



Framing Standards - Specifications for Five Levels of Framing

What we are trying to achieve?

- A consistent bench-mark of standards
- An informed choice of different levels of framing to suit customers' individual needs
- To enable customers to compare quotations on a 'like-for-like' basis. It is essential to demonstrate why a job may be priced above that given by a competitor and why a framer is recommending a particular level of framing
- A marketing tool; to show customers there is more to framing than meets the eye
- To educate framers
- To assist the Guild when arbitrating in disputes revolving round whether a given specification has been met

The specifications address:

- The visual appearance of the frame, now and in the future
- The role of the frame in protecting artwork from damage (primarily caused by airborne pollution, acid generated by framing materials, inappropriate framing techniques, UV light, humidity and damp, insect and mould)

How the specifications are communicated

1) Labels: The level to which the piece has been framed is indicated on a label on the back of the frame which is also signed and dated. There are two types of label:

- GCF labels - three levels
- General labels - five levels, of which three directly conform with the three on the GCF label. GCF framers can choose to use the general label but only GCFs can use GCF labels. Most businesses use both as not all their framers tend to be qualified and only frames produced by qualified framers, or where production has been overseen by a GCF, can display the GCF label. Also, qualified GCFs may carry out work at the lowest two levels when requested to do so by customers

2) Leaflets: Consumer leaflets, produced by the Guild, inform customers about the five levels, the value of having work framed by GCFs, the Guild Code of Ethics etc.

How the specifications work

- The specifications at all levels enable framers to treat 3D objects, fabric, works on canvas etc differently from artwork on paper. Framers must be able to demonstrate that their chosen techniques meet the qualitative requirements of the level to which they are working
- It may be necessary to use alternative materials to meet customers' needs and some artwork may require slightly different treatment to that specified. Deviations from the methods explained in the standards are acceptable if framers can demonstrate that their chosen techniques meet the qualitative requirements of the level to which they are working. For example: oil paintings are not generally glazed; some museums have UV filters on their external glass and internal lighting so do not require this in frames; rebates which are insufficiently deep may require hand-made 'build-ups'. Changes such as these are permissible but should be itemised clearly on the label and the customer's receipt/job sheet
- The standard of craftsmanship must be high regardless of the level to which the piece is being framed. Frames must always be structurally sound, free from unsightly blemishes and must be safely supported. For example, badly cut and pinned mouldings are unacceptable at any level. The higher specifications use higher quality materials and techniques; higher levels of expertise may be required, but

craftsmanship must be of a high standard at all levels

- Framers must be careful when assessing manufacturers' product specifications, to ensure that material comply with the Guild's standards. Manufacturers may sometimes need challenging
- The term 'normal conditions' as used in the Guild's standards means out of direct sunlight, within the temperature range 10°C - 25°C and relative humidity between 40% and 60%
- Nothing irreversible should be done at any level to the artwork (e.g. trimming it) without the permission of the customer.
- The Guild's specifications and standards may be amended from time to time to incorporate changes in materials, technology and knowledge

Specification levels - Amended April 2003

- **Minimum**
- **Budget**
- **Commended**
- **Conservation**
- **Museum**