



BSI Standards Publication

**Jewellery — Determination
of precious metals in 999 ‰
gold, platinum and palladium
jewellery alloys — Difference
method using ICP-OES**

National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of ISO 15093:2015. It supersedes BS ISO 15093:2008 which is withdrawn.

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A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

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Second edition
2015-02-01

**Jewellery — Determination of precious
metals in 999⁰/₀₀ gold, platinum
and palladium jewellery alloys —
Difference method using ICP-OES**

*Joallerie, bijouterie — Dosage des métaux précieux dans les alliages
d'or, de platine et de palladium 999⁰/₀₀ pour la joallerie, bijouterie
— Méthode de la différence utilisant l'ICP-OES*



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see the following URL: [Foreword — Supplementary information](#).

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 174, *Jewellery*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 15093:2008), which has been technically revised with following changes:

- change in [Clause 1](#) that this method is the referee method;
- addition of a warning in [Clause 7](#) that suitable health and safety procedures should be followed;
- change of calibration solutions in [7.2](#) ;
- addition of an alternative wavelength for gold in [Table A.1](#);
- editorial revision of this International Standard.

Introduction

The following definitions apply in understanding how to implement an ISO International Standard and other normative ISO deliverables (TS, PAS, IWA).

- “shall” indicates a requirement;
- “should” indicates a recommendation;
- “may” is used to indicate that something is permitted;
- “can” is used to indicate that something is possible, for example, that an organization or individual is able to do something.

ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (sixth edition, 2011), 3.3.1 defines a requirement as an “expression in the content of a document conveying criteria to be fulfilled if compliance with the document is to be claimed and from which no deviation is permitted.”

ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (sixth edition, 2011), 3.3.2 defines a recommendation as an “expression in the content of a document conveying that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited.”

Jewellery — Determination of precious metals in 999 0/00 gold, platinum and palladium jewellery alloys — Difference method using ICP-OES

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies an analytical procedure for the determination of either platinum in platinum jewellery alloys, gold in gold jewellery alloys, or palladium in palladium jewellery alloys, with a nominal content of each precious metal of 999 ‰ (parts per thousand) by measuring specific elements. (See [Tables A.1, A.2, and A.3.](#))

This International Standard specifies a method intended to be used as the recommended method for the determination of fineness in 999 ‰ alloys covered by ISO 9202.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 11596, *Jewellery — Sampling of precious metal alloys for and in jewellery and associated products*

3 Principle

The samples of the precious metal alloy are weighed and dissolved in aqua regia to prepare a 10 g/l solution. The impurities are determined by ICP-OES, and the precious metals content is obtained by subtraction of the total content of impurities in the sample from 1 000 ‰.

4 Sampling

The sampling procedure shall be performed in accordance with ISO 11596.

5 Reagents

During the analysis, unless otherwise stated, use only reagents of recognized analytical grade and only distilled water or water of equivalent purity.

5.1 Hydrochloric acid (HCl), approximately 30 % to 37 % HCl (mass fraction).

5.2 Nitric acid (HNO₃), approximately 65 % to 70 % HNO₃ (mass fraction).

5.3 Aqua regia (should be prepared just before use).

Mix three volumes of hydrochloric acid ([5.1](#)) and one volume of nitric acid ([5.2](#)).

5.4 Acid stock solution (may contain both chlorides and nitrates), all relevant elements (100 mg/l each) in 1 mol/l HCl ([5.1](#)) and 1 mol/l HNO₃ ([5.2](#)).

5.5 Reference materials: gold, platinum, or palladium, of 999,9 ‰ minimum purity in a suitable form.

The content of each impurity shall be specified.

6 Apparatus

6.1 Customary laboratory apparatus.

6.2 ICP OES, with

- fixed and/or scanning channels,
- an optical resolution of 0,02 nm for the relevant elements and a detection limit of 0,05 mg/l or better, and
- the capability of background correction.

For preferably used wavelength, see [Annex A](#).

6.3 Analytical balance, with a reading accuracy of 0,01 mg.

7 Procedure

WARNING — Suitable health and safety procedures should be followed.

7.1 Sample solution

For each sample to be analysed, two sample solutions shall be prepared as follows.

Weigh approximately 500 mg of the sample portion to the nearest 0,1 mg, transfer into a 50 ml volumetric flask, and add 30 ml of aqua regia ([5.3](#)). Heat gently until complete dissolution of the sample and continue to heat to expel the nitrogen oxides. Allow to cool, make up with water to 50 ml, and mix thoroughly.

The deviation in the volume of the volumetric flask caused by heating is acceptable for this International Standard.

If insolubles are observed, dissolution under pressure should be performed.

7.2 Calibration solutions

Weigh two portions of $(500 \pm 2,5)$ mg of the reference material ([5.5](#)) and dissolve each one as specified in [7.1](#).

Blank solution. Allow to cool and then make up with water to 50 ml and mix thoroughly.

Calibration solution. Allow to cool, add 5 ml of acid stock solution ([5.4](#)) or a volume corresponding to the expected amount of the trace element in the matrix to the second reference material solution, make up with water to 50 ml, and mix thoroughly.

7.3 Measurement

Set up the instrument in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and choose appropriate background correction positions. A clean torch, spray chamber, and sample uptake tubes shall be used and the plasma shall be stabilized before use, following the recommendations of the instruments manufacturer.

Spray the calibration solutions 1 and 2 in accordance with the defined instrument calibration procedure and then run the analytical procedure for the sample solutions. The result shall be displayed with enough decimal places to provide an accurate indication of concentrations at the detection limits of the relevant elements.

Each solution shall have a stabilization time of at least 30 s, followed by five integrations of at least 5 s each for the determination of the net intensities (i.e. background-corrected).

The rinsing time between each measurement shall be sufficient to allow the signal to come back to the baseline, except for the matrix element.

The intensity of the chosen matrix line (see [Tables A.1, A.2, and A.3](#)) shall not be included in the calculation as described in [8.2](#).

8 Calculation and expression of the test results

8.1 Calibration curves

Set the concentration in the blank solution and the calibration solution, taking into account impurities introduced in the solution by the reference material ([5.5](#)) and calculate the calibration curve for each element using the net intensities obtained for the blank solution and the calibration solution.

8.2 Calculation

By means of the calibration curves (see [8.1](#)), convert the net intensity values into concentration values and use Formula (1) to calculate the mass portion of each relevant element (W_i).

$$W_i = \frac{c_i \cdot V_s}{m_s} \quad (1)$$

where

c_i is the concentration of element i in the sample solution, in mg/l;

V_s is the volume of the sample solution, in litres;

m_s is the mass of the metallic sample, in milligrams.

The detection limit is defined as three standard deviations of the concentration of each individual element measured in the calibration solution.

The specific precious metal fineness, W_{sp} , in parts per thousand, is thus calculated using Formula (2).

$$W_{sp} = 1000 - \left(\sum W_i \cdot 1000 \right) \quad (2)$$

where

$\sum W_i$ is the sum of the mass portion of each element found above its detection limit.

8.3 Repeatability

The results of duplicate determinations shall not deviate more than 0,1 ‰ of the precious metal fineness. If the variation is greater than this, the assay shall be repeated.

9 Test report

The test report shall include at least the following information:

- identification of the sample including source, date of receipt, and form of sample;
- sampling procedure;
- the method used by reference to this International Standard, i.e. ISO 15093;

- d) precious metals content of the sample, in parts per thousand (‰) by mass, as single values and mean values, with the result reported with four significant figures;
- e) if relevant, any deviations from the method specified in this International Standard;
- f) any unusual features observed during the determination;
- g) date of test;
- h) identification of the laboratory carrying out this analysis;
- i) signature of the laboratory manager and operator.

Annex A (normative)

Wavelengths

Other wavelengths than those specified in [Tables A.1](#), [A.2](#), and [A.3](#) may be used. In all cases, attention shall be paid to spectral interferences. These tables are not exhaustive. If other elements are present, they shall be analysed.

Table A.1 — Platinum

Element	Wavelength nm	Alternative nm	Element	Wavelength nm	Alternative nm
Ag	328,068	—	Ni	352,454	231,604
Au	242,795	267,595	Pb	168,220	220,353
Bi	223,061	—	Pt ^a	224,552	273,396
Cd	226,502	—	Pd	340,458	355,308
Co	228,616	238,892	Rh	343,489	—
Cu	324,754	—	Ru	240,272	—
Fe	259,94	—	Sn	189,989	—
Ir	215,278	—	Ti	334,941	—
Mn	257,610	—	Zn	213,856	—

^a Suggested matrix line (see [7.3](#)).

Table A.2 — Gold

Element	Wavelength nm	Alternative nm	Element	Wavelength nm	Alternative nm
Ag	328,068	—	Ni	352,454	231,604
Au ^a	389,789	302,920	Pb	168,220	220,353
Bi	223,061	—	Pd	340,458	355,308
Cd	228,802	226,502	Pt	306,471	203,646
Co	228,616	238,892	Rh	343,489	—
Cu	324,754	—	Ru	240,272	—
Fe	259,94	—	Sn	189,989	189,927
Ir	215,278	—	Ti	334,941	—
Mn	257,610	—	Zn	213,856	—

^a Suggested matrix line (see [7.3](#)).

Table A.3 — Palladium

Element	Wavelength nm	Alternative nm	Element	Wavelength nm	Alternative nm
Ag	328,068	—	Ni	352,454	231,604
Au	242,795	—	Pd ^a	248,892	229,651
Bi	223,061	—	Pt	306,471	203,646
Cd	228,802	226,502	Pb	220,353	—
Co	228,616	238,892	Rh	343,489	—
Cu	324,754	—	Ru	240,272	—
Fe	259,94	—	Sn	189,989	189,927
Ir	215,278	—	Ti	334,941	—
Mn	257,610	—	Zn	213,856	—

^a Suggested matrix line (see 7.3).

Bibliography

- [1] ISO 9202, *Jewellery — Fineness of precious metal alloys*

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