



Precious Metals Control Division

1 March 2022

Directive 243

Instructions on the application of the Precious Metals Control Legislation (PMCI)

English is not an official language of the Swiss Confederation. This translation is provided for information purposes only and has no legal force.

Directives are implementing provisions concerning customs act and non-customs legislative instruments issued by the Confederation. They are published in the interests of uniform application of the law.

No legal claims beyond the statutory provisions may be derived from the directives.

Introduction

These instructions are based on:

- a. Federal Act of 20 June 1933 on the Control of the Trade in Precious Metals and Precious Metal Articles (Precious Metals Control Act; SR 941.31, www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/50/345_357_401/en)
- b. Ordinance of 8 May 1934 on the Control of Trade in Precious Metals and Articles of Precious Metals (Precious Metals Control Ordinance; SR 941.311, www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/50/363_375_420/en)

The partial revision of these two documents entered into force on 1 August 1995.

The Central Office for Precious Metals Control, Industriestrasse 37, 2555 Brugg, Switzerland (Tel. +41 58 462 66 22, emk.info@bazg.admin.ch) provides information on Swiss Precious Metals Control Legislation at any time, either verbally or in writing.

Abbreviations

PMCA	Precious Metals Control Act
PMCO	Precious Metals Control Ordinance
Central Office	Central Office for Precious Metals Control
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention of 15 November 1972 on the Control and Marking of Articles of Precious Metals

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1 General

1.1 Definitions

1.1.1 Precious metals by law (PMCA 1)

Only gold, silver, platinum and palladium are considered to be precious metals by law.

The platinum-group metals rhodium, ruthenium, iridium and osmium are not subject to the PMCA, no minimum material requirements or designation regulations exist. These metals are also not covered by the regulations on the melting of precious metals and the purchase or exchange of scrap gold and scrap silver.

1.1.2 Coloured gold (PMCO 44)

Designation for all gold alloys with the exception of white gold alloys, e.g. red, yellow or green gold, usually with silver and copper as colouring additives.

1.1.3 White gold (PMCO 44)

White coloured gold alloys, e.g. with palladium, nickel, iron, etc. as colouring additives.

1.1.4 Adhesive bonding (PMCO 36)

Adhesive bonding is equivalent to soldering.

1.1.5 Inseparable joinings (PMCA 7)

All fixed – e.g. soldered, riveted, adhesively bonded, pressed – joinings are considered inseparable.

1.1.6 Separable joinings (PMCA 7)

All connections which allow the object to be disassembled and reassembled without damage, e.g. screwed, pinned, fastened with snap fasteners or clips, are deemed to be separable.

It is permitted to combine objects of different categories of articles if they are connected to each other in a separable way. Each object must be stamped separately.

Watch straps made of gold-plated base metal mounted on gold watch-cases must be stamped "METAL".

1.1.7 Inlay work

Metallic decorative elements that have been mechanically inlaid, rolled or chased into an object. Inlaid work made of precious metal is not considered to be a coating but a precious metal part. Objects finished in this way are considered to be mixed or multimetal articles and must comply with the regulations for these categories of articles.

1.1.8 Watch cases (PMCO 38)

Watch cases subject to official, obligatory hallmarking in accordance with Article 38 of the PMCO are all watch case enclosures for which the dimensions are defined in the Ordinance on the Use of «Switzerland» or «Swiss» for Watches (SR 232.119).

1.2 Marks and references such as "GOLD", "METAL", etc.; abbreviations and languages (PMCA 6)

The spelling of the marks and references in these regulations is only given as an example. Marks and references must be written out in full, abbreviations are not permitted. The only exception are the chemical symbols according to IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry): e.g. "Au" for gold, "Ag" for silver, "Ti" for titanium.

Marks and references may be translated into German, French, Italian and English.

1.3 Marks and indications in advertising

With regard to misleading or prohibited marks and indications on the articles, the provisions of the PMCA, the PMCO and this Directive also apply to advertising. Advertising is defined as any medium, e.g. paper or digital, which is intended to describe or advertise the products.

1.4 Responsibility mark (PMCA 9, 10 and 47; PMCO Section 4)

It is obligatory to apply a responsibility mark (RM) to precious metal articles (incl. mixed articles), multimetal articles and plated articles (incl. "coiffe or").

The imprint of the responsibility mark must correspond in every detail to the mark image registered with the Central Office. The mark must be clearly and permanently applied to the object.

The use of a Swiss responsibility mark without the consent of the owner is considered unauthorised use in accordance with Article 47, paragraph 1 of the PMCA.

The owner of the mark must notify the Central Office of any changes affecting its mark (e.g. change of company name, address, etc.). Changes in the register of the Central Office are made free of charge.

1.4.1 Articles from third countries with Italian identification marks

The Italian identification mark referred to in the bilateral agreement between Switzerland and Italy (chapter 8, point 8.5) is also recognised as a RM if the articles are imported into Switzerland not directly from Italy but from a third country.

1.4.2 Mark image

In accordance with the PMCO, the RM applied to the articles must correspond exactly to the mark image on file. Under no circumstances, for example, may a registered recessed mark be inverted, i.e. in relief.

The only exception is for RMs on articles produced in one operation with a RM engraved in the punch (medals, stamped ingots, etc.): the RMs are permitted to be inverted for technical reasons.

Reminder: **black** on the image means **recessed** on the object (impressed into the surface); **white** on the image means **embossed** on the object (in relief).

1.5 Differentiation of colours on mixed articles and on multimetal articles (PMCO 44)

Different finishes of mechanical surfaces (for example, one part polished, the other part brushed) may be considered as a colour distinction, provided they can be clearly and distinctly distinguished from each other.

1.5.1 Mixed articles (PMCO 47)

The individual precious metals of a mixed article must be distinguishable from each other by colour.

Combinations of

- white gold with platinum,
- white gold or platinum with palladium,
- white gold or platinum with silver or
- palladium with silver

are only considered to be different in colour if the individual metals differ so clearly in shade and the description of the articles is so unambiguous that there is no danger of confusion, or if the colour of one of the components has been altered by a surface coating in accordance with paragraph 1.6.

1.5.2 Multimetal articles (PMCA 7a)

The individual metals of a multimetal article must differ so clearly in shade and the description of the article must be so unambiguous that there is no danger of confusion. The colour of a component may be changed by a surface coating listed in paragraph 1.6.

1.6 Surface coating of precious metal articles and multimetal articles (PMCO 44)

Subject to the provisions of paragraph 1.5, "Differentiation of colours on mixed articles and on multimetal articles", the following surface coatings are permitted:

1.6.1 On precious metals

a. **Metallic surface coatings (e.g. galvanic)** – according to the following table:

On	Permitted
gold	rhodium, ruthenium, platinum, gold
silver	rhodium, ruthenium, platinum, gold, palladium, silver; gilding or gold plating up to 100% of the surface, subject to marking in accordance with paragraph 2.2.2
platinum	rhodium, ruthenium, platinum
palladium	rhodium, ruthenium, platinum, gold, palladium

The precious metal coatings must have the following minimum fineness:

- gold 585‰
- silver 800‰
- platinum 850‰
- palladium 500‰

If the base material and the surface coating are of the same metal, the coating must have at least the same fineness as the substrate.

b. **Intermediate layers of base metal**

Intermediate layers of base metals are prohibited on precious metal articles (jewellery, cutlery, tableware, watch-cases and watch-case additional parts, etc.).

The following exceptions are permitted for technical reasons:

- Intermediate layers of base metals on medals made of silver as well as on decorative hollow silver articles not in contact with foodstuffs (corkscrews, bottle openers, trays, vases, candle holders, trophies, photo frames, etc.);
- Intermediate layers of a grey copper-tin alloy in the case of gilded or gold-plated silver articles.

Parts provided with such coatings, including intermediate layers, may in no case fall below the standard of fineness stamped on them.

c. Resistant, chemical or thermal treatments

e.g. "blue gold", silver sulphide.

d. Non-metallic coatings

e.g. lacquer, enamel, niello.

e. Coatings with a non-metallic character

The coatings are usually applied in the physical and chemical vapour deposition (PVD, CVD) phase; they consist of metals and non-metals and have a non-metallic character (e.g. TiC, TiN). The coatings may not have the colour of a precious metal or a precious metal alloy.

Parts provided with such coatings may in no case fall below the standard of fineness stamped on them.

As part of the official control and hallmarking, such coatings require an authorisation from the Central Office.

For this purpose, the corresponding requests must be made directly by the manufacturers / suppliers of the coated articles in accordance with the relevant guidelines of the Central Office.

The validations of the coatings are subject to the fees laid down in the PMC-FeeO.

1.6.2 On base metals

a. Resistant, chemical or thermal treatments

e.g. blued steel.

b. Non-metallic coatings

e.g. lacquer, enamel, niello.

c. Base metal coatings of other colours

Base metal coatings of a different colour on the base metal part are permitted.

1.7 Auctions

Precious metal, multimetal, plated and imitation articles on offer at official or private auctions must comply formally and materially with the regulations of the PMCA.

Objects which have been put in order by a PMC office are - with the exception of watch-cases - not officially hallmarked, but merely marked with the Control Office's mark in accordance with number 2 of Annex II to the PMCO.

1.8 Valuations by the PMC offices

The PMC offices are not permitted to perform official valuations of precious metal articles, melt products, coins and medals. The same applies to the assessment of the state of conservation of coins, medals or other objects.

2 Precious metal articles

2.1 Material regulations (PMCA 1 and 7)

2.1.1 Solders (PMCO 36)

- Solders for gold articles must consist of gold solder alloys of the same fineness as the articles themselves.

The following exceptions apply:

- articles made of gold alloys above 750‰ must be soldered with gold solders of a fineness of at least 750‰;
 - for gold chains with links of less than 1mm diameter, solders without gold content are permitted.
- Solders for platinum articles must have a precious metal content of at least 800‰.
 - Solders for palladium articles must have a precious metal content of at least 700‰.
 - Solders for silver articles must have a silver fineness of at least 550‰.

In the case of solders made of alloys of lower fineness or of any other material, a tolerance of not more than ten thousandths on the whole melted object is permitted.

2.1.2 Gilded silver (vermeil) and gold-plated silver

The gold layer must have a fineness of at least 585‰.

2.1.3 Permitted metal parts (PMCA 7; PMCO 42)

2.1.3.1 General

Precious metal articles may have parts made of base metal for technical reasons.

The base metal may not be used for the purpose of strengthening, filling or weighting.

Base metal parts must, if technically possible, be marked "METAL", or the specific name of the metal used, e.g. "STEEL", "STAINLESS STEEL" or "BRASS"; if this is not possible, these parts must differ in colour from the precious metal.

The parts permitted to be made of base metal may also be made of precious metal of a fineness lower than as stamped. They must, if technically possible, be marked "METAL".

In particular, the parts listed below are permitted, but the Central Office may allow other exceptions in duly justified cases submitted with samples or technical drawings.

2.1.3.2 On all precious metal articles

For technical reasons, precious metal articles may have mechanisms or components made of base metal. This is particularly the case for the following parts:

- mechanisms and clips of writing instruments;
- mechanisms of lighters;
- knife blades and similar parts of bottle openers, corkscrews, etc.;
- springs;
- steel stringing wires for necklaces (the stringing wires must not be of a decorative nature);
- magnetic clasps;
- clasps for securing tie pins or clutch backs for tie tacks.

2.1.3.3 Additionally on silver articles

made of base metals:

- bolo tie clasps;
- bracelet and necklace clasps;
- closures or safety systems for brooches and ear clips, incl. supports;
- hinge pins;
- head pins.

made only of non-allergenic metals and alloys:

- pins and screws of piercing jewellery;
- ear stud pins, incl. ear stud screws and nuts.

2.1.4 Permitted parts of 750‰ gold on articles of 999‰ or 916‰ gold (PMCA 7)

Articles of 999‰ or 916‰ gold may, for technical reasons, contain – unmarked – parts of gold alloy with a fineness of 750‰:

- pins and clips, incl. keeper + shackle;
- safety hooks and figures of eight; carabiners;
- tubes for figure of eight safety catches;
- catches and safety buttons;
- hinge pins;
- ear stud pins, incl. ear stud screws and nuts;
- clips, incl. findings for ear jewellery.

2.1.5 Permitted white gold parts on platinum articles (PMCA 7)

The white gold parts listed in paragraph 2.1.4 are permitted on articles made of platinum. Where possible, they must be marked with the word "GOLD", "ORO" or "OR".

2.1.6 Mixed articles (PMCO 40 and 47)

The various precious metals of a mixed article must have at least the minimum legal standard of fineness applicable to them in accordance with Annex 2 No. 1 to the PMCA.

Precious metal parts that can be mistaken for a coating may only be marked with a fineness mark if they are at least 500 micrometres thick and the layer depth is recognisable. Otherwise they are considered to be precious metal coatings (see paragraph 1.6.1 letter a).

2.1.7 Gold nuggets (PMCA 7)

Solid gold in the form of nuggets is permitted on precious metal and multimetal articles, irrespective of the fineness and colour differentiation criteria.

2.1.8 Filled-in objects (PMCO 37)

The inside of precious metal articles and precious metal parts of multimetal articles must not contain any metals – including precious metals of lower fineness – or substances that differ from the precious metal of the main mass.

In particular, such fillings are prohibited if they give rise to the impression of a more stable construction, a greater weight or a greater precious metal content than is actually present.

The following technical exceptions are permitted:

- Candleholders, vases and similar objects made of silver: filling the bases with mastic or similar materials is permitted to ensure better stability. A screwed-on base plate marked "METAL" is also permitted, but not the filling in of the columns or arms of candelabra;
- table knives, salad servers, carving sets, dessert knives, manicure utensils, etc.: The cementing of the tool parts into handles made of a silver shell is permitted.

The Central Office may allow other exceptions in duly justified cases submitted with samples or technical drawings.

2.1.9 Parts made of non-metallic materials (PMCA 1)

2.1.9.1 General

Parts made of non-metallic materials (precious stones, glass, wood, synthetic materials, etc.) are permitted, provided that they are clearly distinguishable from the precious metal, their dimensions are recognisable, and they are not coloured or coated in such a way that they could be mistaken for precious metals.

In the case of partial covering or colouring of parts made of non-metallic materials (for example, decorations or hands on ceramic elements of the bezel of a watch-case), the Central Office may grant an exception in justified cases submitted with a sample and/or technical drawing.

2.1.9.2 Photo frames made of silver

Photo frames made of stamped silver sheet and fixed with adhesive to a support of non-metallic material are permitted, regardless of whether the silver part is back-filled with plaster, plastic mass, glue, etc.

Reinforcements of base metal on silver frames are prohibited.

2.2 Marking regulations

2.2.1 General (PMCO 46)

With the exception of the objects referred to in Article 45 of the PMCO, precious metal articles must bear a mark indicating the legal standard of fineness in thousandths, expressed in Arabic numerals, close to the responsibility mark. The fineness mark must be visible, legible and indelible and have a minimum height of 0.5 mm.

2.2.2 Gilded (vermeil) and gold-plated silver articles (PMCO 46)

Fully gilded or gold-plated silver articles must, in addition to the fineness mark and the responsibility mark, also be marked as silver.

Examples:

gilded silver:	SILVER, VERMEIL, Ag, STERLING
gold-plated silver:	SILVER PLAQUE OR G or SILVER GOLDELECTROPLATED

2.2.3 Mixed articles (PMCO 40 and 47)

2.2.3.1 Principle

Mixed articles may only be traded as such if they bear the fineness marks of each precious metal present.

2.2.3.2 General

If the precious metals of a mixed article are distinguishable from each other by colour, the fineness marks must be applied to each precious metal.

If objects have different parts of the same precious metal, it is sufficient if only one part bears a fineness mark. Only one responsibility mark is required per object.

If, for technical or aesthetic reasons, it is not possible to apply the designation to one precious metal, it may be applied to the other. In this case it must be supplemented by the name of the metals concerned or their chemical symbols, e.g. "Ag 925/Au 750". The precious metal which is predominant by volume must be mentioned first. In addition, the precious metal weight may be indicated.

If the colours cannot be distinguished, only the fineness mark of the lowest-value precious metal may be applied. The value increases from silver to palladium, gold and platinum.

2.2.4 Supplies and semi-finished products (PMCO 52)

Loose components (supplies) and semi-finished products (unfinished articles and parts of articles) are allowed to be marked either completely, partially (only with the fineness mark or only with the responsibility mark) or not at all.

The person who assembles or completes the product is responsible for ensuring that the mark corresponds to the composition of the articles.

2.3 Additional regulations for products of the watch industry

2.3.1 Closure principle for watch-cases (PMCO 38)

In the case of watch-cases made entirely of precious metal, the main components must touch, e.g. gold back on gold front section of watch-case.

2.3.2 Permitted parts made of base metal (PMCA 7; PMCO 42)

- movements and parts of movements such as dials, flange, crowns, winding-shafts and push-pieces;
- spring bars, pins and screws for fixing watch straps to cases and/or clasps (buckle, folding clasp, etc.) to watch straps;
- pins which serve as joints for the clasps;
- other parts with spring function;
- assembly screws for the components of the watch-case;
- screws for shortening or lengthening watch straps;
- on the basis of detailed plans, a strict minimum of through-pins serving as joints between the various links of multimetal watch straps;
- separably mounted winding tubes on gold, platinum or palladium watch-cases;
- separably or inseparably mounted winding tubes on silver watch-cases;
- movement-holders and casing-rings;
- domes (double back covers of pocket-watch-cases) under the condition that they bear the designation of their composition, such as "METAL" or "STAINLESS STEEL".

2.3.3 White gold parts on platinum watch-cases or watch straps (PMCA 7)

Inseparably mounted (soldered or pressed in) white gold winding tubes on platinum cases are permitted.

Other white gold parts which fulfil either a locking, safety or spring function on platinum watch-cases or watch straps may be permitted by the Central Office in duly justified cases which have been submitted with samples or technical drawings.

2.3.4 Voluntary marks for parts of movements made of precious metals (PMCA 6)

Dials, movements (e.g. of skeleton watches) and parts of movements (e.g. rotors), as well as crowns and push-pieces made of precious metal may bear the fineness mark in thousandths or carats. It is not obligatory to apply a responsibility mark.

3 Multimetal articles

3.1 Principle (PMCA 7a)

Multimetal articles may only be traded as such if they comply with the relevant material regulations and are marked accordingly. If this is not the case, they are deemed to be imitations.

3.2 Material regulations (PMCA 1 and 7a; PMCO 41)

In the case of multimetal articles, the dimensions of the precious metal parts must be clearly recognisable in comparison with those made of base metal. If this is the case, the precious metal parts may be firmly connected to the base metal (soldered, riveted, adhesively bonded, etc.).

Multimetal articles must not have any plated or imitation parts, i.e. the base metal parts must not have any surface coating of gold, silver, platinum or palladium.

In addition, multimetal articles must not have any characteristics of plated articles.

If the precious metal part could be mistaken for a coating, it must not be firmly connected to the base metal; only separable connections (e.g. screws) are permitted.

Precious metal parts with a thickness of at least 500 micrometres do not have the characteristics of plated articles, provided that the thickness of the plating is recognisable.

Parts marked "METAL" made of precious metal alloys below the lowest legal standard of fineness are considered as base metal.

The regulations on parts made of non-metallic materials in paragraph 2.1.9.1 are applicable by analogy.

The soldering regulations in paragraph 2.1.1 are not applicable to connections between precious and non-precious metal parts of multimetal articles.

3.3 Marking regulations (PMCA 7a; PMCO 48)

In the case of multimetal articles, the precious metal parts and the base metal parts shall be marked separately:

- Precious metal parts: fineness mark and responsibility mark;
- Base metal parts: with the specific name of the metal or the word "METAL".

If an object is composed of several parts made of precious and base metal, it is sufficient if the marks are applied to one part each.

If for technical or aesthetic reasons it is not possible to mark one part, the mark may be applied to the other part. In this case it is necessary to add the name of the precious metal or its chemical symbol to the fineness mark, e.g. "GOLD 750/TITANIUM" or "STEEL/Ag 925". The metal which is predominant in volume must be mentioned first. In addition, the weight of the precious metal may be indicated.

4 Plated articles

4.1 Principle (PMCA 8)

Plated articles may only be traded as such if they are marked in accordance with the regulations in Art. 49 of the PMCO and comply with the relevant material regulations. If this is not the case, they are deemed to be imitations.

4.2 Material regulations (PMCA 2; PMCO 43)

In the case of plated articles, the precious metal layer must be present on at least the part of the surface which is essential for the appearance or function of the article (decisive surface). It is therefore permitted to cover surfaces only partially with a precious metal layer and to mark the articles as plated or – in the case of watch-cases – as "coiffe or".

The minimum tolerance regarding the thickness of the precious metal layer is 20%.

Non-plated parts or surfaces of plated or "coiffe or" objects may not have thinner coatings of the same precious metal. For example, only gilded parts on partially plated articles are prohibited.

On non-plated parts or surfaces of partially plated articles, surface coatings of a colour or composition that could be mistaken for the precious metal coating are also prohibited. For example, yellow titanium nitride coatings are not permitted on partially plated yellow gold plated articles.

The regulations on the differentiation of colours in paragraph 1.5 are not applicable to plated articles. However, paragraph 1.6.1 letter a applies analogously to surface coatings of plated articles.

4.3 Marking regulations (PMCO 49)

The marks must provide information on the actual composition of each part. Art. 49 of the PMCO regulates the permitted types of mark.

In the case of partially plated articles, each part must be marked separately. The non-plated part must bear the specific name of the metal, e.g. "STEEL" or the word "METAL". If for technical or aesthetic reasons it is not possible to mark one part, the marks may be applied to the other part. References to the corresponding parts are permitted, e.g. PLATED MIDDLE G 10/STAINLESS STEEL BACK.

If an object is covered with precious metal coatings of different thicknesses, only the lowest value may be indicated.

The mark must be on the outside of watch-cases.

4.3.1 Prohibited marks (PMCA 8; PMCO 50)

For plated articles, the following marks and descriptions are prohibited:

- Standard of fineness in thousandths, carats or in words in combination with terms such as "fine..." or "pure...", e.g. "FINE GOLD" or "PURE SILVER";
- Marks indicating the proportion or weight of the precious metal used;
- Marks in connection with the name of precious metals (e.g. "AMERICAN GOLD", "GOLDOR");
- Any other marks likely to mislead as to the value or composition of the articles.

4.3.2 Marks indicating sizes, numbers, references (PMCA 6)

Marks indicating sizes, numbers, references, etc. on objects such as spectacle frames or watch strap buckles must be accompanied by abbreviations such as "mm", "no.", "ref.", if they are likely to be confused with standard of fineness or common marks of thickness of coating (carats, thousandths, micrometres [microns], etc.).

Marks corresponding to recognised international standards, on the other hand, are permitted without additions.

4.3.3 Combined markings (PMCA 6)

Combinations with the name of precious metals are permitted only if it is the registered name of a company and if the mark is supplemented with "AG", "S.A.", "S.a.r.l.", "Co", "Cie", "Marque déposée", "GmbH", "Ltd.", "®", "©", "™", etc. If there is a risk of confusion, the Central Office may require additional indications.

5 Imitations

5.1 Material regulations (PMCA 2)

There are no material regulations for imitations.

5.2 Marking regulations (PMCA 8; PMCO 50)

Marks on imitations must correspond to the actual composition of the articles.

Imitations coated with precious metals may be marked as gilded, silvered, platinised or palladised articles.

The English terms "gold plated", "silver plate" and "silver plated" are accepted as equivalents of the terms "gilded" and "silvered" under the following conditions:

- The mark "GOLD PLATED" is permitted on labels, advertisements, brochures, etc. On the articles themselves it is only permitted if it is supplemented with "GILDED";
- The marks "SILVER PLATE" and "SILVER PLATED" are permitted – without additions – both on labels, advertisements, brochures etc. and on the articles themselves.

The same regulations apply to platinum and palladium as to gold.

Paragraphs 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 apply analogously; marks such as "24K GOLD PLATED" or "1/10 12 KGF" are prohibited.

The marking regulations for tableware and cutlery remain exempt.

Fantasy marks such as "AMERICAN" are permitted.

5.3 Tableware and cutlery (PMCO 51)

The weight of the amount of silver content may be indicated on tableware and cutlery. They may be marked in accordance with international standards. These can be requested from the Swiss Association for Standardization (SNV).

- EN ISO 8442-2: Materials and articles in contact with foodstuffs – cutlery and table holloware – requirements for stainless steel and silver-plated cutlery;
- EN ISO 8442-3: Materials and articles in contact with foodstuffs – cutlery and table holloware – requirements for silver-plated table and decorative holloware;
- EN ISO 8442-4: Materials and articles in contact with foodstuffs – cutlery and table holloware – requirements for gold plated cutlery.

Marks in accordance with the above standards are permitted. The applied manufacturer's mark does not have to be registered as a RM.

6 Other regulations

6.1 Marks customary in certain industries or trades (PMCA 6; PMCO 50)

For articles other than those from the watchmaking, jewellery, silversmithing and related industries (writing instruments, lighters, etc.), it is permitted to use traditional special marks customary in certain industries and crafts – including combinations with the name of precious metals. However, these marks must not give rise to any misunderstanding as to the true quality of the product.

Standards of fineness in thousandths, carats or in words in combination with terms such as "fine..." or "pure...", e.g. "FINE GOLD" or "PURE SILVER" remain prohibited.

Such articles are in particular objects made of wood, leather, porcelain, glass, etc., decorated with gold leaf, platinum leaf, palladium leaf or silver leaf or bearing precious metal deposited by electroplating or applied in liquid or paste form.

Examples of approved marks:

- Picture frames or other objects made of wood, leather, etc., decorated with precious metal leaf, for example:
GOLD LEAF, REAL GOLD LEAF, GOLD FRAME, SILVER LEAF
- Vacuum-gilded objects made of wood, leather, plastic mass, etc.:
GOLD CD, GOLD DECORATION
- Objects made of porcelain or glass with precious metal decorations:
SILVER ON PORCELAIN, SILVER PORCELAIN, SILVER RIM, GOLD RIM, BRIGHT SILVER, SILVER DECORATION, POLISHED SILVER, FUSED GOLD, etc.
- Printed products, business cards, books:
GOLD PRINT, IMPRESSION OR

The following articles may also be marked or advertised with similar marks:

- Other objects which are not likely to be mistaken for precious metal or plated articles, such as household appliances, furniture, plumbing fixtures, etc.;
- Products from the foodstuffs or cosmetics sector (silvered sugar balls, golden almonds, gold liqueur with gold leaf flakes, etc.).

6.2 Use of the names of precious metals (PMCA 6; PMCO 50)

The use of the names of precious metals in advertising is permitted if there is no doubt that refers to the colour of the product or to its symbolic standing and not to the composition of the articles.

6.3 Invoices, correspondence (PMCA 6; PMCO 50)

It is permitted for manufacturers and wholesalers to include on invoices or business correspondence indications of the true composition of articles, semi-finished products, supplies and products, even if they do not comply with the regulations (e.g. indication of the thickness of gold plating in micrometres).

Quality marks, e.g. standards of fineness or thicknesses of coatings on invoices, must correspond to reality.

The person who brings the articles into retail trade is responsible for compliance with the material and formal legal regulations.

6.4 Guarantee certificates (PMCA 6)

Guarantee certificates issued for a period of years at the time of purchase of articles - e.g. for the replacement or repair of damaged coatings - are permitted, provided they bear the name and address of the seller.

7 Official controlling and hallmarking

7.1 General (PMCA 13 and 20; PMCO 82)

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

Watch-cases that are only temporarily imported for the installation of the mechanism are also subject to official hallmarking.

Official hallmarking is optional for watch-cases made of a combination of precious metal and base metal (multimetals).

International conventions are exempt from this.

Official hallmarking is optional for precious metal articles other than watch-cases and for multimetal articles.

The official hallmark is not applied to objects made of a precious metal alloy below the Swiss minimum standard of fineness.

7.2 Official hallmarking of watch-cases (PMCO 117)

At least one official hallmark must be visible on the outside of watch-cases.

Watch-cases that have been fully marked by the manufacturer on the inside of the case backs must have an additional fineness mark on the outside of the case. In this case, the Control Office will stamp both the inside of the case back and the outside of the case with the "head of a St. Bernard dog".

If hallmarking with the "Common Control Mark" of the Vienna Convention is requested, all marks must be applied to the outside of the case, i.e. the fineness mark, the responsibility mark, the "head of a St. Bernard dog" and the "Common Control Mark".

7.3 Official hallmarking of articles with an approved PVD/CVD coating (PMCO 44)

As explained in paragraph 1.6.1 letter e, the use of PVD/CVD coatings is subject to prior validation by the Central Office, which determines the conditions of acceptance.

An applicant for official hallmarking may therefore have its components coated by a supplier who can offer it a range of approved coatings. Under these conditions, it is sufficient to enclose the authorisation from the Central Office with the request for official hallmarking.

In the absence of any such prior authorisation, the applicant for official hallmarking must itself submit a written request to the Central Office with all the necessary information. If the applicant works with an external service provider, it is responsible for collecting all the necessary information for validation from the service provider and forwarding it to the Central Office.

The articles may only be presented for official hallmarking after coating, so that the Control Office can check the material conformity and apply the necessary marks under conditions similar to those for the validation of the coating.

7.4 Official hallmarking of mixed articles (PMCO 117)

An official hallmark is sufficient on mixed articles. It is also applied if all marks are on only one precious metal.

7.5 Official hallmarking of multimetal articles (PMCO 83)

Multimetal articles may be officially hallmarked provided that the fineness mark and responsibility mark are affixed to the precious metal part and there is sufficient space to apply the official hallmark next to them. This also applies if the base metal mark is affixed to the precious metal part.

7.6 Common Control Mark of the Vienna Convention (PMCO 126)

7.6.1 General

For hallmarking with the "Common Control Mark" of the Vienna Convention, both the national and the Vienna Convention requirements must be met. If the two sets of requirements do not coincide, the regulations of the Convention take precedence in principle.

The provisions of the Convention are available on the official www.hallmarkingconvention.org website.

7.6.2 Hallmarking of temporarily imported foreign articles

Assay Offices are permitted to accept foreign articles imported only temporarily for hallmarking with the Common Hallmark of the Vienna Convention for official controlling and hallmarking. In this case, the responsibility mark applied to the articles must be registered in Switzerland.

8 International conventions

The regulations of the following international conventions signed by Switzerland (PMCO 126) do not necessarily correspond to the regulations of the PMCA. The Central Office can provide information in this regard.

Further information can be obtained from the publication platform for federal law [Fedlex](#) using the Classified Compilation of Federal Legislation (SR) number indicated in the brackets below.

8.1 **Vienna Convention of 15 November 1972 on the Control and Marking of Articles of Precious Metals "Vienna Convention – Common Control Mark"**

The member states which are parties to this multilateral agreement can be found at www.hallmarkingconvention.org.

If an object is marked with an official hallmark of a signatory state as well as the "Common Control Mark" of the Convention ("balance"), it will not be officially stamped again in the other contracting states.

The responsibility mark must be registered in the state that performed the official hallmarking.

8.2 **Bilateral agreement between Switzerland and France (0.941.334.91)**

Both states recognise each other's official hallmarks. Therefore, the double control of articles no longer applies.

The responsibility mark must be registered in the state that performed the official hallmarking.

8.3 **Exchange of letters between Switzerland and Spain (0.941.333.2)**

Both states recognise each other's official hallmarks on watch-cases and their additional parts (e.g. watch straps).

8.4 **Bilateral agreement between Switzerland and Austria (0.941.316.3)**

Both states recognise each other's official hallmarks on watch-cases.

8.5 **Bilateral agreement between Switzerland and Italy (0.941.345.4)**

Precious metal articles officially stamped in Switzerland do not have to bear the identification mark of the Italian importer, while Italian identification marks are recognised as responsibility marks in Switzerland. Watch-cases marked with Italian identification marks are not subject to the obligatory official hallmarking.

8.6 Bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the Russian Federation (0.941.366.5)

Both states recognise each other's guarantee marks on precious metal articles of the watch industry. Therefore, the double control of articles made of gold, silver, platinum and palladium no longer applies. The responsibility mark only has to be registered in the state that performed the official hallmarking.

8.7 Official hallmarking practice in connection with bilateral and multilateral agreements

8.7.1 Articles with a RM recognised by a bilateral agreement

Articles presented for official hallmarking that are marked with a foreign RM that is not registered in Switzerland but is recognised by a bilateral agreement (e.g. with an Italian identification mark) can be stamped with the official national hallmark "head of a St. Bernard dog".

However, hallmarking with the "Common Control Mark" is not permitted. The Convention stipulates that the RM must be registered in the contracting state.

8.7.2 Articles from third countries with recognised foreign guarantee marks

Foreign hallmarks recognised by virtue of an agreement are also permitted without further control and official hallmarking if the articles are imported from third countries.

8.7.3 Watch-cases of Italian origin imported from third countries

Watch-cases of Italian origin and marked with an Italian identification mark but imported via third countries are not subject to the obligatory official hallmarking.

8.7.4 Foreign guarantee marks with integrated standard of fineness

Foreign official guarantee marks with integrated standard of fineness not permitted by law (e.g. Dutch silver hallmark with integrated "835") are permitted; however, the mark must be supplemented with the next lower standard of fineness permitted by law.

9 Import, export

9.1 Import (PMCA 20; PMCO 126 and 131)

Articles manufactured abroad can be traded in Switzerland only if they comply with the regulations of the PMCA.

Upon importation, the consignments may be subjected to either a comprehensive check or only a spot check by the Precious Metals Control, or they may be forwarded to the consignee of the articles without being checked. The consignee is always responsible for ensuring that, when the articles are introduced into the market, they comply with the legal requirements.

The Assay Offices have the right to carry out analyses when checking consignments.

9.2 Export (PMCA 21; PMCO 135)

On their own responsibility, consignors may export articles with marks that deviate from the PMCA and that are prescribed or customary in the country of destination, without requiring authorisation from the Central Office.

If such articles bear a quality mark, they must be also have a responsibility mark. In justified cases, the Central Office may grant exceptions to this rule.

9.3 Temporary import (PMCO 134)

Temporary imports of articles intended for export which bear non-compliant marks require authorisation from the Central Office for each individual consignment.

10 Old gold, old silver and waste containing precious metals

10.1 Purchase or exchange

The purchase or exchange of old gold and old silver, such as watches, jewellery and other used articles made of precious metals, multimetals, plated or imitations, including silver and blacksmith articles, lighters, writing tools, spectacles and dental crowns, as well as waste containing precious metals, is not regulated by the legislation on precious metals.

The cantonal regulations concerning the purchase of used objects (e.g. permits for second-hand dealers, junk dealers, etc.) remain reserved.

Trade in old gold and silver is exclusively under the responsibility of the purchaser. If there is any doubt as to the origin of the articles, the purchaser must inform the competent police authorities.

10.2 Resale

10.2.1 Resale of melted waste (PMCA 31; PMCO 169)

If the purchased waste containing precious metals, old gold and old silver are melted down before resale, the ingot must be stamped with a melter's mark. This melter's mark must be registered with the Central Office for Precious Metals Control.

If such ingots are not sold directly to a holder of an assayer-melter's licence, they must be subjected to a fineness analysis before sale.

10.2.2 Resale of own waste (PMCO 171 and 172)

Manufacturers who melt down their own production waste (scrap, filings, etc.) for sale must hold an individual melter's licence issued by the Central Office for Precious Metals Control. The melt products intended for sale must be stamped with the individual melter's mark.

If such ingots are not sold directly to a holder of an assayer-melter's licence, they must be subjected to a fineness analysis before sale.

10.2.3 Resale of old gold or old silver in retail outlets (second-hand jewellery)

The resale of second-hand jewellery or other second-hand objects carries risks. Often such objects do not meet the requirements of the precious metals control legislation (missing marks, parts containing precious metals of lower fineness, parts made of base metal that are not permitted, excess solder, etc.). Such objects must therefore be carefully inspected before re-use and formally brought in order before resale. They may be submitted to an Assay Office for examination.

10.3 Re-use of old gold or old silver as raw material for manufacturing

The use of such material carries risks (parts of lower fineness, excess solder, parts made of base metal). The re-use of the precious metals from the purchase of old gold and old silver is not recommended.

10.4 List of recognised assayer-melters (PMCO 168d and 178)

The following directories and lists are available online:

- Directory of holders of melter's licences and assayer's licences:
[Melting and assaying of precious metals](#)
- Lists of internationally recognised assayer-melters ("Good delivery" - list):
 - Gold + silver:
<http://www.lbma.org.uk/good-delivery-list>
 - Platinum + palladium:
www.lppm.com/display.aspx?type=gooddelivery

11 Inspections (PMCA 38; PMCO 15)

The Precious Metals Control inspects all companies that produce articles subject to the Precious Metals Act, trade in them or carry out activities for which a licence is required (manufacturing companies, goldsmiths' workshops, wholesalers, retail shops, mail order companies, department stores, boutiques, etc.).

These inspections are usually pre-announced. The aim of the inspections is to ensure, on the one hand, that all articles manufactured, stored and put up for sale comply with the regulations and, on the other hand, that the provisions on the melting of old gold, old silver and waste containing precious metals are respected. Moreover, the visits also facilitate personal contacts and provide information.

The officer in charge of the inspection has the right to:

- inspect the business;
- check the factory, warehouse and sales area;
- take objects away for closer examination;
- request information and inspect documents – in particular invoices and inventory lists.

The persons in charge of the business are obliged to cooperate and to provide the necessary information.

12 Organisational measures

List of Assay Offices and their business areas (PMCO 15)

Assay Office	Business area
Biel with the subdivisions Le Noirmont and Villars-sur-Glâne	French-speaking parts of the cantons of Bern and Fribourg, canton of Jura and canton of Neuchâtel (for inspections)
Chiasso	Canton of Ticino and the Italian-speaking part of the canton of Graubünden
Geneva	Cantons of Geneva and Vaud, and the French-speaking part of the canton of Valais
Zurich with the subdivision Basel	All German-speaking cantons, the German-speaking parts of the cantons of Bern, Fribourg and Valais; the Principality of Liechtenstein
La Chaux-de-Fonds (cantonal)	Canton of Neuchâtel (operations)

13 Final provisions

These instructions enter into force on 01 March 2022.

As of this date, all previous instructions issued by the Central Office that contradict them are repealed, namely:

- Instructions on the application of the Precious Metals Control Legislation (IPMC) of 01 April 2021.