

# Precious Metals Control

## 1. Legal basis

- Federal Act of 20 June 1933 on the Control of Trade in Precious Metals and Precious Metal Articles (Precious Metals Control Act, PMCA, [CCFL 941.31](#)).
- Ordinance of 8 May 1934 on the Control of Trade in Precious Metals and Articles Precious Metals (Precious Metals Control Ordinance, PMCO, [CCFL 941.311](#)).
- Ordinance of 17 August 2005 on taxes for Precious Metals Control ([CCFL 941.319](#)).

In addition international conventions on precious metals control exist which Switzerland has concluded with a series of other States to facilitate trade ([International conventions](#)).

## 2. Rules relating to importation, exportation and transit

### 2.1 Principle

All goods for which statutory minimum criteria and marking requirements exist must be presented to the precious metal control.

In Tares, on the page "display details", "non-customs provisions" corresponding notes refer to a possible precious metal regulation control obligation.

Information on the Swiss precious metal regulation control obligations and exceptions to these (e.g. for works of art, personal property, wedding trousseaux and heirlooms, goods accorded customary diplomatic immunities, personal effects, precious metals for banking purposes, etc.) are provided by the Precious Metal Assay Offices ([addresses](#)).

### 2.2 Imports and exports

Goods subject to the Swiss precious metal regulations have to be declared to the customs office and may only be removed after being released by the Precious Metals Control.

### 2.3 Transit

Transit is not subject to any special provisions. The right is reserved for measures to be taken in the area of indication of provenances.

## 3. Indications pointing out consignments which are subject to precious metals controls

### 3.1 Gold

- 333, 375, 585, 750, 916, 999, "Au", "or"
- 8, 9, 14, 18, 22 combined with "Karat", "carat", "K", "C", "Kt" or "ct"
- "GG" (yellow gold), "RG" (red gold), "WG" (white gold)

In the case of gold products, often only the work involved is invoiced, the gold is charged to a gold account. However, the value of the gold must be added on.

### 3.2 Silver

- 800, 925, "Ag"
- Sterling
- Vermeil, galonné (gold plated silver)

### 3.3 Platinum and palladium

- 950, Pt
- 500, 950, Pd

### 3.4 Gold-plated goods (mechanical plating)

"RGP", "rolled gold plated", "coated L", "or laminé", "1/10 12 KGF", "coiffe or", "GF", " gold filled ", possibly with the mark for a legal standard of fineness in "carats", thickness in "Microns", "Mic", or "µ".

### **3.5 Galvanically gilded articles**

"Americ", "Amerikaner", "Union", "Plated-G", "gilded", "gold-electroplated", "gold-plated", "GP", possibly with the mark for a legal standard of fineness in "carats", thickness in "Microns", "Mic", or "µ".

### **3.6 Silver-plated articles (99,9% galvanically, very rarely mechanically)**

"Silver-plated", "silver plate", "EPNS", "versilbert" and "Sheffield Plate".

### **3.7 Weight units**

- 1 carat, in the case of gold: 41.6667 thousandths; 24 carat = fine gold
- 1 carat, in the case of precious stones and pearls: 0.2g
- 1 grain, in the case of precious stones and pearls: 0.05g
- 1 momme, in the case of cultured pearls: 3.75g; 1000 mommes = 1 kan (Japanese weight unit)
- 1 ounce (fine ounce or troy ounce): 31.1035g

## **4. General provisions**

The following requirements cover the **most important and most current** formal and material provisions of precious metals legislation.

The Central Office for Precious Metals Control and the Assay Offices will gladly provide you with further information ([addresses](#)).

### **4.1 Precious metals**

In accordance with the law, precious metals are gold, silver, platinum and palladium.

### **4.2 Standards of fineness for precious metals**

Switzerland recognizes the following standards of fineness:

- for gold:        375     585     750     916     999
- for silver:     800     925     999
- for platinum:  850     900     950     999
- for palladium: 500     950     999

All parts of an article made of precious metal must be of the standard of fineness indicated on the mark applied. No minus tolerance is allowed under Swiss Law.

For goods produced by electroforming the marked standard of fineness shall not be less than that of the alloy obtained by melting the whole article.

### **4.3 Categories of goods**

- Precious metal articles (incl. mixed articles, i.e. articles composed of more than one precious metal):

Articles made of precious metal alloys with at least the minimum legal standard of fineness.

Mixed precious metal articles composed of more than one precious metal are articles in which each precious metal part has at least the minimum legal standard of fineness.

- Multimetals articles:

Multimetals articles are goods composed of a precious metal with a legal standard of fineness and base metals marked appropriately.

- Plated articles:

Plated articles are articles with a precious metal layer applied permanently to another material which bear a legal mark corresponding to their composition. The thickness must be at least 5 micrometres for gold, platinum and palladium and at least ten micrometres for silver (1 micrometre = 1 thousandth of a millimetre).

- Imitations:

- precious metal articles which are below the minimum fineness standards or which do not satisfy the other criteria for precious metal articles;
- articles corresponding to multimetals or plated articles, which are not marked as such or do not satisfy the criteria required for these categories of goods.

#### **4.4 Marking**

- Precious metal goods and multimetal articles must bear the mark for a legal standard of fineness (written in thousandths) and a responsibility mark, registered at the Central Office for Precious Metals Control; multimetal articles must bear a supplementary marking which indicates the base metal used.
- Plated goods must bear marks indicating the precious metal coating and a responsibility mark.
- Even the smallest objects and the piercing jewellery must be stamped with a standard of fineness mark and a responsibility mark.

#### **4.5 Responsibility mark**

One might compare the responsibility mark with a signature; by striking his mark the owner vouches for the accuracy of the article's composition and accepts the consequences of any further dispute.

The responsibility mark must be deposited with the Central Office for Precious Metals Control in Brügg/BE. The deposition is valid for 20 years.

#### **4.6 Controlling and official hallmarking**

All watch-cases in gold, silver, platinum or palladium, of foreign or local manufacture, sold in Switzerland, are subject to control and compulsory official marking.

Apart from watch-cases, that is for all other precious metal articles, and multimetal goods, the control and marking procedure is optional.

The official hallmark for all precious metals and all fineness standards is the "head of a St. Bernhard dog":



#### **4.7 Forbidden indications and designations for plated metal articles and imitations**

- indications of the fineness in parts per thousands or in carat, designations of quality written in full, and expressions combined with words such as "fine..." or "pure...", for example "FINE GOLD" or "PURE SILVER";
- indication of proportion or weight of the precious metal used in per mill, grammes, kilogrammes, etc.;
- designations combined with the names of precious metals such as "GOLD", "SILVER", "PLATINUM" or "PALLADIUM" (or translations thereof), e.g. "GOLDOID", "GOLDIN", "ORINOX", "OR AMERICAIN", "ORIDEAL", "KOMBINOR", "ALPACCASILBER", "HOTEL-SILBER", "ARGENTOR", "NICKEL-SILVER", "PLATININ", "PLATINOR", "NOVO-PLATIN", etc.;
- Indications of sizes, numbers, references, etc. which could be confused with standards of fineness or micron numbers (e.g. 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, 18, 20, 22, 24, 40, 750, 850, 900, 925, 999, 1000, etc.);
- Guarantee or quality indications such as "DORE A L'OR FIN", "23 KARAT HARTVERGOLDET", "RECOUVERT A L'OR FIN", "DORAGE DUR", "GARANTI DORE OR FIN", "GOLDAUFLAGE", "DORURE GARANTIE 24 CARATS", "CHARGE D'ARGENT 1er TITRE", "FINITION ARGENT FIN", "ARGENT 90", "ARGENTURE FINE", "ECHTE SILBERAUFLAGE", "FEINVERSILBERT", "ARGENTE GARANTI", "I a VERGOLDET", "HARTVERGOLDET", "PLATE", etc.;
- all other made-up names which might cause confusion concerning the composition or the value of the article.

## **5. Lists 1 and 2**

On importation, all consignments containing goods which are regulated by the Swiss precious metals regulation must be submitted to one Assay Office.

You find in two lists the goods that must be reported without exception or under certain conditions to the competent Control Office.

### **List 1**

Goods that must be reported WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

**List 2**

Goods that must be reported under certain conditions

Please see [Watches, jewellery and precious metals](#).

**6. Addresses**

Please see [addresses of the Precious Metal Control Offices](#).