinum, at least 95 percent of platinum and iridium or ruthenium.

6.4 Palladium

“palladium” or “pall.” are quality marks provided for any article which contains 95% palladium. This quality mark may also be used for an alloy of at least 90% palladium only when accompanied with an additional 5% of any combination of the following prescribed metals namely platinum, iridium, ruthenium, rhodium, osmium or gold.

PLATED ARTICLES

Section 7 of the Regulations and the table thereto

This section does not cover the requirement for plated watch cases, spectacle frames, flatware and hollow ware which are discussed later in this guide.

7.1 “gold filled”

“G.F.”

or “*doublé d’or*”

These are acceptable quality marks on any article which is produced from material consisting of a base metal to which a layer of gold of minimum 10K quality has been soldered or sweated, and such quality of gold comprises at least 1/20 of the gross weight of the entire article.

7.2 “rolled gold plate”

“R.G.P.”

or “*plaqué d’or laminé*”

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to any article which meets the gold filled requirements except that the amount of gold comprises less than 1/20 of the gross weight of the entire article.

With respect to the plated articles mentioned in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2, if a karat designation is used, it must be preceded by the fraction when used in conjunction with the quality marks, “gold filled” or “rolled gold plate”. For example, the mark “1/20 10K rolled gold plate” would be an indication that the article had applied to it by a mechanical process 10K gold and that the gold comprises 1/20 of the entire weight of the article. Each numeral in the fraction used must be in the same size of type and prominence as the remainder of the quality mark.

- 7.3 **“gold electroplate”**
“gold plated”
“G.E.P.”
“electro-plaqué d’or”
or **“or plaqué”**

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to an article which has been plated with gold of at least 10K. The thickness of the gold plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 1 micrometre or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

- 7.4 **“silver filled”**
“S.F.”
or **“doublé d’argent”**

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to any article produced from material consisting of a base metal to which a layer of silver of .925 quality has been soldered or sweated, and such silver comprises at least 1/10 of the gross weight of the entire article.

- 7.5 **“silver electroplate”**
“silver plate”
“silver plated”
“electro-plaqué d’argent”
“plaqué d’argent”
or **any abbreviation for any of the foregoing**

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to an article which has had silver of at least .925 quality applied by a plating process.

The thickness of the silver plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 1 micrometre or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

- 7.6 **“vermeil”**
or **“vermil”**

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to any article meeting the minimum quality standard for “silver”, which has been plated with gold of at least 10K quality.

The thickness of the gold plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 1 micrometre or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

PLATED POCKET WATCH CASES

Section 8 of the Regulations and table thereto

NOTE: The criterion used with respect to the quality marks “gold filled”, “rolled gold plate” or “gold plated” used on watch cases is based on thickness and not weight.

8.1 “gold filled”

“G.F.”

or **“doublé d’or”**

These quality marks must be accompanied by a factual karat designation, e.g., “10K gold filled”. All of the numerals and letters in the mark must be in the same size of type.

A minimum thickness of $\frac{3}{1000}$ of an inch (75 micrometres) of at least 10K gold must be applied to the outer surface of the hunting case front, back, centre, open-face bezel, pendant, crown and bow. At least $\frac{1}{1000}$ of an inch (25 micrometres) of at least 10K gold must also be applied to the outer surface of the caps and hunting bezel.

8.2 “rolled gold plate”

“R.G.P.”

or **“plaqué d’or laminé”**

These quality marks must be accompanied by a factual karat designation, e.g. “10K rolled gold plate”. All numerals and letters in the mark must be in the same size of type.

A minimum thickness of $\frac{1\frac{1}{2}}{1000}$ of an inch (35 micrometres) of at least 10K gold must be applied to the outer surface of the hunting case front, back, centre, open-face bezel, pendant, crown and bow. At least $\frac{1}{1000}$ of an inch (25 micrometres) of at least 10K gold must also be applied on the outer surface of the caps and hunting bezel.

8.3 “silver filled”

“S.F.”

or “doublé d’argent”

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to watch cases produced from material consisting of a base metal to which a sheet of silver of .925 quality has been soldered or sweated.

A minimum thickness of 3/1000 of an inch (75 micrometres) of at least .925 silver must be applied to the outer surface of the hunting case front, back, centre, open-face bezel, pendant, crown and bow. At least 1/1000 of an inch (25 micrometres) of at least .925 silver must also be applied on the outer surface of the caps and hunting bezel.

8.4 “gold electroplate”

“gold plated”

“G.E.P.”

“electro-plaqué d’or”

or “or plaqué”

These quality marks may only be applied to watch cases which have been electrolytically plated with gold of at least 10K quality to a thickness of at least 5 micrometres.

The thickness of the gold plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 5 micrometres or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

8.5 “silver electroplate”

“silver plated”

“electro-plaqué d’argent”

or **any abbreviation for any of the foregoing**

These quality marks may only be applied to watch cases which have been electrolytically plated with silver of at least .925 quality to a thickness of at least 5 micrometres.

The thickness of the silver plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 5 micrometres or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.



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PLATED BRACELET WATCH CASES

Section 9 of the Regulations and table thereto

The marking provisions are identical to pocket watch cases (see paragraphs 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 of this guide) with one exception. The exception is that provision is made here for the addition of the marking of any part which is not of the quality of the rest of the case, e.g., Base Metal Back.

This marking may be applied either on the inner or outer surface of the case back.

The trademark must be applied to the case proper. The name on the dial of the watch is not considered to cover the requirement to apply the trademark on the case.

10.1 “gold filled”**“G.F.”**or **“doublé d’or”**

These are acceptable quality marks on any article which is produced from material consisting of a base metal to which a layer of gold of minimum 10K quality has been soldered or sweated, and such quality of gold comprises at least 1/20 of the gross weight of the entire article.

10.2 “rolled plate”**“R.P.”****“rolled gold plate”****“R.G.P.”****“placage laminé”**or **“plaqué d’or laminé”**

These are acceptable quality marks which can be applied to any article which meets the gold filled requirements except that the amount of gold comprises less than 1/20 of the gross weight of the entire article.

10.3 “gilt”**“gold plated”****“G.E.P.”****“or plaqué”**or **“doré”**

These quality marks may be applied to a spectacle frame which is produced in a material which has had gold of at least 10K applied electrolytically to a thickness of at least 1 micrometre.

The thickness of the gold plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 1 micrometre or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

The provision for the use of the mark “gilt” or “doré” applies only to spectacle frames.

PLATED FLATWARE

Section 11 of the Regulations and table thereto

11.1 “silverplate”

“placage d’argent”

“silverplated”

“plaqué d’argent”

“silverware”

“argenterie”

“S.P.”

OR **“E.P.”**

These quality marks may be applied to articles of flatware which have been plated with silver of a minimum .925 quality.

“A.I.”

“A.I.X.”

“A.I.+”

“A.I. EXTRA”

“A.A.+”

“A.A.I.+”

“A.A.I. EXTRA”

“triple plate”

“triple placage”

“quadruple”

OR **“XXXX”**

These quality marks may also be applied to flatware articles, based on the amount of silver of a minimum .925 quality used as primary plating on a gross of teaspoons of the same size and design. Refer to the Regulations for the different amounts of silver used as primary plating and the different amounts of silver in overlay.

11.2 “gold electroplate”

“gold plated”

“G.E.P.”

“electro-plaqué d’or”

or “or plaqué”

These quality marks may be applied to flatware which has been plated with at least 10K quality gold.

Where such gold plating is of at least 1 micrometre thickness, the thickness may be marked but only in whole numerals.

11.3 “nickel-silver”

“nickel-argent”

or “N.S.”

The terms “nickel-silver”, “nickel-argent” or “N.S.” may be applied to an article in conjunction with the quality mark provided the base metal contains 10 percent or more by weight of pure nickel. The trade-mark is also required.

All gold-plated and silver-plated flatware containing less than 10 percent pure nickel by weight in the base metal must be stamped with the name of the base metal in conjunction with the trade-mark. The appropriate precious metal quality mark may also be applied.

PLATED HOLLOW WARE

Section 12 of the Regulations and table thereto

12.1 Except for Sheffield reproductions, gold-plated and silver-plated articles must have the name of the base substance legibly and conspicuously stamped, branded, engraved or imprinted and the trade-mark must be applied in conjunction with the quality mark.

12.2 **“nickel-silver”**
“nickel-argent”
OR **“N.S.”**

These terms may be applied to hollow ware articles where the base metal contains 10% or more by weight of pure nickel.

12.3 **“britannia metal”**
“métal anglais”
“white metal”
“métal blanc”
“B.M.”
OR **“W.M.”**

These terms may be applied to an article where the base metal contains 90% or more by weight of tin.

- 12.4 **“gold electroplate”**
“electro-plaqué d’or”
“gold plated”
“or plaqué”
OR **“G.E.P.”**

These quality marks may be applied to articles of hollow ware which have been gold plated with gold of at least 10K quality.

The thickness of the gold plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 1 micrometre or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

- 12.5 **“silverplate”**
“placage d’argent”
“silverplated”
“plaqué d’argent”
“argenterie”
“S.P.”
OR **“E.P.”**

These quality marks may be applied to articles of hollow ware which have been plated with silver of at least .925 quality.

The thickness of the silver plate, in terms of whole numbers of micrometres, may be applied to such an article provided the thickness is of at least 1 micrometre or larger. Refer also to paragraph 5.4 of this guide.

- 12.6 **“Sheffield reproduction”**
OR **“reproduction of Sheffield plate”**

These quality marks may be applied to hollow ware articles which have a base of nickel or copper, with a soldered border, and the border plus any mounts must be of .925 silver, nickel or copper.

13.1 For articles produced in gold between 9K and 24K

3 parts per 1,000 parts by weight - where no solder is used.
7 parts per 1,000 parts by weight - where solder is used.

13.2 For articles produced in 18K (or more) white gold

3 parts per 1,000 parts by weight - where no solder is used.
15 parts per 1,000 parts by weight - where solder is used.

13.3 For articles produced in silver .925 or better

2 parts per 1,000 parts by weight - where no solder is used.
6 parts per 1,000 parts by weight - where solder is used.

**13.4 For articles produced in platinum
(or an alloy of platinum and iridium or ruthenium)**

The quantity of platinum (or the alloy if used) must be at least 95 percent of the metallic content of the article. No legal tolerance provided.

13.5 For articles produced in palladium

The quantity of palladium used must be at least 95 percent of the metallic content of the article. No legal tolerance provided.

**13.6 For articles produced in an alloy of palladium and
platinum, iridium, ruthenium, rhodium, osmium or gold**

The quantity of palladium and of the alloy must be at least 90 percent and 95 percent respectively of the metallic content of the article (refer to the table attached to section 6 of the Regulations for details). No legal tolerance provided.

13.7 For plated articles (section 7 of the Regulations) and spectacle frames (section 10 of the Regulations) produced in gold filled or rolled gold plate, when a representation of the proportion and quality of the gold is made, the weight of the gold must be at least 90% of the required gold in the article unless the article has been either engraved, brocaded or diamond faceted, in which case the weight of gold must be at least 80% of the required gold in the article.

For plated articles (section 7 of the Regulations) and spectacle frames (section 10 of the Regulations) produced in gold filled, if no representation of the proportion and quality of the gold is made, the weight of the gold must be at least 90% of 0.0208 fineness unless the article has been either engraved, brocaded or diamond faceted, in which case the weight of gold must be at least 80% of the required gold in the article.

13.8 For plated articles (section 7 of the Regulations) produced in silver filled if a representation of the proportion of the silver is made, the weight of the silver must be at least 90% of the required silver in the article unless the article has been either engraved, brocaded or diamond faceted, in which case the weight of silver must be at least 80% of the required silver in the article.

For plated articles (section 7 of the Regulations) produced in silver filled if no representation of the proportion of the silver is made, the weight of the silver must be at least 90% of 0.0925 fineness unless the article has been either engraved, brocaded, faceted, in which case the weight of silver must be at least 80% of 0.0925 fineness.

EXAMPLES OF MARKINGS

14.1 The use of dual markings such as “14K - 18K” or “10K – STERLING” are only permitted on articles where the quality difference is discernible by colour. The quality making up the greater proportion in the article must appear first.

14.2 When the base metal is required to be marked on an article (hollow ware, flatware), the only permissible abbreviations allowed are “N.S.”, “B.M.”, “W.M.”. Abbreviations such as “COP”, “Br.”, “Z” are not allowed.

PARTS EXEMPT FROM ASSAY

Section 4 of the Regulations

The parts of an article that are exempt from assay for the purposes of the Act and the Regulations are:

- (a) any mechanism, movement or works, where the article consists of a case or cover containing or incorporating the mechanism, movement or works;
- (b) brooch pins, brooch joints and brooch catches on
 - (i) gold or silver insignia pins, or
 - (ii) any article in section 7 of the Regulations (i.e. plated article other than watch cases, spectacle frames, flatware and hollow ware) with a gold filled, rolled gold plate or silver filled quality mark;
- (c) in section 6 of the Regulations for gold and silver articles,
in section 8 of the Regulations for gold filled and rolled gold plate watch cases other than bracelet watch cases,
in section 9 of the Regulations for gold filled and rolled gold plate bracelet watch cases, and
in section 7 of the Regulations for gold filled, rolled gold plate and silver filled plated articles other than watch cases, spectacles frames, flatware and hollow ware:
 - (i) springs, winding bars, sleeves, crown cores, joint pins, screws, rivets, dust bands, movement rings and spring pins,
 - (ii) hat pin stems and sockets,
 - (iii) scarf pin, stick pin and collar tack clutchbacks,
 - (iv) bracelet tongues,
 - (v) locket bezels,
 - (vi) knife skeletons and blades,
 - (vii) lapel button backs and the posts to which they are attached,
 - (viii) earring setting posts, and
 - (ix) tubes and posts for attachment to drilled stones together with any attached collet or claw setting; and
- (d) in section 10 of the Regulations for spectacle frame
 - (i) pad posts,
 - (ii) cores and inner winding of comfort cable temples,
 - (iii) any part permanently encased in a non-metallic covering, and
 - (iv) hinge assemblies.

HOW TO CONTACT THE COMPETITION BUREAU

Anyone wishing to obtain additional information about the *Competition Act*, the *Precious Metals Marking Act*, the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* and the *Textile Labelling Act* should contact the Competition Bureau's Information Centre at:

Telephone

Toll-free: 1-800-348-5358

National Capital Region: 819-997-4282

TDD (for hearing impaired): 1-800-642-3844

Facsimile

819-997-0324

Address

Information Centre
Competition Bureau
50 Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0C9

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