



RESPONSIBLE  
JEWELLERY  
COUNCIL

# CHAIN OF CUSTODY

STANDARD

DECEMBER 2024

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## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The following documents offer supporting information to help entities implement the COC Standard:



[RJC COC Guidance](#)



[RJC Glossary](#)



Further supporting documents, appendices and references to assist with implementing this document, can be found on the [RJC website](#) and on the [member portal](#).

Key defined terms in this document are in *italics* and can be found in the [glossary](#).

### ENQUIRIES, FEEDBACK OR COMPLAINTS


We welcome feedback on the Chain of Custody standard. If you have any inquiries, feedback or complaints, please contact: [consultation@responsiblejewellery.com](mailto:consultation@responsiblejewellery.com) +44 (0)207 321 0992

The Responsible Jewellery Council is the trading name of the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices Ltd, 1st Floor, 11 Gough square, London, EC4A 3DE.

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Compliance with the RJC COC standard is entirely voluntary and is neither intended to, nor does it, create, establish or recognise any legally enforceable obligations or rights against the RJC and/or its members or signatories.



# Our vision is a responsible worldwide supply chain that promotes trust in the global jewellery and watch industry

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is a not-for-profit standard-setting organisation founded in 2005.

## **ABOUT THIS STANDARD**

This standard defines an approach for companies to handle and trade gold, silver and platinum group metals (PGM) in a way that is fully traceable and responsibly sourced. Chain-of-custody (COC) certification is voluntary and complements certification against the RJC's Code of Practices (COP), which is mandatory for all RJC members.

This is a 'version controlled document' and the RJC reserves the right to revise this standard based on implementation experience and emerging good practice. The version posted on the RJC website supersedes all other versions. Please see [www.responsiblejewellery.com](http://www.responsiblejewellery.com)

# Introduction

## ABOUT THE RJC CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARD

A chain of custody (COC) is a documented sequence of custody of material as it moves along the supply chain. The RJC's COC standard, first developed in 2012, defines the requirements for creating a COC of precious metals that are responsibly produced, processed and traded through jewellery supply chains, and that are third-party assured at every stage.

The standard complements the RJC's Code of Practices (COP) for responsible business, against which all commercial members of the RJC must be certified. The COC Standard sets out the requirements needed for certification and is voluntary for RJC members.

RJC COC certification provides a strong process for companies in the precious metal supply chain seeking a point of differentiation for their customers, consumers and other stakeholders. This can add value to jewellery products and help protect and enhance jewellery brands.

Recognising that jewellery supply chain companies have varied needs in third-party assured approaches to responsible sourcing and provenance, there is also the option to have provenance claims included in the scope of COP certification. Certified provenance claims can be adapted to suit particular supply chain needs. This option is available to entities dealing in materials outside the scope of the COC standard including diamonds and coloured gemstones who may want to make claims about implementing systems of segregation and traceability.

Certification against the RJC COC standard illustrates an entity's conformance against the requirements of the COC. The member's certification scope is defined by the entity seeking certification and includes all facilities and outsourcing contractors that the entity intends to use to process, store, handle, ship and receive COC material.

## COC CERTIFICATION AT A GLANCE

- Allows for traceable material which is segregated along the supply chain.
- Requires third-party auditing at every stage of the supply chain.
- Is designed to promote responsible sourcing from artisanal and small-scale mining.
- Starts with responsible sources which meet eligibility criteria.
- Is voluntary, and applies to gold and platinum group metals (PGM) – platinum, palladium, rhodium.



## Introduction

### STATUS AND EFFECTIVE DATE

This is the 2024 version of the RJC COC standard, which was approved by the RJC Board on 19 November 2024. The first COC standard was formally adopted by the RJC Board in 2012 and updated in 2017. This latest version is the outcome of a formal revision, and takes account of certification experience, evolving standards and stakeholder feedback.

The 2024 version supersedes the 2017 version of the standard, but a transition period has been established to enable RJC members seeking certification to follow through with existing planning and certification deadlines. During this transition period, all existing COC certifications will remain in place, and entities will not need to get re-certified until the end of their current certification period.

### STANDARD'S DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW

This standard has been developed through a formal process, following the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards. The process was overseen by the multistakeholder RJC Standards Committee, and the RJC is sincerely grateful for the time, expertise and valuable input of the committee members, as well as the many individuals and organisations who contributed to the standard through consultation.

We strive to ensure that our standards are relevant and achievable and to this end we undertake to formally review this standard by 2029 (five years after publication of this revised version), or earlier as required. Proposals for revisions or clarifications can be submitted at any time, and we will document these for consideration in the next review process.

Standard's harmonisation is a key objective of the RJC. Our Certification Process Requirements document provides information on the initiatives and existing certifications that are recognised towards RJC certification. At the time of publication of the 2024 COC standard, this includes:

- Fairtrade Standard for Gold from Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining, including Associated Precious Metals
- Fairmined Gold Standard for Gold from Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining, including Associated Precious Metals
- The Mining Association of Canada Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) programme
- The International Council on Mining and Metals' (ICMM) sustainable development framework
- London Bullion Market Association (LBMA): Responsible Gold Guidance
- Responsible Minerals Initiative: Gold Supply Chain Transparency Smelter Audit Standard and Instruction
- Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) Rules for Risk Based Due Diligence in the Gold and Precious Metals Supply Chain (DMCC Rules for RBD-GPM)
- World Gold Council Conflict-Free Gold Standard

We will continue to monitor relevant supply chain initiatives and look for opportunities to harmonise our efforts.

# Chain-of-Custody Management



## 01 MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1 The *entity* shall have documented *management systems* that address all applicable requirements of the RJC COC standard in all facilities under its control that have custody of COC material.
- 1.2 The *entity* shall assign authority and responsibility to a *senior staff* member for the *entity's* compliance with all applicable requirements of the COC standard.
- 1.3 The *entity* shall establish and implement communications and training measures that make relevant personnel aware of, and competent in, their responsibilities under the COC standard.
- 1.4 The *entity* shall maintain *records* covering all applicable requirements of the COC standard and shall retain them for a minimum of five years or for as long as defined by national legislation, whichever is longer.
- 1.5 The *entity* shall have *systems* in place that enable it to respond to reasonable requests for verification of the *COC transfer documents* it issues.
- 1.6 The *entity* shall carry out regular reviews at least annually to ensure that its *management systems* are appropriate and up to date.
- 1.7 The *entity* seeking COC certification shall be an RJC member, or under the control of an RJC member, in good standing, certified to the RJC's COP standard 2019 or later and thereby be committed to upholding responsible business practices as defined in the RJC's COP.

## Chain-of-Custody Management

### 02 INTERNAL MATERIAL CONTROLS

- 2.1 The *entity* shall identify each point at which there is an opportunity for eligible and/or *COC material* in its custody to become mixed with non-eligible and/or non-COC material, and shall put controls in place to ensure segregation.
- 2.2 The *entity's* internal *systems* shall be able to reconcile the total weight of eligible and/or COC material in its custody with movements in and out of the inventory over a given time. If the *entity* has custody of *jewellery products* containing COC material, reconciliation may be by item count rather than weight.
- 2.3 If the *entity* issues a *COC transfer document* for *COC material* identified as having a certain provenance or other characteristic, the *entity's* internal *systems* shall ensure that the requirements for segregation and reconciliation as set out in provisions 2.1 and 2.2 are met in order to help segregate that COC material.
- 2.4 The *entity's* internal *systems* shall verify and document that the contents of each shipment of *COC material* received from, or dispatched to, other entities, *outsourcing contractors* or *service companies* certified to the COC standard are accurately described by the applicable *COC transfer document* for that shipment or through equivalent *records* in cases where the use of a transfer document has been suspended in line with the requirements in provision 9.4. If an error is discovered after *COC material* has been shipped, the *entity* and the other party shall document the error and take the agreed steps to correct it.
- 2.5 Refiner entities shall additionally:
  - a. Maintain internal material control *systems* that can uniquely identify the *origin* of each material including date received, quantity and assay, and reconcile movement of inventory in and out.
  - b. Collect information on the mine of *origin* of mined *gold* received, and *source* and type of recycled *gold* received, and annually:
    - i. Submit this information to the RJC
    - ii. Report this information publicly, with due regard to *business confidentiality*.

## Chain-of-Custody Management

### 03 OUTSOURCING CONTRACTORS AND SERVICE COMPANIES

- 3.1 The *entity* shall not transfer *COC material* to an *outsourcing contractor* or *service company* unless the following conditions have been met:
- The *entity* shall have, and shall not relinquish, legal ownership of any *COC material* transferred to the *outsourcing contractor* or *service company*.
  - The *entity* shall assess the risk of potential non-conformance with this standard resulting from engaging each *outsourcing contractor* or *service company* that takes custody of the *entity's COC material*, and determine, based on that risk assessment, that the risk is acceptable.
  - Any *outsourcing contractor* that takes custody of an *entity's COC material* shall be included in the *entity's certification scope* and shall have a *management system* in place that conforms with provision 2 of this standard (on internal material control).
  - Any *outsourcing contractor* included in the *entity's certification scope* shall not outsource any processing of *COC material* to any other contractor.
- 3.2 For the return of *COC material* from an *outsourcing contractor* or *service company*:
- The *entity* shall verify and record that each transfer it receives for the return of *COC material* is consistent with the *COC transfer document* that it issued when the *COC material* was shipped to the *outsourcing contractor* or *service company*, subject to any changes to the *COC material* expected as a result of the *outsourcing contractor's* processing or manufacturing activities.
  - If there are inconsistencies, the *entity* shall not issue any subsequent *COC transfer documents* for that material.
  - Where material has been provided to an outsourced contractor without a transfer document and surplus material is being returned, the member shall have *systems* in place to verify that the material being returned has come from a specific consignment, and that it is still identifiable either through the items or components being of a unique nature or the packaging remaining intact.
- 3.3 Where the *entity transfers* finished products to the final *customers* through owned or affiliated distribution entities, the following conditions shall be met:
- No further processing or transformation of the *finished jewellery products* shall be undertaken from the point at which the products have been transferred to the legal ownership or custody of the affiliated *entity* other than as described in 3.1b.
  - The *entity* shall assess the risk of potential non-conformance with this standard resulting from the *operations* of an affiliated *entity* involved in the distribution, logistics and retail of *COC material*, and determine, based on that risk assessment, that the risk is acceptable.
  - Any affiliated *entity* involved in the logistics, distribution or retail of finished *COC jewellery products* shall not outsource the distribution, logistics or retail of such products to any external contractor or *service company* other than as described in provision 3.1.



## Chain-of-Custody Management

### 04 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF COC MATERIAL

- 4.1 The *entity* shall have *systems* in place to verify that material sold as COC and being returned and accepted for reintegration into the COC pipeline is traceable to specific transactions and transfer documents and that there is no risk that the material being returned has been substituted, modified or adulterated by the inclusion of non-COC *material*. The requirements apply whether ownership of the material has passed to the *counterparty* or whether material has been supplied on approval or by a similar arrangement.
- 4.2 In the event that all or part of a shipment supplied as COC is returned by the original *counterparty*, the member must verify that the material is the same and retain *records* of the checks made, which will include:
  - a. *Due diligence* of the *counterparty*.
  - b. Assessment of risk of substitution/modification or adulteration (this would mean that where the verification relied on tamper-evident packaging, only sealed packs can be accepted).
  - c. Verification of how material is stored while with the *counterparty*.
  - d. Dates and reference numbers of all relevant transactions.
  - e. Identification numbers (or other means of identification).
  - f. Visual identification, including drawings, photographs, markings etc.
  - g. Any other evidence including *records* of the reasons for the return.
- 4.3 Returns from a COC-*certified member* shall be clearly documented with the reference of the original transaction, together with a warranty that the material has been in the physical possession of the *entity* making the return from the time of the original consignment until the point of return, and accompanied by a transfer document, unless the use of the transfer document has been suspended in accordance with provision 9.4.
- 4.4 Returns from a non-COC-*certified member* can only be accepted for reintegration if they are finished products packed in their original tamper-proof packaging or comprising one single component and bearing a unique serial number, and shall be clearly documented with the reference of the original transaction, together with a warranty that the material has been in the physical possession of the *entity* making the return from the time of the original consignment until the point of return.

# Systems to confirm eligibility of material



## 05 ELIGIBLE MINED MATERIAL

- 5.1 An entity shall have *systems* in place to ensure that *eligible mined material* declarations are only issued for material sourced from the following:
- a. Mines that are within its COC *certification scope* or in which it holds a legal interest and where the mines are within the COC *certification scope* of another COC-certified *entity*.
  - b. Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) producers operating on the *entity's* mining concessions that have participated in initiatives to professionalise and formalise ASM and with documented *due diligence* confirming that the material comes from such ASM producers and not from *illegitimate sources*.
  - c. Mines or producers certified under an RJC-recognised responsible ASM standard, with documented *due diligence* that confirms that the material comes from such mines or producers.
  - d. Mines that are subject to an RJC-accepted responsible mining assurance scheme and validated to conform with the COP standard requirements as defined in provision 5.2.
  - e. Processing residues that contain traces of precious metals from which mining by-product can be extracted, for which an *eligible material declaration* may only be issued by the refiner.
  - f. *Tailings* originating from an active mine that conforms with provisions 5.1a–d, from which precious metals can be extracted, and for which an *eligible material declaration* may only be issued as defined under those provisions, or *tailings* from a mine that has ceased *operations*, supported by the relevant Know Your Counterparty (KYC) information on the organisation that last owned the mine and/or the *entity* now extracting the tailings, and for which an *eligible material declaration* may only be issued by the refiner.

## Systems to confirm eligibility of material

- 5.2 An *entity* sourcing *eligible material* from mines subject to an RJC-accepted responsible mining assurance scheme under provision 5.1d shall have documentation of having carried out the following validation processes:
- a. A desktop review of the mine's conformance with the COP using the RJC self-assessment workbook and taking into account RJC-accepted mining assurance schemes.
  - b. For each mine identified as High Risk based on the *due diligence* undertaken under the RJC COP, the *entity* shall conduct *enhanced KYC*, using the RJC *enhanced KYC* checklist and including:
    - Additional research on assurance reports and *legal compliance*, covering labour rights, working conditions, legal requirements in the country of *operations* and an assessment of the mine's *compliance*.
    - An in-person verification of all applicable COP provisions, or third-party audit.
  - c. Confirmation of COC eligibility.
- 5.3 An *entity* issuing an *eligible material declaration* for *mined material* shall have documented *due diligence*, in conformance with provision 7 of the COP standard, that can confirm one of the following:
- a. The mine(s) from which the *mined material* is produced, and its transportation routes, are not located in *conflict-affected and high-risk areas*.
  - b. The mine(s) from which the *mined material* is produced, and its transportation routes, are located in *conflict-affected and high-risk areas*, but the production, processing and transportation of the material is confirmed as not having adverse impacts related to those areas.
  - c. The material is a *mining by-product* with suppliers screened according to the *KYC systems and procedures* described in provision 12 of the COP standard.
  - d. The material is recovered from *tailings* from mines or processors that have been assessed in accordance with provision 5.1f.

## Systems to confirm eligibility of material

### 06 ELIGIBLE RECYCLED MATERIAL

- 6.1 An *entity* shall have *systems* in place to ensure that *eligible recycled material* declarations are only issued for:
- a. *Pre-consumer gold, silver or PGM: gold, silver or PGMs* derived from the jewellery and manufacturing *process* or from semi-processed or finished items that have not entered the consumer market but are returned to a refiner or other downstream intermediate processor to begin a new life cycle.
  - b. *Post-consumer gold, silver or PGMs: gold, silver or PGMs* derived from post-consumer precious metal products, such as jewellery and ornaments sourced from *individuals*, organisations or industrial facilities in their role as end-users of a fully assembled product. This includes products that have been used or were intended to be used for their original purpose that are no longer required/desired or can no longer be used for their original purpose.
  - c. Material derived from waste: *gold, silver or PGMs* derived from pre- or post-consumer precious metals or a mix of both, industrial products including waste electrical and electronic equipment, or industrial components such as spent catalysts and fuel cells.
  - d. A mix of the above clearly traceable to eligible *sources*
- Investment materials are excluded from all of the above categories.
- 6.2 The *entity* will make a clear, unequivocal and unambiguous declaration of the category/ categories of the recycled material. If the proportions of the different types of recycled material are declared (such as percentage, weight, etc.), the *entity* shall have *systems* in place to calculate these proportions and retain evidence to support the declarations made.
- 6.3 The COC-certified *entity* shall provide documented criteria for acceptable sources and types of recycled precious metals to counterparties, including:
- a. Companies seeking approval to become commercial suppliers to the *entity*.
  - b. *Private individuals* and estates that wish to sell private materials to the *entity*.
  - c. COC-certified *customers* purchasing *COC material* from the *entity*.
- 6.4 The *entity* shall have documented *procedures* and *records* to approve new commercial suppliers, which shall cover:
- a. Conducting KYC as described in provision 12 of the COP standard to establish the beneficial ownership and principals for all suppliers.
  - b. Reasonable determination of the *origin* of the recyclable material to establish that any material described as 'scrap' or 'waste', whether pre-consumer or post-consumer, can legitimately be accepted as meeting those definitions.
  - c. Ensuring that the *due diligence process* as described in provision 7 of the COP standard covers the supply chain to a sufficient depth to provide confidence on the point of *origin* of recycled materials.
  - d. Denying the supplier if information acquired through the approval *process* provides reasonable evidence to suspect any adverse *human rights* impacts in the supply chain, or the legitimacy of the supplier and/or its *sources*.

## Systems to confirm eligibility of material

- 6.5 The *entity* shall have documented *procedures* and *records* for monitoring commercial suppliers. In addition to *due diligence* and KYC as described in provisions 7 and 12 of the COP standard, these shall cover:
- Maintaining an understanding of the *origin* of the recyclable material.
  - Reviewing the *due diligence* and KYC *policy* and *procedures* of the commercial supplier if it is identified as representing a high risk of introducing *illegitimate sources* into the supply chain. Site visits to verify the supplier's *systems* and *records* should be undertaken proportionate to the risk level.
  - Excluding the supplier from delivering any *COC material* if there is reasonable evidence to suspect the legitimacy of the supplier and/or its *sources* (such as unusual or suspicious transactions, activities or associations) and if, upon investigation, these cannot be cleared of suspicion. Suspicious transactions, activities or associations identified should be reported to the relevant authorities, in accordance with local law.
- 6.6 For *recyclable materials* sourced directly from *private individuals* or estates:
- The *entity* shall have documented *procedures* and *records* for obtaining proof of:
    - the identity of the seller; and
    - the identification of the product containing *recyclable materials*.
  - The *entity* shall make reasonable enquiries and efforts to determine the seller's ownership of the recyclable material to ensure it is not from an *illegitimate source*.

## 07 ELIGIBLE LEGACIED (GRANDFATHERED) MATERIAL

- 7.1 The *entity* shall have *systems* in place to ensure that eligible legacied material declarations are only issued for:
- Gold* and *PGMs* refined before 1 January 2012.
  - Silver* refined before 1 January 2018.
- 7.2 If the refining date does not appear as a permanent part of the item of eligible legacied material, the *entity* shall ensure it obtains and maintains documented evidence of the year the item was produced or minted based on *records* matched to a serial number or refiner's mark stamped on the item or to some other permanent mark or physical characteristic.

# Issuing chain-of-custody documentation



A transfer document shall be issued for each shipment or transfer of COC material dispatched to other certified entities or certified service companies, in accordance with provisions 7 and 8. This document is used as an eligible material declaration to initiate the COC or to record subsequent movement.

## 08 ELIGIBLE MATERIAL DECLARATIONS

- 8.1 The *entity* initiating the COC with an *eligible material declaration* shall document the *eligible material* as one of the following:
- a. Mined, in conformance with provision 5 of this standard.
  - b. Recycled, in conformance with provision 6 of this standard
  - c. Legacied, in conformance with provision 7 of this standard.
  - d. A mix of mined, recycled and/or legacied, each in conformance with the applicable provision of this standard.

## Issuing chain-of-custody documentation

- 8.2 For *eligible mined material*, the *entity* shall include one of the following in the *COC eligible material declaration*:
- A conflict-free declaration that identifies whether provision 5.3a, b or c applies.
  - If provision 5.3b applies (the material has originated from *conflict-affected and high-risk areas* but is confirmed as not having adverse impacts), an appendix summarising the *entity's due diligence* for that material in accordance with provision 7 of the COP standard.
  - If the material is mined, the country or countries where it was extracted.
  - If the material is a *mining by-product*, the main material from which it was extracted and the country or countries where it underwent refining or mineral processing.
  - If the material is *tailings*, the country or countries where it was generated.
- 8.3 When initiating a chain for *COC material* that will be mixed with existing *COC material* before transfer to another *entity*, the *entity* shall record an *eligible material declaration* in an internal *COC transfer document* or maintain such evidence that proves the eligibility of the material.

### 09 COC SHIPMENTS AND TRANSFER DOCUMENTS

- The *entity* shall ensure that a *COC transfer document* accompanies and is either physically attached or digitally linked to each shipment or transfer of *COC material* dispatched to other certified entities, *outsourcing contractors* or certified *service companies*.
- The *entity* shall ensure that *COC transfer documents* include all the required information outlined in the guidance this standard.
- If the *COC transfer document* includes supplementary information about the *entity*, the *eligible material* or its provenance, the *entity* shall ensure the supplementary information can be supported by objective evidence.
- Where the member retains ownership but is sending components to outsourced contractors or *service companies*, the use of the transfer document may be suspended as long as the details are recorded and traceable in the member's internal *systems*.

## Issuing chain-of-custody documentation

### 10 PRODUCT CLAIMS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 10.1 If the *entity* makes *claims* or *representations* about *COC material* in a jewellery product, these shall be described in written form and shall not include information that is inconsistent with the *COC transfer document(s)* supplied with the *COC material*.
- 10.2 Members making *claims* to a *consumer* must make available at the point of sale, on their website or through any other *publicly available* communication medium, further details about the *claims* being made, including data to support the verification of the *claims*, and the *systems* in place to achieve them.
- 10.3 Members that make one or more product *claims* shall ensure that the claims being made are not misleading, are verifiable and comply with all applicable law.
- 10.4 *Claims* in relation to recycled materials in a product shall clearly indicate the type of recycled material and, in particular, whether this is pre-consumer recycled, post-consumer recycled, recycled material derived from waste or a mix of these types. Where this is a mixed recycled material, the type(s) of *source* shall be stated.
- 10.5 *Claims* can be made on *jewellery products* that include non-COC components identified for exclusion by the RJC. A clear and unambiguous description of the COC components or components that are non-COC within the product must be made available to the *customer* or *consumer*.
- 10.6 The *entity* shall have *systems* in place to ensure that all relevant *employees*, including sales associates, do not make oral *claims* or representations to *consumers* about *COC material* that are inconsistent with the *claims* or representations described in written form.
- 10.7 If the *entity* uses the RJC logo and/or *COC certification stamps*, it shall ensure that it abides by the rules for use of the logo, trademarks and intellectual property. If the *entity* uses the RJC logo and makes reference to the COC standard in association with *jewellery products* containing *COC material*, it shall ensure that it is clear that the use of the logo and reference to the COC standard only applies to the *COC material* and not to any other material.



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## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

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## **CONSULTING EXPERTS**

Effie Marinos, Sam Brumale

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**THE COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY  
PRACTICES LTD.**

1st Floor, 11 Gough Square,  
London EC4A 3DE.

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