

Quality Assurance

How can a consumer assess the quality of a product before purchase?

For a common consumer, it is normally not possible to assess the quality of the product purchased, at its face value i.e., by merely looking at it, touching it or smelling it. Standards are used as the basis to assess the quality of the product to be purchased. Presence of certification marks such as ISI, Agmark, woolmark etc. on a product implies that the product has been produced according to a specific standard.

What are Standards?

Standards are authoritative statements of the criteria necessary to ensure that the material, product or procedure is fit for its intended purpose. Product standards generally prescribe optimum levels of quality, safety and performance as well as sampling and methods of practical evaluation. The standards ensure:

- Protection of safety and health
- Fitness for purpose (performance)
- Environmental protection
- Ease of use
- Quality and reliability
- Compatibility between products (interoperability)
- Transparency of product information and labelling
- Protection from false or misleading claims
- Fair competition, hence choice among goods and services and competitive pricing
- Systems of redress, such as complaints handling and processing of claims
- Consistency in the delivery of services
- Suitability of products for vulnerable populations (such as children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly)

Is it mandatory for all manufacturers to adopt Indian Standards?

Adoption of Indian Standards is generally voluntary in nature and their implementation depends on adoption by the manufacturer concerned. An Indian Standard becomes binding if it is stipulated in a contract, referred to in legislation or made mandatory by specific orders by the Central or State Governments.

How does a consumer identify products conforming to Indian Standards?

Third party certification scheme helps common consumers to identify products conforming to standards. Presence of certification mark on a product implies that the product has been produced according to a specific standard and that its production has been carried out under a well-defined system. It also indicates that it has been appropriately inspected and tested according to the agreed standard. Hence, products certified by well-defined certification schemes assure product quality and thereby enable consumers to identify products of daily use that conform to standards. In India, the Bureau of Indian Standards operates a Certification Marks Scheme for the use of the  Mark, under the provisions of the BIS Act, 1986.

What is ISI Mark?



 Mark is a standardization mark issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to certify that the products conform to the minimum quality standards. The Product Certification Scheme of BIS aims at providing Third Party Guarantee of quality, safety and reliability of products to the customer. Presence of ISI certification mark, known as Standard Mark, on a product is an assurance of conformity to the specifications. The conformity is ensured by regular surveillance of the licensee's performance by surprise inspections and testing of samples, drawn both from the market and factory. The manufacturer is permitted to self-certify the licensed products after ascertaining its conformity to the Standard.

Consumer products under Compulsory Certification are infant foods, food colours, cement, GLS lamps, electric iron, electric immersion water heater, some steel tubes, packaged bottle water etc. In all 93 products are covered under Compulsory Certification. The complete list of these products is available on BIS website www.bis.org.in. Some of the products under Voluntary Certification include biscuits, coffee powder, pressure cookers, L.P. gas stoves, detergents, fountain pen ink, carbon papers, dry distemper, paints, PVC pipes, ceiling fans, water heaters.

Before buying any such goods you should check whether the product bears standard marks for different products as presence of  Mark on a product signifies quality as per Indian Standards.

How to lodge a complaint about a Marked Product?

In case of any complaint about the quality of ISI Marked product, the consumer should get in touch with the nearest office of the Bureau of Indian Standards. BIS has a system of attending to complaints on Marked Products. BIS arranges for their redress by way of replacement/repair of the product in case the complaint is found to be genuine. Necessary actions are taken to ensure that corrective measures are taken by erring manufacturers so that other consumers are not put to inconvenience. Such complaints are also treated as feedback information on the performance of the licensees. Detailed below are a few points for the consumer's reference.

- Online registration of complaints can be done on BIS website: www.bis.org.in
- Personally contact/ write to the nearest Regional Branch/ Inspection Office of BIS or directly to the Head, i-CARE Department at BIS Head Quarters at New Delhi.
- Inform the Name/ Type/ Size/ Grade of the Product/ Source and date of Purchase/ Batch No.
- Specifically indicate the nature of complaint.
- Preserve the cash memo, in case it is available.
- Keep the product complained about and its packing in safe custody till the visit of an inspecting officer of the Bureau of Indian Standards.

What is Hallmarking?



All that glitters is not GOLD

- Hallmarking is the accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles. Hallmarks are thus official marks used in many countries as a guarantee of purity or fineness of precious metal articles.
- In India, at present two precious metals namely gold and silver have been brought under the purview of Hallmarking.
- The principle objective of Hallmarking Scheme is to protect consumers against victimization due to irregular gold or silver quality, and to develop India as a leading gold market centre in the World and to develop export competitiveness.

Features of Hallmarking:-

- Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery is a purity certification scheme of BIS launched in the year 2000.
- Hallmarked jewellery goes through stringent norms of manufacture and quality control.
- Hallmarked jewellery is assayed and marked by BIS recognized Assaying and Hallmarking Centres.

Look for

- Jewellery showroom selling hallmarked jewellery.
- BIS mark on the jewellery along with purity mark.

Buy

- Hallmarked jewellery only. It assures fineness mark.

Ask for

- Cash receipt which helps BIS to resolve complaints (if any).

Caution

- Do not get impressed by testing of jewellery by Karat meter or other similar instruments (it checks only surface)
- Hallmark indicates that the jewellery article has been independently tested and assures that it conforms to the marked

Who operates the Hallmarking Scheme?

It is a voluntary scheme being operated by BIS through its network of Regional/ Branch Offices all over the country. As per this scheme licence is granted to a jeweller for certification of purity of gold (or silver) jewellery in accordance with IS 1417 (IS 2112 for Silver) (see list of licensed jewellers at www.bis.org.in). A licensee jeweller has to get the jewellery hallmarked through any of the BIS recognized Assaying and Hallmarking centres.

(see list of assaying centres at www.bis.org.in under Hallmarking of gold and silver).

What one should look for in a Hallmarked gold article?



BIS Mark

916	Fineness Mark: a millesimal fineness number indicative of gold Content, Corresponding to 22 carat on a scale of 1000
A&HMC's Logo	Assaying and Hallmarking Centre's Mark: The logo of BIS recognized Assaying and Hallmarking Centre where the jewellery has been assayed and hallmarked
Code Letter	Year of Marking: Code letter represents the year of hallmarking of jewellery as decided by BIS, e.g. denoted by a code letter e.g. 'A' for year 2000; 'B' for year 2001; 'C' for year 2002; 'R' for year 2013
Jeweller's Mark	Jeweller's Mark: Logo of Certified Jeweller/ Jewellery Manufacturer

Nos. Denominating	958	916	875	750	708	585	375
Gold Purity for	23 Carat	22 Carat	21 Carat	18 Carat	17 Carat	14 Carat	9 Carat

How much does it cost to get a gold article hallmarked?

Following hallmarking charges are applicable:

- 25/- per article
- Minimum charges for a consignment shall be ` 150/- . (Services Tax and other levies as applicable shall be extra)

How much does it cost to get a silver article hallmarked?

BIS recognized Assaying and Hallmarking Centres have been advised to follow the following hallmarking charges for Silver:

- 10.00 per article upto 100 g
- 50.00 per article from 100 -500g
- 100.00 per article more than 500g
- Minimum charges per consignment is ` 150.00

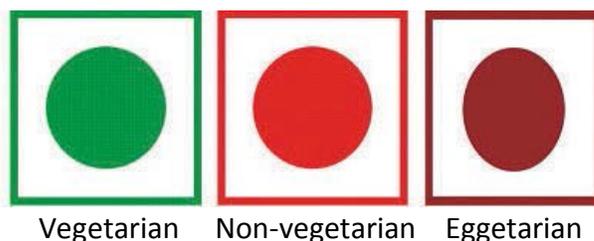
(Services Tax and other levies as applicable shall be extra).

What is AGMARK?

AGMARK is a certification mark on agricultural products in India, assuring that they conform to a set of standards approved by the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, an agency of the Government of India. The AGMARK is legally enforced in India by the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937. The present AGMARK standards cover quality guidelines for 205 different commodities spanning a variety of Pulses, Cereals, Essential Oils, Vegetable Oils, Fruits and Vegetables, and semi-processed products.

What are Vegetarian and Non-vegetarian Marks?

Packaged food products sold in India are required to be labeled with a mandatory mark in order to be distinguished between vegetarian and non-vegetarian.



Mark of a small green or red circle inside a square is visible on the package of products. The red circle indicates that the food item contains non-vegetarian ingredients and the green circle indicates vegetarian ingredients. This helps the consumer to identify the food of their choice. The Government of India has made it mandatory for all packages of processed food items to bear the vegetarian or non-vegetarian mark.

Declaration by way of red dot /brown dot marking on the package for non-vegetarian/ egg vegetarian contents and green dot for vegetarian content in soaps, shampoos, tooth pastes and other cosmetics and toiletries has been made mandatory through the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) (Amendment) Rules, 2014.

What is ISO Mark?



ISO stands for International Organization for Standardization. The objective of ISO is to make common standards of products and services at international level, which ultimately facilitate foreign trade. Some of the areas where ISO standards can be applicable are hospital, insurance etc.

What is Silk Mark?

Silk Mark is a quality assurance label for pure silk. It helps consumers to identify Pure Silk. The consumer has long been having a difficulty of identifying pure silk from host of other fibers. Silk Mark was launched in 2004. By purchasing silk mark labelled products from the authorised users, consumers get an assurance that they are indeed purchasing 100 percent natural silk products. The Silk Mark protects the interests of both the consumers and genuine traders and manufacturers of silk. It also helps in Generic Promotion of Natural Silk.



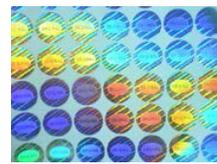
What is Woolmark?



Woolmark is a certification mark used on textile products as an assurance that the product is made of 100% pure new wool. Woolmark is recognized throughout the world as a symbol of quality and reliability. This quality standard for woollen products is prescribed by the International Wool Secretariat.

What is Hologram?

Hologram is a small square size plastic sticker generally of silver colour, with some text written on it, pasted on the package of some products or on the cover page of some books. This is called Hologram. The purpose of sticking it on the package of the product is to establish the authenticity of the product.



What is Handloom Mark?



Handloom Textiles constitute a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of our country. It occupies a place second only to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people. Handloom Mark is given under the Handloom Mark Scheme launched in 2006. Handloom Mark is the Government of India's initiative to provide a collective identity to the handloom products in India and can be used not only for popularizing the hand woven products but can also serve as a guarantee for the buyer that the product being purchased is genuinely hand woven from India. The 'Handloom Mark' is a symbol of rich legacy and tradition of Indian Handloom textiles.

What is Ecomark?



This earthen pot symbol categorizes the product as environment friendly. The logo for the Ecomark Scheme, signifies that the product which carries it does the least damage to the environment. It is a government operated seal of approval program for environmentally preferable consumer products. To increase consumer awareness, the Government of India launched the eco-labelling scheme known as 'Ecomark' in 1991 for easy identification of environment-friendly products. The criteria follows a cradle-to-grave approach, i.e. from raw material extraction, to manufacturing, and to disposal. The Ecomark label is awarded to consumer goods that meet the specified environmental criteria and the quality requirements of Indian Standards.

What is Recycling Mark?



The universal recycling is an internationally recognized symbol used to designate recyclable materials. It is composed of three mutually chasing arrows that form a Möbius strip (an unending single-sided looped surface).

What is BEE Label?



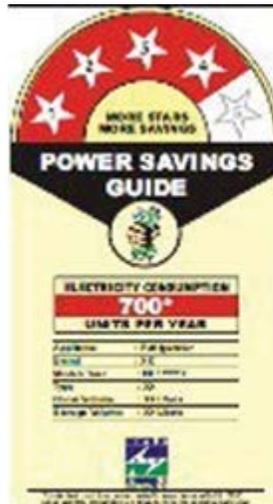
The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is an agency of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power created in March 2002. The mission of Bureau of Energy Efficiency is to reduce energy intensity in the economy.

Today, when we go to purchase an electrical appliance, the number of choices available exceeds our capacity to understand and evaluate them. An important factor that must be understood is how much electricity that the appliance of Energy Efficiency, introduced the Standards and Labeling Program in May 2006. Under this programme, the manufacturers are required to place a label showing how much electricity the appliance will consume under certain conditions.

The programme is currently running for refrigerators, air conditioners, televisions, geysers, tube lights and fans among the household appliances. The scheme is mandatory for some of the appliances while voluntary for others. The labels contain a number of items. The highlight though is the 'STARS'. More the stars more efficient is the appliance. Some of sample labels are shown below:



BEE Star label - Small label
For TVs, Computers/laptops,
fans and tube-lights
This is a label for 1 Star ~~tubelight~~
– least efficient among the rates
appliances



BEE Star Label – Big label

For refrigerators, air-conditioners, geysers and washing machine

This is a label for 4-star refrigerator. It consumes 700 kWh in a year. A 5 star refrigerator will consume lower units for same capacity and cooling

What is significance of FSSAI Logo?



FSSAI Logo is one of the obligatory requirements, which is not a mark of certification but signifies a valid license for food business operators (FBO) as per the guidelines given under Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006. It is now mandatory as per FSS Act to display it on your label as it signifies that the product is hygienic and approved. Every FBO in the country must obtain a 14-digit registration or license number. The FSSAI Logo and license number shall be displayed on the label of food package in contrast color to the background.

List of consumer disputes redressal agencies

National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

Upbhokta Nyay Bhawan,
'F' Block, GPO Complex, INA, New Delhi-110 023
Fax No: 011-24651505, 24658505
PBX No : 011-24608801, 24608802, 24608803, 24608804

State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions

Sl. No.	State Commissions & Addresses
1.	Andhra Pradesh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission 'Eruvaka' Building, Kahairatabad, Hyderabad – 500004 Phone: 040-23317040 Fax : 040-23394399 E-mail : ap-sforum@nic.in
2.	Arunachal Pradesh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Near Pawan Hans Office, (Old Secretariat Complex) Naharlagun, Itanagar Phone: 0360-2248620, 2247661 Fax : 0360-2350664 E-mail : arp-sforum@nic.in
3.	A & N Islands State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Deptt of Civil Supplies, Civil Supplies Complex, Port Blair- 744102 Phone:03192-232321 Fax : 03192-232321 E-mail : an-sforum@nic.in
4.	Assam State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Housefed Complex, Central Block, 5 th Floor, Front Portion, Beltola Bashistha Road, Guwahati – 781 006 Phone: 0361-62229766 Fax: 0361-62229766 E-mail : asm-sforum@nic.in

5.	<p>Bihar State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission R – Block, Road No.2, South of Daroga Prasad Rai Memorial Trust, Patna – 800 001 Phone:0612-2506395 Fax: 0612-2506395 E-mail: scdrc@sancharnet.in & bih-sforum@nic.in</p>
6.	<p>Chandigarh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Plot No.5-B, Madhya Marg, Sector – 19 B, Chandigarh –160 019 Phone: 0172-2700183 Fax: 0172-2784225 E-mail: stcomm-chd@nic.in & cdg-sforum@nic.in</p>
7.	<p>Chhattisgarh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Behind New Bus Stand, Pandri, RAIPUR -492004 Phone : 0771-2582902 Fax: 0771-2582904 E-mail : chg-sforum@nic.in</p>
8.	<p>Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Department of Civil Supplies, Collectorate, Daman – 396220 Phone: 0260-2230689, 2230698 Fax: 0260- 2230689 Email : daman@guj.nic.in & dnh-sforum@nic.in</p>
9.	<p>Delhi State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ‘A’ Block, First Floor, Vikas Bhawan, I.P. Estate, New Delhi – 110 002 Phone: 011-23370799 Fax: 011-23370258 Email: statecommission@vsnl.net & del-sforum@nic.in</p>
10.	<p>Goa State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Junta House, 1st Lift, 4th Floor, Vivekanand Road, Panaji – 403 001 Phone: 0832-2222466 Fax: 0832-2425365 E-mail:gcdrc@goa.nic.in & goa-sforum@nic.in</p>
11.	<p>Gujarat State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ‘Grahak Bhavan’ Near Gota Cross Road, Towards Gandhinagar, S. G. Highway, Gota, Ahmedabad, Gujarat Phone: 02717-241614 Fax: 02717-241641 E-mail : guj-sforum@nic.in</p>
12.	<p>Haryana State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Bays No. 3 - 6, Sector – 4, Panchkula – 134 112 (Haryana) Phone: 0172-2567364 Fax : 0172-2567502 E-mail : har-sforum@nic.in</p>

13.	<p>Himachal Pradesh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Block No.33, 2nd Floor, H.P. Nagar Vikas Pradhikaran Commercial Building, Kusumpati, Shimla – 171 009 Phone: 0177-2620797 Fax: 0177-2620855 E-mail : scc-hp@nic.in</p>
14.	<p>J & K State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission i) 3, Manda Hill, Rehari, JammuTavi, Jammu & Kashmir ii) Near Municipality Office, Municipality Complex, Srinagar, STD Code: Jammu – 0191, Srinagar- 0194 Phone: 0191-2545232 0194-2477195 E-mail : jk-sforum@nic.in</p>
15.	<p>Jharkhand State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Near High Court, Dauranda, Ranchi - 834002 Telefax: 0651-2480171 E-mail : jkh-sforum@nic.in</p>
16.	<p>Karnataka State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Basava Bhavan, High Grounds Basaveswara Circle, Bangaluru – 560001 Phone: 080-22355065, 22262865 Fax: 080-22260590 E-mail : karscdrc@kar.nic.in & kar-sforum@nic.in</p>
17.	<p>Kerala State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Sisu Vihar Lane, Vazhuthacaud, Sasthamangalam P.O., Thiruvananthapuram – 695 010. Phone: 0471-2727220 Fax: 0471-2320578 E-mail : ker-sforum@nic.in</p>
18.	<p>Lakshadweep State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission C/o Assistant Controller of Legal Metrology, Department of Legal Metrology & Consumer Affairs, U.T. of Lakshadweep, Kavaratti – 682555 Phone: 04896-262102 Fax: 04896-263298 E-mail : lak-accal@hub.nic.in & lak-sforum@nic.in</p>

19.	<p>Madhya Pradesh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Plot No.- 76, Arera Hills Bhopal – 462 001</p> <p>Phone: 0755 -2763673 Fax : 0755 -2553722</p> <p>E-mail: scdrchbo@mp.nic.in & mp-sforum@nic.in</p>
20.	<p>Maharashtra State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Old Administrative Staff College Bldg., Opp. C.S.T. Station,Hazarimal Somani Marg, Mumbai – 400 001</p> <p>Phone:022- 22072097, 22057409 Fax : 022-22018539</p> <p>E-mail : mah-sforum@nic.in</p>
21.	<p>Manipur State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Deptt of Food & Civil Supplies,Sangaiprou, Imphal</p> <p>Phone: 0385-2220391</p> <p>E-mail : man-sforum@nic.in</p>
22.	<p>Meghalaya State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Horse Shoe Building, Lower Luchumiere, Shillong – 793 001</p> <p>Phone: 0364-2222629 Fax: 0364-2222629</p> <p>E-mail : meg-sforum@nic.in</p>
23.	<p>Mizoram State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Zodian Square, Aizwal – 796 001</p> <p>Phone: 0389-2341451 Fax: 0389-2341453</p> <p>E-mail : miz-sforum@nic.in</p>
24.	<p>Nagaland State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Old MLA Hostel Building, Kohima – 797 001</p> <p>Phone: 0370-2221505</p> <p>E-mail : nag-sforum@nic.in</p>
25.	<p>Odisha State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Sector – 1, Near Sati Choura Chowk, C.D.A. Bidanasi, Cuttack – 14 Phone: 0671-2363604</p> <p>E-mail : ors-sforum@nic.in</p>

26.	<p>Puducherry State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Plot No.3, D.P. Thottam, Behind Hotel Sarguru, Muthialpet, T.V. Nagar, Puducherry – 605 003 Phone: 0413-2213862, 2210503 E-mail : scdrc@pondy.pon.nic.in & pon-sforum@nic.in</p>
27.	<p>Punjab State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Plot No. 1037, Sector – 37A, Dakshan Road, Chandigarh Phone: 0172-2693737 E-mail : pun-sforum@nic.in</p>
28.	<p>Rajasthan State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Handloom Haveli, Ashok Marg, C-Scheme 1st Floor, Jaipur- 302 001 Phone: 0141-2372237 E-mail : raj-sforum@nic.in</p>
29.	<p>Sikkim State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Palzor Stadium Road, Near Sikkim Nationalised Transport, Gangtok – 737 101 Phone: 03592-205027 E-mail : sik-sforum@nic.in,</p>
30.	<p>Tamil Nadu State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Frazer Bridge Road, V.O.C. Nagar, Park Town, Chennai – 600 003 Phone: 044-25340040 E-mail : scdrc@tn.nic.in & tn-sforum@nic.in</p>
31.	<p>Tripura State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ‘Khadya O Bhokta Bhawan’, Ground Floor, Eastern Side, P.O. Kunjaban West Tripura - 799 006 Phone: 0381-2223514 Fax: 0381-2326308 E-mail : tri-sforum@nic.in</p>
32.	<p>Uttar Pradesh State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission C – 1, Vikrant Block – 1, Near Shaheed Path, Gomati Nagar, Lucknow – 226 010 Phone: 0522-2306643, 2306655 Fax: 0522-2306645 E-mail : up-sforum@nic.in</p>

33.	<p>Uttarakhand State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission</p> <p>House No.176, Ajabpur Kalan, (Near Spring Hills School),Mothrowala Road, Dehradun – 248 121</p> <p>Phone: 0135-2669712 Fax: 0135-2669719</p> <p>E-mail : utr-sforum@nic.in</p>
34.	<p>West Bengal State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Kreta Suraksha Bhavan, Ground Floor, 11A, Mirza Ghalib Street, Kolkata – 700 087</p> <p>Phone: 033-22520308 Fax: 033-22520354</p> <p>E-mail : wb-sforum@nic.in</p>