



CIBJ The World Jewellery
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Ensuring Consumer Confidence

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**Trading in Diamonds,
Coloured Gemstones,
Pearls & Corals**

The Do's and Don'ts

Ensuring consumer confidence in the sales of diamonds, coloured gemstones, pearls and corals

This simplified guide is intended to assist those selling diamonds, coloured gemstones, corals, pearls and/or any related artificial products, in understanding the obligations they have towards their customers and the recommended supplier interactions.

The contents of this guide do not replace the clauses and definitions described in the individual CIBJO Blue Books (<https://www.cibjo.org/the-blue-books/>) and other international and local laws and regulations. The reader is encouraged to download the relevant Blue Book from the CIBJO Website to gain a wider understanding of the diamond, gemstone, coral and pearl industries commitments towards their customers.

The Do's & Don'ts

Please Do

- ✓ do ensure that your supplier has given you the appropriate information as to the nature of any of the items in the explanations below.
- ✓ do ensure that all of the items in the explanations below are labelled correctly within your stock.
- ✓ do ensure that all sales staff are properly informed.
- ✓ do sell all of the products in the explanations below accurately and without ambiguity.
- ✓ do always clearly disclose any treatments prior to and at the time of sale.
- ✓ do always issue an invoice/receipt to any purchaser stating that the product is sold accurately and without ambiguity.
- ✓ do use the words “treated” or “synthetic” or other equivalent terms (see CIBJO Gemstone Book), whenever these are used in writing, with equal emphasis and prominence as the word that describes the gemstone or the stone, for example: Treated diamond, Treated ruby, Synthetic diamond, Synthetic sapphire.
- ✓ do educate your sales persons in the use of proper unambiguous nomenclature and refer to the CIBJO Blue Books for clarity.

- ✓ do ensure that consumer advertising or marketing, in print or online, is in accordance to the instructions in this guide and CIBJO rules.
- ✓ do with diamonds: state the grades (colour, clarity and cut) clearly as well as the individual or total weights involved.
- ✓ do with synthetic diamonds: Use one of the following authorised qualifiers when referring to synthetic diamonds: “synthetic”, “laboratory-grown” or “laboratory-created”.
- ✓ do research on critical issues that concern consumers, for example, sustainability, ethical sourcing, conflict diamonds, and create a proactive narrative to answer questions.
- ✓ do inform the customer about aftercare and any maintenance required for particular gem materials.

Please Do Not

- ✗ do not use language verbal or written that does not accurately and unambiguously reflect the true nature and/or condition of the product being described - do not abbreviate or place an asterisk to declare that a gemstone, pearl or cultured pearl is treated or that the stone is artificial.
- ✗ do not use abbreviations such as “lab-grown” and “lab-created”.
- ✗ do not use the term LGD as an abbreviation for Laboratory Grown Diamonds / Laboratory Created Diamonds / Synthetic Diamonds without expressing the full term first.
- ✗ do not use the term “Laboratory Diamond”.

- ✘ **do not** use the terms “cultured” and “cultivated” when referring to synthetic stones because “cultured” and “cultivated” refer exclusively to organic/biogenic products.
- ✘ **do not** use the adjectives “real”, “genuine”, “precious”, “authentic” and “natural” when referring to artificial products, as those terms apply exclusively to natural materials.
- ✘ **do not** use the expressions “natural treated diamonds (or any other gemstone)” and “treated natural diamonds (or any other gemstone)”. Instead, simply use “treated diamonds, treated emeralds (or any other gemstone)”.
- ✘ **do not** wait until after a sale is closed to disclose relevant information regarding the gem content of a product.
- ✘ **do not** mix up total weights with individual weights.
- ✘ **do not** accept merchandise from the trade without a written document that accurately describes the content.
- ✘ **do not** deny or dodge any complex inquiries from customers concerning the gem trade, e.g., conflict diamonds, ethical sourcing, child labour.
- ✘ **do not** call gemstone, pearl or diamond reports “certificates” as they are simply third-party verification “reports” or professional opinions produced by gemmological laboratories.
- ✘ **do not** refer to gemstones as semi-precious as all gemstones are precious only with some being costlier than others.
- ✘ **do not** avoid alerting the customer on durability and/or stability issues of gem materials, particularly when treated.

Diamonds, Coloured Gemstones and Corals

Diamonds, coloured gemstones and corals are natural materials which have been formed completely by nature without human interference during their formation; they may subsequently be modified by normal lapidary practices. Naturally occurring gem minerals are usually used in jewellery due to a combination of properties that provide them with beauty, rarity and relative durability. They encompass:

Minerals: for example, diamond, aquamarine, emerald, garnet, ruby, sapphire, topaz.

Natural glasses: for example, obsidian, moldavite.

Rocks: for example, lapis lazuli, opal with matrix.

Organic gem materials: for example, amber and tortoiseshell.

Biogenic gem materials: for example, pearl, mother-of-pearl and coral.

Only materials that have been formed completely by nature qualify to be described as “natural”. The unqualified terms, “diamond”, “ruby”, “emerald” and other gemstone names, may only describe a gemstone of natural origin. The adjectives “real”, “precious”, “genuine” or “natural” shall only be used to refer to or designate natural materials.

There are two main categories of coral; precious coral and common coral. **Precious corals** – coral used in jewellery and decoration, specifically red, pink and white

varieties with porcelain like lustre after polishing. **Common corals** – for example, sponge coral, bamboo coral, blue coral, as well as soft skeleton type, e.g. black and golden corals. After treatment, some species have been used as ornaments.

For diamonds see [ISO 18323:2015](#) which specifies a set of permitted descriptors for the diamond industry and is specifically designed to be understood by the consumer.

Pearls

PEARLS - natural pearl formations are secreted, without human intervention, in the interior of molluscs and within naturally formed pearl sacs. They are composed of a complex scleroprotein named conchiolin and of calcium carbonate in the form of aragonite and/or calcite arranged in concentric layers. They may be nacreous or non-nacreous and from freshwater or saltwater.

There are three main categories of pearls or pearl-like products in the market place;

Natural Pearls – pearls formed entirely by nature and within naturally formed pearl sacs in the body of a mollusc.

- freshwater or saltwater pearls
- freshwater or saltwater blister pearls

Cultured Pearls – pearls formed by the instigation of mankind and within cultured pearl sacs in the body of a mollusc. They may be beaded or non-beaded.

- freshwater or saltwater cultured pearls
- freshwater or saltwater cultured blister pearls

Imitation pearls – pearl-like products formed entirely by man.

Treatments

PLEASE SEE THE INDIVIDUAL CIBJO BLUE BOOKS FOR FULL GUIDANCE; THE FOLLOWING IS A BROAD GUIDE.

<https://www.cibjo.org/the-blue-books/>

Diamonds, coloured gemstones, corals, pearls and cultured pearls may have been subjected to treatments, usually to change their colour, durability, stability and/or clarity.

It is in the best interest and responsibility of the trade for consumers to be fully informed with regards to any treatments applied to gemstones. Treatments may impact a gemstone value, and are often not permanent or may require special care; the seller shall therefore inform the purchaser about the treatment and any special care requirements and clearly place this information on invoices.

Examples of treatments that shall, if applied to a gemstone, be explained in writing to consumers, are given in the following table. The reader is again referred to the published Blue Books where complete explanations are available. In particular one should note that for pearls and coral certain treatments presently only require a General Disclosure.

Diamond	Coloured Stone	Coral	Pearl & cultured pearl
Foiling	Surface waxing	Coloured surface waxing	Dyed
Fracture filling	Fissure filling with oil		Oiled
Heating / annealing	Fissure filling with resin or other polymers	Open fissure or cavity filling with resin or other polymers or wax.	Filled
Heat with high pressure (HPHT)	Filling of fissures, fractures and/or cavities with glass and other solidified substances	Dyeing	Heating
Internal Laser drilling	Heating	Impregnating	Artificial irradiation
Laser drilling	Heat with pressure	Coating	Waxed
Artificial irradiation	Flux assisted healing		Lustre enhancement
Artificial irradiation and annealing	Bleaching		Heavy working
Coating	Artificial irradiation		Coating
	Diffusion treatment		Colour tinting
	Dyeing		
	Impregnating		
	Coating		

Note - The treatment of some gemstones is currently undeterminable, such as heat treated aquamarine and tourmaline or some irradiated beryl and tourmaline. In such case it is prudent to disclose any possible treatments.

Artificial Products

These are products which include a variety of materials that are partially or completely made by man.

Artificial products partially made by man

These are composite stones with gemstone components, examples of which include “garnet-topped-doublets”, “emerald on glass-doublets”, “natural sapphire on synthetic ruby-doublets” as well as “ruby-glass composites”, “pressed amber” and “emerald on emerald-doublets”, or “composite diamonds” (diamond on synthetic diamond).

Artificial products completely made by man

Synthetic stones – crystalline materials that are defined as being artificial products having essentially the same chemical composition, physical properties and structure as that of their naturally occurring counterparts; examples which are commercially available include “synthetic diamond”, “synthetic ruby”, “synthetic sapphire”, “synthetic emerald”, and “synthetic amethyst” and “synthetic cubic zirconia (CZ)”.

Note – The term “synthetic”, “laboratory-created” and “laboratory-grown” are synonymous.

Artificially crystallised products with no known natural counterpart -These include, e.g., yttrium aluminium garnet

(otherwise known as YAG) and gadolinium gallium garnet (otherwise known as GGG).

Artificial uncrystallised products - These include man made glass, lead glass, plastic and products of various compositions, such as pressed materials (for example, pressed turquoise) that are used to imitate the appearance of gemstones.



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