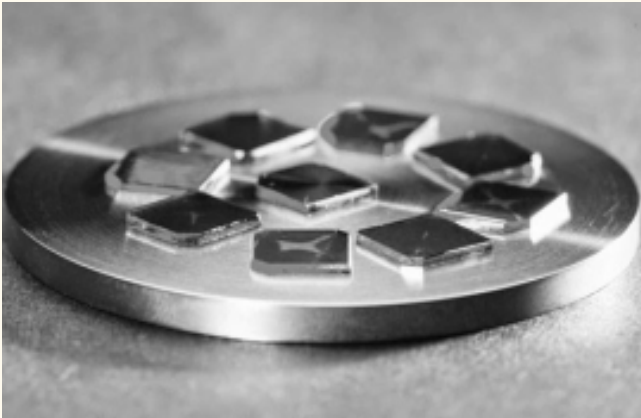


【CVD Diamond】FTC Drops 'Natural' From Definition of Diamond

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Source: Diamond Loupe

The changes, approved unanimously by the five-member commission, cap a six-year process of revamping the much-talked-about standards for marketing jewelry and gems. This revision marks the Guides' first major overhaul in 22 years.



In what can only be described as a victory for laboratory-grown diamond producers, the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has dropped the word 'natural' from its definition of a diamond, essentially redefining 'diamond' to include non-mined gemstones, as part its new guides for the jewelry industry. It further gives additional leeway to existing standards regarding the description of lab-grown diamonds (and metal alloys), and has dropped 'synthetic' as an appropriate descriptor of lab-grown diamonds except under certain circumstances.

"The revision makes relatively far-reaching changes in what's allowed as far as marketing lab-grown diamonds," writes JCK's Rob Bates, "and these changes almost entirely tilt toward the lab-grown sector." And yet, despite this decision, the FTC continues to restrict the use of the word "diamond" to natural diamonds unless the word is immediately preceded by a word or phrase that clearly discloses the product is not a mined diamond.

'Synthetic' no longer recommended

- *The word diamond cannot be used for synthetic diamonds without words immediately preceding indicating it is not a natural diamond. The word diamond alone without a qualifier can only be used for natural diamonds.*
- *Manufacturers can use other phrases if those terms "clearly and conspicuously convey that the product is not a mined stone."*
- *While adjectives such as created, grown and foundry are not recommended as descriptors, the commission says if the "suggested terms could be used non-deceptively in context (e.g., as part of an ad highlighting that the product is man-made), there is nothing to prevent marketers from doing so."*
- *As for using the word "cultured" to describe non-mined stones, the commission said it should be qualified, as the term on its own often leads consumers to believe a diamond is mined. The commission suggests marketers use words such as "man-made," "lab-grown" or "foundry" to qualify "cultured," thereby avoiding confusion about a diamond's origins. However, marketers should not use the word "synthetic" to qualify "cultured," the FTC noted, as it creates confusion among consumers, who believe the term indicates a stone is fake or artificial.*
- *While the FTC removed 'synthetic' from its suggested descriptors, it declined to prohibit its use (another request by diamond growers), arguing that the term is not deceptive in every instance. But it did rule that it is misleading to use the term synthetic to "suggest a competitor's lab-grown diamond is not an actual diamond."*