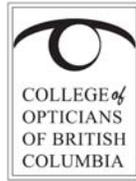


FACT SHEET



College of Opticians of British Columbia

Policy on Mandatory Program and Certification of Sight Testing by Opticians

- The purpose of the College of Opticians of BC (COBC) is to protect the health and safety of British Columbians as it relates to the practice of Opticianry.
- Under current regulations, opticians may provide sight-testing services using automated technology with physician or optometrist supervision.
- In September 2003, the COBC decided that it was in the public interest to establish a mandatory program and certification for automated sight testing by opticians.
- Sight tests only measure the refractive error of the person's eyes to determine the power of the lens needed to correct their vision.
- The COBC Board of Directors believes the automated sight testing technology is safe and appropriate for people without eye health risk factors.
- To ensure public safety, opticians who perform sight tests under current regulation must be certified by the COBC and adhere to Standards of Practice.
- The COBC has Standards of Practice in place to properly inform consumers of the limitations of the sight test, the need for a regular full eye health exam and the difference between a sight test and a full eye health exam.
- According to the Standards of Practice (Section 53) in the COBC bylaws, all opticians who use automated refraction equipment must notify the Registrar of the COBC within a prescribed period of time.
- By 2007, all opticians using automated refraction equipment must be certified.
- Certification requires the successful completion of a COBC approved a sight testing program, designed to meet COBC established Sight Testing Competencies.¹
- Certification also requires the successful completion of the COBC approved certification examination on sight testing.
- All opticians who perform sight tests must provide a written notice to the client as prescribed in the bylaws and obtain the client's signature. The Standards of Practice further specify that the written notice and the client's signature is part of the client record that must be maintained by all sight testing opticians.
- The COBC remains vigilant and responsive to consumer concerns, accredits and monitors the use of automated sight-testing equipment by opticians.

¹ see COBC Fact Sheet: Accreditation of Automated Sight-Testing Program for Opticians