

Awards.com Guide Explains What Buyers Get Wrong About Crystal Awards

Crystal is a type of glass, and award crystal is lead-free. Awards.com explains K9 crystal, sandblasting versus laser engraving, and why it won't yellow.

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Most people believe crystal is a separate material from glass, and many think it contains lead. Both ideas are wrong, and they lead buyers to the wrong questions when they shop for a crystal award. A new guide from Awards.com sets the record straight.

The published guide on buying crystal awards starts with the fact that trips up most shoppers: crystal is a type of glass. As Awards.com explains, the optical crystal and [K9 crystal](#) used in quality awards are lead-free glass, engineered for clarity and made to be cut and polished into precise shapes. The old link between crystal and lead comes from lead crystal glassware, a different material made for a different job.

That single point changes how a buyer should shop. Because "crystal" is a category and not a grade, two awards can both be labeled crystal and be very different pieces. The guide walks through what actually separates them: clarity and edge color, weight in the hand, and the quality of the cut and polish. K9 crystal, the grade seen most often in premium awards, is water-clear with no green or gray tint at the thicker edges.

"The recipient never reads the spec sheet. They pick the award up," said Vincent Nero, VP and General Manager at Awards.com. "Everything you are paying for, the clarity, the weight, the polish, is felt in that one second. That is what you are actually buying. So skip the glass-versus-



crystal debate and ask about the grade of glass instead."

The guide also explains the two main engraving methods, which buyers rarely ask about. Sandblast engraving cuts a frosted, white-etched mark into the surface that stands out from across a room and holds up for the life of the piece, the traditional choice for names, years, and logos. Subsurface laser engraving floats an image or logo inside the crystal for a 3D effect. Neither is better in the abstract. The right choice depends on the design.

On durability, the guide corrects a common worry. Crystal will not yellow or fade. Crystal and [glass awards](#) hold their clarity for decades and are more UV-stable than acrylic, which can yellow after long exposure to strong light. The real handling question is that crystal, being glass, can chip if dropped, which felt-padded bases and careful placement address.

Example of thick crystal cubes



Awards.com engraves every piece free, provides a proof before production, and has no order minimum. The full guide and the crystal awards collection are available on the company's website.

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*Vincent Nero, VP GM,
Awards.com*

Read the guide: [What Buyers Get Wrong About Crystal Awards](#)

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recognition. We design and engrave crystal, glass, acrylic, and plaque awards, with free engraving, a free proof before production, and no order minimum, so buyers can order a single piece or an entire program. Learn more at [Awards.com](#).

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