

Legal Limitations of Cash Payments



The Limitations of Cash Payments in Summary

In the context of the prevention of money laundering and of terrorist financing, cash payments in Belgium are limited to a **maximum amount of 3,000 euros** (or its equivalent in another currency).

For Which Types of Payments?

The limitation applies to **any type of payment**, regardless of the total amount. Splitting payments into smaller instalments does not allow you to pay or receive an amount of maximum 3,000 euros in cash several times.

If there appears to be a link between a series of transactions, this applies to the total amount as a whole.

This rule also applies to all types of payments, including for **instance donations to a non-profit organisation**.

- Example: a customer orders a new kitchen from your enterprise. You ask for a deposit of 2,000 euros, which the customer pays in cash. After the installation of the kitchen, you still have to receive an outstanding balance of 10,000 euros. Out of this amount, you can only accept another cash payment of 1,000 euros.



Between Which Parties?

The limitation of the use of cash applies to all payments between:

- **business and consumer** (example 1);
- **businesses among themselves** (example 2).

The limitation does not apply to transactions between consumers (example 3).

The limitation does not apply either to operations with financial institutions (i.e. banks). There is therefore no legal limitation on depositing cash into your bank account.

Please note: the limitation applies both to payments made and to amounts received and therefore accepted!

- Example 1: as a professional business, you sell a 3,100 euro lawnmower to a consumer. You may accept a maximum of 3,000 euros in cash and must have him pay at least 100 euros electronically.
- Example 2: as a construction company you order 60,000 euros of insulating material from a wholesaler. You may pay a maximum of 3,000 euros in cash.
- Example 3: you want to buy your neighbour's car to teach your son to drive. Your neighbour sells it to you for 5,000 euros. You may pay the full amount in cash.



Stricter Rules for Scrap Metals, Precious Metals and Copper Cables

In the sectors trading scrap metals, precious metals and copper cables, stricter rules apply to cash payments. This concerns more specifically **jewellers and scrap metal dealers** since this legislation also covers goods that contain the above-mentioned metals:

Limitations of cash payments in transactions scrap metals, precious metals and copper cables		
	Business Professional sales	Consumer Private sales
Business Professional purchase	No cash payment possible	No cash payment possible
Consumer Private purchase	3,000 euros (general rule)	No limit



In this sector, the law does not allow any cash payments between companies.

If a company wants to buy scrap metals or precious metals such as **gold, silver, platinum or palladium** from a consumer, that company may not pay in cash. The same applies for the purchase of **copper cables** from a consumer. In the three cases above, the full amount has to be paid to the consumer through other means of payment.

When a company from one of these sectors sells to a consumer, the cash payment limitation of up to 3,000 euros applies.

There are no limits for transactions between consumers.

Two important exceptions apply:

1. if these precious materials are present only in **small quantities** and solely because of their necessary physical properties. For example, a thin layer of gold is sometimes used in the production of electronic chips, not as the main component for value but as an essential element for the functionality of the device.
2. in the case of a **public sale** conducted under the supervision of a bailiff.

Examples:

- A consumer wants to buy an engagement ring of 1,500 euros. As a jeweller, you may accept this payment entirely in cash.
- You are a jeweller and want to sell gold to another jeweller. You may not pay any part of this invoice in cash.
- A consumer comes to your jewellery store to sell you an heirloom. You want to buy it from him for 2,000 euros. You may not pay in cash for this, not even partially. You must transfer the total amount of 2,000 euros electronically (bank transfer, PayPal...).

Total Ban on Real Estate Transactions

When buying or selling a property (land, house, flat...), whether by auction or private agreement, payment may **only be made by bank transfer or cheque**.

The contract and the bill of sale have to state the number(s) of the financial accounts to which the amount has been or will be transferred, as well as the identity of the holders of these accounts. Notaries and estate agents monitor this procedure and are required to report any non-compliance.

Enforcement

The **Directorate-General for Economic Inspection** regularly carries out inspections. The inspectors have access to all of the company's documents.

It is up to the company to prove, with the help of accounting documents, that these payments were not made or accepted in cash beyond or against the legal limitations explained in this brochure.



Penalty

If, as a company, you accept or pay an amount in breach of these legal limitations, you face a fine ranging from **2,000 to 1,800,000 euros**.

Contact Details for Suspicious Persons or Transactions

If you notice suspicious persons or transactions, you can report them to the Economic Inspection.

Are you a consumer? If so, report through [ConsumerConnect](#). On this platform, you will also find information about your rights and obligations as a consumer.

Are you a company? Report violations through the [report point of the FPS Economy](#).

Legislation

Act of 18 September 2017 on the prevention of money laundering and of terrorist financing and on the limitation of the use of cash.












FPS Economy, S.M.E.s, Self-employed and Energy

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