

**Houston Police Department – Criminal Investigations Command
Burglary & Theft Division – Precious Metals Unit
Revision of City Ordinance- Secondhand Crafted Precious Metals**

Overview

The Precious Metals Unit was formed in November of 2011 to combat the rising number of crimes involving precious metals. It is comprised of one sergeant and four officers.

Objective

A review of the City's ordinance pertaining to precious metals determined that it was vague, confusing and it required more precise verbiage to assist law enforcement in prevention and deterrence of secondhand precious metal crimes. HPD's proposed changes align the City's ordinance with State law and will help reduce these crimes.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Define the Precious Metals Unit?**
 - The Precious Metals Unit, within the department's Burglary and Theft Division, is a non-case driven unit that monitors businesses citywide that buy and sell precious metals, such as gold, silver, and platinum.
- **What is the mission of the Precious metals Unit?**
 - To reduce the potential for businesses to purchase stolen crafted precious metals. To aid in the prevention or deterrence of the theft of secondhand precious metal and to recover said metals.
- **What are the primary tasks that the Precious Metals Unit Performs?**
 - Inspecting for compliance and enforcement of precious metals dealers licensing, recordkeeping and reporting requirements as required by state and city laws.
 - To dismantle or disrupt burglary rings targeting precious metals, gems and jewelry.
 - To assist investigators with their investigations and educate surrounding law enforcement agencies on current laws in an effort reduce fencing operations in surrounding areas.
- **Why does the city ordinance need to be revised?**
 - The current city ordinance does not match state law in some instances which causes confusion. The current ordinance is vague and requires more requirements to assist law enforcement in preventing and recovering secondhand precious metal.
- **What additional requirements are necessary to assist law enforcement?**
 - Must use Web-based reporting and not mail-in reporting
 - Digital finger print of person selling
 - Photo of items being sold
 - Photo of person selling
 - Any advertisement will require state and city license number
 - Out of town/temporary dealers must register with state and be held by same standards at permanent business