Making Your Mark by Andy Cooperman © 2014

Why Stamp Your Work?

• For Posterity & Provenance.
  - for collectors, museums & appraisers.
  - to help establish the history of our field including the secondary market.
  - to create a personal history of your creative life.

• As a Sales Tool.
  - a maker’s mark is seen by many as a signature and, as such, implies and establishes value, significance and collectability.
  - customers sometimes won’t buy a piece if it hasn’t been “signed”.

• Informational:
  - A date can help the collector and the maker keep track of a career (even their own).
  - Marking “ingredients” can help the repair-person proceed correctly.
  - Marking a piece with a title helps ensure that the name will always travel with the work.

• Because it’s the Law…*
  - that is, if you stamp the quality (hallmark), you must stamp the maker or vendor.

*The best place to start is to visit the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office website. This website is very informative and can help you get the necessary info that you need.
http://www.uspto.gov

Excellent FAQ pages:

**Things to Remember in Marking:**

• Consider what information you will include. I stamp/mark with:
  - metals (could even include nonprecious metals such as bronze).
  - maker name or logo.
  - date: year, sometimes entire date.
  - sometimes title of piece.
  - text: sometimes a personal message (as in a gift).

• Mark in an area of low wear and that is visually appropriate.
  - mark in an area that makes sense and integrates into the overall design.

• On hollow or delicate objects:
  - consider “writing” with a bur.
  - consider affixing a previously stamped or etched tag or “seal”.

• Mark deeply: this is for posterity so stamp or engrave deeply or use indelible inks.

**Stamps and Logos:**

• For jewelry: Keep your mark (logo, signature, initials) readable at 1-2mm tall.
  - print out your mark at life-size to check for readability.

• Average ring stamp is 1-1.5mm tall.

• Longer logos or names are generally harder to imprint, especially when using a bent ring stamp, which has a curved or radius face.
  - if you use a bent/ goose-necked ring stamp for flat objects, rock it back and forth to accommodate its curved face.

• It’s best to strike powerfully once, to avoid double stamping.

• If using a stamp, strike with a bronze or brass mallet.

**The Law:** *Stamping laws and guidelines are there to protect the CONSUMER.*

• You **DO NOT** need to mark your work with quality or metal content.

• You **MAY** stamp only your name/logo—or nothing at all

  BUT

• If you mark with metal quality (gold, etc.) you must include your name or maker’s mark.
  - a logo/trademark **MUST** be registered.
  - a name/signature (last name at least) need **NOT** be registered.

• If possible, each individual precious metal should be stamped with quality.
  - one maker’s mark will be fine if it is stamped close by the quality mark.
**Maker Mark Stamp Manufacturers**

Price quoted for this example logo *(right)*: *square shank - bent ring stamp - 1.3mm high*

- **Buckeye Engraving**
  - $130 + s&h
  - 330-677-5685
  - [www.steelhandstamps.com](http://www.steelhandstamps.com)

- **C & W Steel Stamp Co.**
  - $150 + s&h
  - 800-838-4233
  - [www.ringstamps.com](http://www.ringstamps.com)

- **Everstamp (Henry A Evers Co.)**
  - $158 +$7.95 s&h
  - 800-553-8377
  - [www.henryaevers.com](http://www.henryaevers.com)

- **Hamid Rashidi (Otto Frie)**
  - $130 + tax + s&h
  - 510.832.0355 x110
  - hamidr@ottofrei.com

- **Infinity Stamps, Inc**
  - $145 + s&h
  - 818-576-1188 ext.317
  - [www.infinitystamps.com](http://www.infinitystamps.com)

- **Microstamp**
  - $125 + s&h
  - (800) 243-354
  - [www.microstamp.us](http://www.microstamp.us)
  - *actual delivery: 3 days*

- **Steel Stamps Inc. (Harper Mfg.)**
  - $120.00
  - (800) 776-8407
  - [www.steeldampsinc.com](http://www.steeldampsinc.com)

- **Rio Grande (Impressions)**
  - n/a
  - Too slow a response and confusing artwork requirements.
  - [www.riogrande.com/ad/impressions](http://www.riogrande.com/ad/impressions)

**Supporting the Work: the firmer the better...**

- **Steel:** most of the energy is transferred into the stamp strike.
  - but the opposing surface can be marred damaged, especially textures.
  - try placing paper towel or sandpaper between steel and the object.
- **Wood:** oak & maple can work. Kinder to the surface of your work.
- **Nylon/rawhide:** clamp hammer/mallet in vice and use as anvil.
- **Lead block:** great for stamping rings. Conforms to ring shanks.
  - not great for flat work.
  - beware of deep textures which can hold bits of lead and contaminate.
- **Brass/bronze:** block, profile block or thick sheet. Can work well.