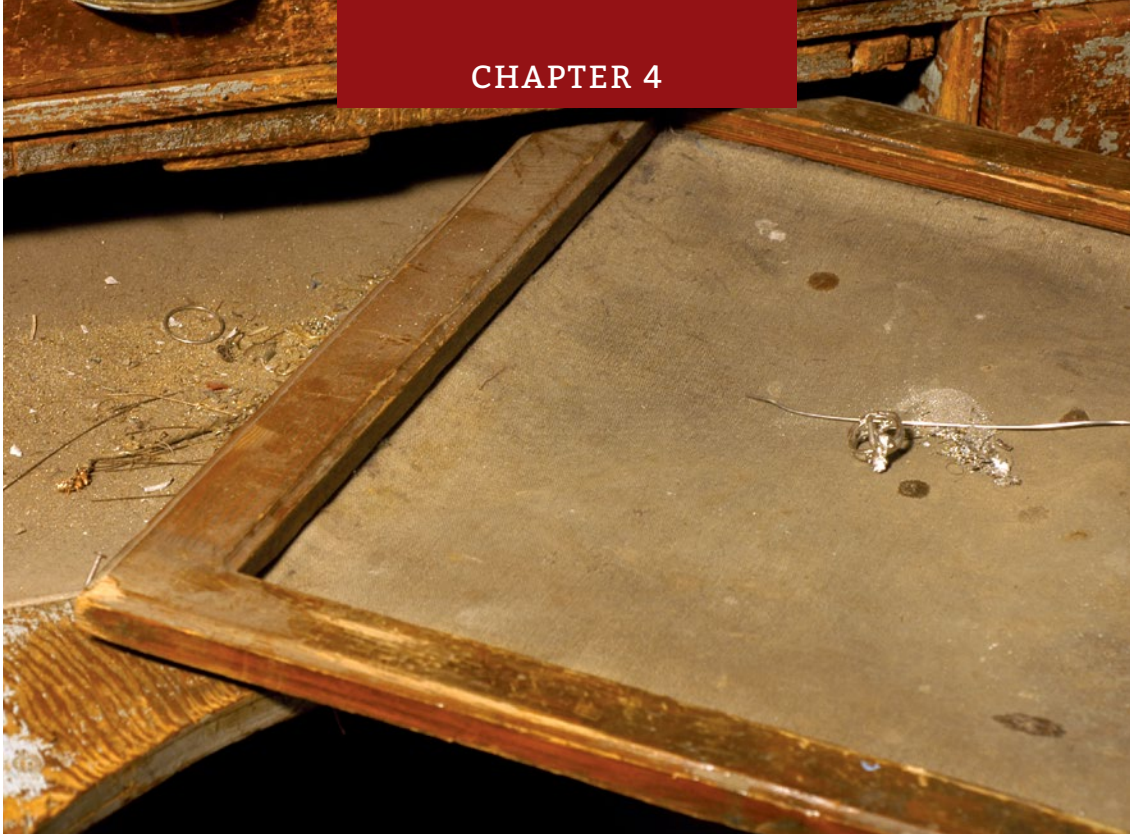




Segregating Metals (Without Going Crazy)

One of the best ways to maximize your refining returns is by keeping the various types of scrap segregated—this helps you to better gauge the return, and it helps the refiner to process your lot most efficiently.

When working at the bench, try to reserve a tray exclusively for platinum work.

- Since refining platinum group metals (PGMs) requires chemicals, processes, and even assaying methods that are different from gold and silver, separating PGMs out of your gold and silver scrap (and vice versa) will go a long way in reducing the charges for refining. Try to keep individual, labeled catch trays for each type of metal you use.
- It's not necessary to keep all gold scrap segregated by karat and color. For example, there's no need to separate your 14k yellow gold from your 18k white gold. Doing so can increase your fees, since many refiners charge more to process multiple small lots than one large lot. However, it can also give you a clearer idea of how much precious metal you're sending in, and help you to better predict your return and your payout.

Before sending out a shipment, review the refiner's terms to ensure any minimum payment levels are met.

- When working at the bench, keep clean scrap (cuttings, filings, small bits of metal) from contaminated scrap (e.g., pieces with soldered joints). If you have only one catch tray, line the tray with a removable sheet of paper. This will help you to better segregate your scrap and alloys.
- **Cost-saving hint:** When possible, re-use clean scrap by turning it into wires or sizing stock. This can be more cost-effective than refining it.
- Always keep scrap metal separated from general shop sweeps, such as dust swept off the shop floor or paper towels used to wipe down shop surfaces. This is because the sweeps may contain combustible materials that will need to be burned off before any precious metals can be recovered.
- Remove iron and steel from your lot, since ferric content may skew your assay results. Cull broken saw blades, burs, and even the little steel springs in worn-out clasps. One of the best ways to separate ferrous metals from your sweeps is to use high-power rare earth magnets. These magnets are easily available on the internet, and because of their strength can attract a lot of nonprecious metal for their size. (They can also attract platinum cobalt alloys, which are slightly magnetic.)
- Extend the metal segregation to your vacuum cleaners: As much as possible, use separate vacuums for specific metals.
- Never mix buffing and grinding materials with your higher-grade gold, platinum, and silver scrap. Have the refiner test this lower-grade scrap separately.
- Small shops that collect a minimal amount of sludge at the bottom of their ultrasonic cleaner and in sink traps (approximately less than 5 lbs.) can combine it with their floor sweeps. Large manufacturers should keep



Remove iron and steel from your lot. Broken saw blades, burs, and even the little steel springs in worn-out clasps can contaminate your lot—and impact your bottom line.



sludge from each manufacturing process separate to help in identifying metal-rich waste streams.

- Keep the various types of scrap in clearly labeled and securely sealed containers. ♦

Buffing and grinding materials add up. Try to isolate this low-grade scrap from your clean scrap.