BRIEF ON HALLMARKING SCHEME

Introduction

Since ancient time Gold is considered as a store house of value in India. In villages, people invest in gold to keep them secured against inflation and to be able to raise loans by mortgaging it in the time of need. A large number of artisans buy gold to handcraft magnificent jewellery for domestic as well as export market. In recent years annual demand for gold has been in the range of 600 - 800 tonnes.

Background

Gold is too soft to withstand wear, therefore, for jewellery making, gold is always alloyed with some other metal. The need for alloying of gold also makes public extremely vulnerable to excessive adulteration. Detection of adulteration in gold is difficult without performing technical tests. The complex nature of Indian jewellery, mostly made of high caratage gold and containing numerous soldered joints of lower caratage, makes determination of purity more difficult. In addition, 24 carat plating of articles of low caratage is also common. The common consumer, though well aware of such malpractices, still requires an independent means of assurance of purity.

It was in this background that Government of India took cognizance of the need for protecting consumers. A mandate was, therefore, given to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Standing Committee on Gold and Precious Metals to look into the issues relating to standardization of Gold products and introduction of Gold Hallmarking in the country. The Committee identified Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in the year 2000 as the sole agency to operate the Hallmarking Scheme in India, and entrusted BIS with the task of implementing hallmarking scheme to protect the consumer against cheating, develop export competitiveness and make India a leading market for gold jewellery in the world. The Scheme for Hallmarking of Silver articles was launched later in 2005.

Hallmarking

Hallmarking is the accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in jewellery/artefacts or bullion/coins. The legal and operational framework is governed by the BIS Act, 2016, BIS Rules, 2018 and BIS (Hallmarking) Regulations, 2018, as amended from time to time, together with the applicable Quality Control Orders (QCOs) and BIS guidelines. Mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery/artefacts was introduced on 23 June 2021 in 256 districts. Through successive amendments, the coverage has since expanded to 392 districts as per the latest amendment dated 03 August 2026 reflected on the BIS Mandatory Hallmarking Order page. The hallmarking scheme for gold jewellery and artefacts presently covers seven gold caratages: 9K, 14K, 18K, 20K, 22K, 23K and 24KS.

Key exemptions under the current mandatory gold-hallmarking framework include, subject to the conditions in the applicable QCOs/guidelines, gold articles below 2 grams, Kundan/Polki/Jadau articles, specified export/re-export and exhibition cases, medical/dental/veterinary/scientific/industrial articles, incomplete articles for further manufacture, gold bullion, gold thread, and certain other specified categories/turnover exemptions. These exemptions should always be read with the latest notified order and BIS clarification/guidelines.

For hallmarking of jewellery, a jeweller willing to sell hallmarked jewellery/artefacts has to obtain a Certificate of Registration from BIS through the National Single Window System (NSWS). The one-time registration is granted instantly, without registration fee, with lifetime validity, and the certificate can be downloaded from the portal. The NSWS registration is linked with the Manakonline/HUID ecosystem for

hallmarking operations. The latest jeweller guidelines also recognise corporate registration, under which the head/registered office applies with the list of retail outlets

The registered jeweller submits precious metal articles to a BIS-recognized Assaying & Hallmarking Centre (AHC), where the articles are received, weighed, tested and, if conforming to the applicable standard, hallmarked.

An AHC can apply online for BIS recognition through Manakonline portal. Recognition and related processes, including scrutiny, assessment/audit, reporting, grant of recognition and renewal, are processed through the online workflow. The revised Guidelines for Recognition & Operation of AHCs (Doc. No. HM/AHC/Guideline/4, June 2026), implemented w.e.f. 29 June 2026, introduced stage-wise and overall timelines, integrated Off-Site Centre (OSC) provisions and restricted OSC establishment to deficient districts, reduced the pre-recognition audit requirement from 4 man-days to 2 man-days, and simplified grouping guidelines by removing fineness-based classification.

Earlier (before 1 July 2021), hallmarked jewellery carried four marks: BIS Mark; purity in carat and fineness for gold / fineness for silver; Assay Centre identification; and Jeweller identification. With the introduction of the HUID system from 1 July 2021, gold jewellery/artefacts moved to three hallmark components: BIS Standard Mark, purity/caratage & fineness, and a six-digit alphanumeric HUID. The HUID can be verified through the Verify HUID feature of the BIS Care App.

For silver, the revised IS 2112:2025 replaced IS 2112:2014. From 01 September 2025, HUID-based hallmarking for silver jewellery/artefacts was introduced on a voluntary basis; however, any silver article submitted for hallmarking under the BIS Scheme is required to bear the HUID-based hallmark. The revised silver hallmark consists of BIS Standard Mark with the word “SILVER”, Purity Grade and six-digit HUID.

BIS has developed an end-to-end digital solution for hallmarking operations. The jeweller submits the hallmarking request online and the AHC workflow covers inward receipt, weighment, XRF, sampling, fire assay and laser marking through Manakonline. Recent process upgradations deployed in 2026 include integrated weighing-balance capture of gross weight, and microbalance integration for assay-sheet/sample/check-gold weights, disabling manual keyboard entry of weighment. A provision for photographs and automatic weight-capture of hallmarked gold articles was deployed w.e.f. 08 June 2026, also available on BIS Care APP for verification by consumer before sale.

The Indian Standard on Gold Hallmarking, IS 1417:2016, provides the applicable fineness/marking specifications. The current mandatory-hallmarking framework covers seven gold caratages: 9K, 14K, 18K, 20K, 22K, 23K and 24KS. The corresponding minimum fineness values are 375, 585, 750, 833, 916, 958 and 995 ppt respectively. IS 1417 also provides the applicable requirements for hallmarking and testing of gold jewellery/artefacts.

IS 2112:2014 previously specified the silver grades 990, 970, 925, 900, 835 and 800. The current standard is IS 2112:2025 (fourth revision) read along with its Amendment No. 1 published in October 2026, supersedes IS 2112:2014 and specifies eight silver purity grades: 800, 835, 900, 925, 958, 970, 990 and 999 ppt.

Hallmarking charges payable by jewellers to recognized AHCs are currently: Gold - Rs. 75/- per article, with minimum consignment fee of Rs. 200/-; Silver - Rs. 35/- per article, with minimum consignment fee of Rs. 150/-. The corresponding BIS levy from AHCs is Rs. 7.50 per gold article (minimum Rs. 20/- per consignment) and Rs. 3.50 per silver article (minimum Rs. 15/- per consignment). Applicable taxes as per prevalent rates shall be payable in addition to above.

BIS carries out market surveillance of registered jewellers and surveillance/assessment of AHCs. The latest Jeweller Guidelines provide that efforts shall be made to carry out at least one market surveillance every year

for registered jewellers, including corporate registrations, with no prior intimation of the visit. Surveillance may be carried out by a BIS Hallmarking Representative (BHR) and/or BIS staff.

A registered jeweller shall maintain the required display and verification facilities at the sales outlet, including the BIS “Hallmarked Jewellery Available for Sale” display, BIS registration certificate, hallmark components, 10X magnifying glass, suitable weighing balance, BIS contact details, hallmarking charges and BIS Care/Verify HUID information.

For sale invoices, separate article description, net precious-metal weight, purity/caratage & fineness and hallmarking charges are required; the invoice shall also mention that the consumer can get purity verified at any BIS-recognized AHC. This applies to retail as well as jeweller-to-jeweller (B2B) transactions.

For hallmarking of gold and silver bullion and coins, BIS licensing is applicable to eligible refineries/mints, with marking at the manufacturing stage in accordance with the applicable standards and regulations. Grant and renewal of refinery/mint licensing are processed online through Manakonline.

Growth of Hallmarking Scheme

As on 15 October 2026, there are 2,36,624 BIS-registered operative jewellers (Gold: 2,10,155; Silver: 26,469) and 1,565 BIS-recognized Assaying and Hallmarking Centres (AHCs) (Gold: 1,561; Silver: 327).

Mandatory gold hallmarking covers 392 districts across the country. Since the introduction of HUID-based hallmarking in July 2021, over 65 crore gold jewellery articles have been hallmarked with HUID.

For silver, the HUID-based hallmarking system has been made operational w.e.f 01 September 2025 under IS 2112:2025, and over 90 lakh silver articles have been hallmarked with HUID.