

In the Netherlands precious metal objects have been assayed for their precious metal content for more than 600 years. This is therefore the oldest form of Dutch consumer protection. The hallmark on your piece of jewellery or utensil guarantees its level of platinum, gold and/or silver. There must be a hallmark, which is recognised in the Netherlands, on every piece of jewellery or utensil that you buy in this country

Dutch fineness marks (standards)

Platinum	large and small new objects	large and small used objects
	EWN	EWN
950 thousandths		

Gold	large new objects	small new objects	large and small used objects
		EWN	EWN
916 thousandths (22 carat)			
833 thousandths (20 carat)			
750 thousandths (18 carat)			
585 thousandths (14 carat)			

Silver	large new objects	small new objects	large and small used objects
		EWN	EWN
925 thousandths (1 ^e level)			
835 thousandths (2 ^e level)			
800 thousandths (3 ^e level)			

In addition to the standard mark, an assay office mark and date letter are also applied to larger objects. The assay office mark indicates where the object was assayed and the date letter, the year in which the object was assayed. The assay office marks currently in use for platinum, gold and silver, and the date letters for a number of years, are shown below.

Assay office marks

assay office	Edelmetaal Waarborg Nederland
platinum and gold	
silver	

Date letters

	2000		2008
	2001		2009
	2002		2010
	2003		2011
	2004		2012
	2005		2013
	2006		2014
	2007		2015

International Convention standard marks

The International Convention standard marks given below, together with a Sponsor's mark, a fineness mark in thousandths and an assay office mark, are also valid in the Netherlands.

Platinum	Gold	Silver

Assay office marks applied with International Convention fineness marks
Edelmetaal Waarborg Nederland

For more information:

Edelmetaal Waarborg Nederland (EWN), Joure, the Netherlands : +31 (0) 513 - 468 111 www.ewnederland.nl

Introduction

The Assay Act 1986 guarantees, by means of legal hallmarks, that an object contains the correct level of platinum, gold and/or silver. Every platinum, gold or silver object sold in the Netherlands must have a hallmark that is valid in this country.

Illustrations of Dutch legal hallmarks are shown overleaf.

Hallmarks from Finland, France, Ireland, Austria, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and Sweden are also valid, if applied by an independent assay office appointed by the government.

More information about this is available from Dutch assay offices.

Furthermore, the words platinum, gold, silver and/or precious metal may not be used for objects that do not meet the minimum statutory fineness. Failure to observe this and other stipulations of the Assay Act is an economic offence, made punishable by the Economic Offences Act (WED).

The buyer of objects made from platinum, gold or silver is therefore well protected.

When buying an object, look for hallmarks:

They are your guarantee!

Precious metal alloys

Pure platinum, gold and silver are too soft to be made into jewellery or utensils. They are therefore mixed with base metals to achieve a sufficiently hard material to work with.

The quantity of precious metal in such an alloy is called the fineness of the alloy. The fineness is given in parts (by weight) per 1000 of the alloy. For example, 750 thousandths of gold means that there are 750 parts of pure gold in 1000 parts of gold alloy. The old designation "carat" is also used for gold (pure gold is 24 carat).

The precious metal alloy from which the object is made is assayed for one of the legal fineness standards and guaranteed by the application of a standard mark on the object. A distinction is made between new and used objects.

Standard marks

The standard mark, together with the Sponsor's mark, guarantees the fineness of precious metal of new objects ("small hallmark"). The Sponsor's mark is the mark of the supervisor or importer responsible for the fabrication or import of the object.

Large objects carry the standard mark, the Sponsor's mark, the assay office mark and a date letter ("large hallmark"). In the case of used objects, only the standard mark is applied.

Assay office marks

The symbol for the assay office mark for platinum and gold objects is the head of a lion. The symbol for silver objects is the head of Minerva (see overleaf).

There is a letter in these symbols designating the assay office that carried out the assay and applied the stamp to the object.

For 1988 the following cities are represented by the letters preceding them:

A Amsterdam	B Utrecht
C The Hague	D Rotterdam
E Groningen	F Leeuwarden
G Zwolle	H Arnhem
I Breda	K Den Bosch
L Middelburg	M Schoonhoven
N Maastricht	O Roermond
P Alkmaar	Q Roosendaal

Current Assay offices:

J Joure	2002 - today
R Gouda	1988 - today

Date letters

The date letter indicates the year in which the object was assayed. Twenty-five letters of the alphabet are used over and over again for the date letters. The design of the letters is different in each series. In the years in which the Queen of the Netherlands was crowned (1948 and 1980), a crown is placed above the date letter.

More information is available on this topic from the assay offices.

Q 2000*	W 2006	C 2012	I 2018
R 2001	X 2007	D 2013	J 2019
S 2002	Y 2008	E 2014	K 2020
T 2003	Z 2009	F 2015	L 2021
U 2004	A 2010	G 2016	M 2022
V 2005	B 2011	H 2017	N 2023

* on request in 2000 with millennium mark:



Metal stamps

Objects with hallmarks may also consist of parts made from base metals. This is legally permissible provided that there is an indication on the base metal parts showing that they are not platinum, gold or silver.

Examples of such marks are: metal, METAL, steel, titanium, palladium, copper, etc. It is not always possible to apply a stamp of this kind to the base metal part and in this case, it is placed on the precious metal part of the object.

If the assay office applies this mark, the mark below is always used. The "METAL" mark and the legally prescribed standard mark are placed adjacently, touching one another.



Objects made from two precious metals can, under certain conditions, also be given two standard marks, for example for gold and silver.

Sponsor's marks

If a new object of precious metal is offered for sale on the Dutch market, in addition to a standard mark that is valid in the Netherlands, the object must also carry a Sponsor's mark that is registered in the Netherlands. This mark indicates the supervisor and/or importer responsible for marketing the object.

Sponsor's marks are all unique and registered. Details about the Sponsor's marks registered in

the Netherlands are available from Dutch assay offices.

Hallmarks valid in the Netherlands in accordance with the Vienna Convention

The Netherlands is a member of the International Hallmarking or Vienna Convention. This means that Dutch assay offices can apply the so-called Common Control Mark (CCM) of the Convention to new platinum, gold or silver objects. This hallmark is valid both in the Netherlands and in the other signatory states.

The Convention mark consists of:

1. the Sponsor's mark of the manufacturer or importer
2. a mark giving the fineness in thousandths
3. the applicable Convention's fineness or standard mark (see overleaf)
4. the CCM assay office mark (see overleaf)

Supervision

Verispect B.V. has been entrusted with the supervision of observance of the Assay Act. The employees of Verispect check whether those involved keep to the provisions of the act.

Verispect B.V.

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Assay offices in the Netherlands:

(appointed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs)

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