



COLLEGE *of* OPTICIANS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
a B.C. Health Regulator

Standards of Practice

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College of Opticians of British Columbia

Guidelines to the Standards of Practice

This document does not contain the guidelines to the Standards of Practice. To download a copy of the Standards of Practice that contains the guidelines, please visit:

http://www.cobc.ca/Resource_Room.aspx

In order to protect the public, the goal of the guidelines is the maintenance of the appropriate standards of professional competence and conduct by members of the College of Opticians of British Columbia (COBC).

The guidelines represent the College's view of good practice, i.e. what a competent optician is able to do in practical and achievable terms within existing training and skills. It does not constitute a checklist of clinical or professional procedures that must be performed.

Guidelines do not indicate what opticians must do in a given set of circumstances. They provide a guide as to the scope of services that the optician can provide. It is incumbent upon each practitioner to exercise professional judgment when determining the needs of each health care consumer.

Guidelines are not written for every Standard of Practice. New guidelines might be developed, as circumstances warrant, to reflect advances in medical science and constantly changing technology and/or scope of practice.

The guidelines may be used by the COBC in judging the competence and professional conduct of COBC members.

The inquiry committee may make reference to the guidelines in determining whether or not actions on the part of an optician amount to professional misconduct or unskilled practice.

The guidelines are set out as a reference to specific Standards of Practice and are presented in bold typeface. The Standards of Practice are presented in Italics. The numbering system reflects that used in the separate Standards of Practice document.

Standard 1: Competence

The Optician shall conduct him or herself so that health care consumers receive the Optician's most effective performance.

Criteria:

- 1.1 *Each Optician is responsible for maintaining his or her competence.*
- 1.2 *Each Optician is responsible for evaluating his or her own educational needs and meeting those needs through programs of continuing education.*
- 1.3 *The optician shall only perform tasks for which he or she has sufficient education and experience to perform competently and safely, and shall not engage in tasks that are beyond his or her capacity to perform.*
- 1.4 *The Optician will refer, or assist health care consumers to find the necessary professional help when the condition or status of the health care consumer falls outside his or her scope of practice, education or experience.*
- 1.5 *The Optician shall not engage in the practice of Opticianry while his or her ability to do so is compromised or impaired*
- 1.6 *The Optician shall ensure that he or she meets the continuing education requirements as specified by the College of Opticians.*
- 1.7 *The Optician shall maintain current knowledge of legislation, standards and policies pertaining to the delivery of Opticianry care and to the education and general welfare of his or her health care consumers.*
- 1.8 *The Optician is responsible for inspecting any product, and determining the appropriateness of any solution, that is provided to a health care consumer.*

Standard 2: Professional Conduct

The Optician shall meet the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice.

Criteria:

- 2.1 *The Optician shall function in accordance with the Code of Ethics (standards of practice of the College of Opticians of British Columbia, bylaws, regulations, and Health Professions Act)*
- 2.2 *The Optician is responsible for the professional actions and consequences of actions of any student or non-registrant that they have agreed to supervise*
- 2.3 *Opticians are required to report any incident of unauthorized practice to the College of Opticians of British Columbia.*

- 2.4 *Opticians are required to report any incident of unauthorized use of the protected titles to the College of Opticians of British Columbia.*
- 2.5 *An optician must ensure that any staff member who uses the title of a regulated health professional must be a regulated member of that health profession.*
- 2.6 *An Optician shall only provide treatment which they know or believe is appropriate to meet the needs of the health care consumer.*
- 2.7 *An Optician shall only continue treatment of a health care consumer where such need is indicated and where the treatment continues to be effective.*
- 2.8 *An optician, at the request of a health care consumer or another optician has a duty to facilitate the timely transfer of a health care consumer file, prescription or assessment record to another health care professional.*
- 2.9 *The Optician shall recognize that, while he or she has the right respecting choice of health care consumers he or she shall act in a manner consistent with the British Columbia Human Rights Code.*

Standard 3: Clinical Requirements

The Optician shall meet the specific clinical requirements of professional practice.

Criteria:

Place of Business Location

- 3.1 *In order to provide services an optician must own, be employed in, maintain, or have access to a dispensing facility. A dispensing facility may include mobile service. It is the responsibility of the optician to make sure the dispensing facility meets the requirements as outlined in this standard of practice. The dispensing facility shall be neat and clean. In addition, the registrant must display his/her Certificate of Registration.*
- 3.2 *The registrant must provide the COBC with details about the dispensing facility at which the registrant's dispensing services take place including the mailing address and the telephone number.*
- 3.3 *Methods of infection control shall be determined and implemented to sterilize or sanitize all products or instruments used in health care consumer care.*
- 3.4 *An optician working in a dispensing facility must have access to a prescribed minimum amount of ophthalmic instrumentation dependent on the level of services that are offered at the facility.*

Records

4.1 An optician must make and maintain a record of his/her care for each health care consumer that contains the results of measurements and observations according to the bylaws of the College

4.2 Records are to be organized and maintained in ways that allow for retrieval and review in a timely manner.

4.3 Records shall be legible and understandable by the optician, the health care consumer and the College

4.4 Records must be maintained and/or transferred as set out in Privacy Legislation. A copy of the legislation is posted on the COBC website

4.5 Except in circumstances specified by law, the information contained in a health record shall be maintained confidentially.

4.6 Opticians are to provide health care consumers with reasonable access to the information maintained about them in the record.

4.7 Refraction opticians are required to provide a copy of any assessment of the correction of refractive error they have completed for a health care consumer. The copy of the assessment shall include the measurement of the health care consumers inter pupillary distance.

4.8 Opticians should use the format for recording of specifications provided to health care consumers for eyeglasses, contact lenses and assessment records as posted on the COBC website.

4.9 Records are to be held for as long as necessary to satisfy the clinical, ethical, financial, and legal obligations of the optician.

Knowledge and Clinical Expertise and Technology

5.1 In order to be able to offer best practice service and care to health care consumers.

5.2 Opticianry knowledge and clinical skills shall be developed and maintained; developments in clinical theory and Opticianry techniques and technology are to be evaluated for clinical practice and should be applied and adapted as appropriate.

Legal Obligations

6.1 Professional fee structures are to be understood, and agreements with third party contracts shall be reviewed and adhered to. Opticians shall ensure their fees and company policies on returns and discounts are explained to health care consumers in advance of provision of services.

6.2 Registrants must be familiar with Statutory and common law obligations relevant to practice Health Care Consumer consent and release of information forms must be utilized. In a format that contains information as suggested by the COBC

Standards of Behaviour

7.1 The scope of Opticianry services provided must be those deemed necessary for the care of the health care consumer. The dignity and rights of the health care consumer must be respected.

Health Care Consumer History – Obtaining Case History

8.1 Reasons for the health care consumer's visit are to be elicited in a structured way and relevant information must be recorded.

8.2 Information and data required for assessment, dispensing and management shall only be elicited from the health care consumer, legal guardian and/or other professionals with the health care consumer's or legal guardian's written or otherwise implicit permission.

8.3 Information elicited shall be sufficiently detailed in order to facilitate both immediate and ongoing care of the health care consumer.

8.4 Subsequent assessments that may be performed should be identified on the health care consumer's record, while earlier information and data shall be confirmed in order to maintain an appropriate perspective in the ongoing care of the health care consumer.

Communication with the Health Care Consumer

9.1 Modes and methods of communication that take into account cultural background of the health care consumer shall be used.

Health Care Consumer Management – Planning and Implementation

10.1 Consideration should be given to the relative importance or urgency of the presenting complaint and assessment findings.

10.2 A management plan shall be chosen with the health care consumer following counseling and explanation of the recommended service or product. While a management plan is good practice for health care consumers who are the recipients of any optician services this is most particularly applicable to those who are contact lens health care consumers or refracting health care consumers.

10.3 The informed consent of the health care consumer must be obtained for the initiation and continuation of any management plan.

10.4 Health Care Consumers requiring ongoing care and review shall be advised as to when their fit, visual acuity and vision health should next be evaluated

10.5 Opticians must comply with the Opticians Regulations by providing the health care consumer a written copy of the assessment record or authorizing document for an ophthalmic appliance or other visual aid.

Dispensing Ophthalmic Appliance(s) - Eyeglasses

11.1 The suitability of spectacles as a form of correction for the health care consumer needs to be assessed and alternatives considered.

11.2 The health care consumer's refraction, visual requirements and other findings must be applied to determine the corrective power of the ophthalmic appliance

11.3 The optician has a professional obligation to the health care consumer to ensure that any service or product that he or she has recommended meets the needs of the health care consumer.

11.4 The health care consumer should be assisted in selecting an appropriate ophthalmic appliance.

11.5 Frame and lens parameters need to be considered for the health care consumer's visual condition, needs and expressed desires.

11.6 Lenses shall be ordered and fitted to spectacle frames in accordance with accepted tolerance standards.

11.7 The ophthalmic appliance must be verified against the prescription or assessment record and fitted to the health care consumer.

Dispensing Ophthalmic Appliance(s) - Contact Lenses

12.1 Contact Lenses for prospective or existing health care consumers shall be assessed using required equipment and assessment tools.

12.2 The health care consumer's refraction, visual requirements and other findings must be applied to determine the contact lens specifications.

12.3 Contact lenses received from a lab or supplier for a named health care consumer shall be verified before the lenses are supplied to the health care consumer.

12.4 Contact lenses must be assessed on the eye for physical fitting and visual performance.

12.5 The health care consumer shall be instructed in matters relating to ocular health and vision in contact lens wear, insertion and removal techniques, maintenance, and replacement frequency.

12.6 Contact lens performance, ocular health and health care consumer adherence to wearing and maintenance regimen must be monitored.

12.7 Opticians must comply with Section 6(7) of the Health Professions Act Opticians Regulations with regards to providing the health care consumer a written copy of specifications of the contact lenses.

12.8 As regulated professionals it is prudent for opticians to ensure professional standards are applied to all products dispensed by them.

12.9 A contact lens fitting is considered complete and the specifications recommended accurate only after the health care consumer has returned for a follow-up assessment as recommended by the contact lens practitioner.

12.10 Contact Lenses for prospective or existing health care consumers shall be assessed using required equipment and assessment tools

12.11 The patient's refraction or refractive assessment as well their visual requirement and any other mitigating factors must be applied to determine the contact lens specifications.

Automated Refraction

13.1 The registrant must provide written notice to the health care consumer, in the form specified in the bylaws and in a language understood by the health care consumer, at the time of the independent automated refraction, explaining:

- a)that the procedure to be conducted is an independent automated refraction and is not an eye health examination,
- b)the distinction between an independent automated refraction and an eye health examination which ocular diseases or other conditions specified in section 5 of this Schedule preclude a health care consumer from being able to have an independent automated refraction, and
- c)the desirability of periodic eye health examinations based on the age and overall health of the health care consumer, and recommending that the health care consumer have an eye health examination in addition to the independent automated refraction according to that recommended schedule

13.2 Prior to conducting the independent automated refraction, the registrant must ensure the health care consumer has signed the notice described in the Schedule of the Regulations, attesting to the following:

- a)that the health care consumer has read and understands the information contained in the notice;
- b)that the health care consumer is between the ages specified in the Schedule to the Regulations;
- c)that the health care consumer has had the examination specified in the Schedule to the Regulations;

d)that to the best of the health care consumer's knowledge, the health care consumer is not subject to and does not have a history of any ocular disease or other condition specified in Schedule to the Regulations.

13.3 The registrant must not conduct an independent automated refraction for a health care consumer who

- a)is under the age of 19 years or is 65 years of age or older,
- b)has not had at least one eye health examination since attaining the age of 19 years or, if the health care consumer is 40 years of age or older, has not had at least one eye health examination since attaining the age of 40 years, or
- c)is subject to or has a history of any of the following:
 - glaucoma, retinal detachment, macular degeneration or diplopia;
 - a prescription for corrective lenses containing prisms;
 - refractive error exceeding plus or minus 6.00 dioptres in either eye;
 - diabetes or hypertension;
 - recent head trauma;
 - injury or pain occurring to or in either eye within the previous 3 months;
 - any other condition, symptom or sign indicating a need for an eye health examination as set out in the standards, limits or conditions established by the college for the practice of Opticianry.

13.4 The registrant must, in relation to the notice signed under section 2 of this Schedule:

- a)provide, free of charge, and whether or not requested by the health care consumer, a legible written or electronic copy to the health care consumer containing the information outlined in section 3.1.5 of this schedule, and
- b)retain a copy with the health care consumer's health care record until it may be destroyed *in accordance with the bylaws*.

13.5 Corrective eyeglass lenses must not be dispensed, and a contact lens must not be fitted or dispensed, on the basis of an assessment record, in any of the following circumstances:

- a)the assessment record indicates that there has been a change in refractive error exceeding

- plus or minus 1.00 dioptre in either eye within the previous 6 months, or
 - plus or minus 2.00 dioptres in either eye since the date of the most recent prescription or assessment record, if any, provided by the health care consumer to the registrant;
- b) the assessment record indicates that there is refractive error exceeding plus or minus 6.00 dioptres in either eye, or prisms might be required;
- c) the best corrected visual acuity will be less than 20/25 in either eye;
- d) the health care consumer is not satisfied with the health care consumer's best corrected vision after 2 contemporaneous independent automated refractions have been *conducted*.

13.6 The registrant must recommend that a health care consumer have an eye health examination in any of the circumstances described in section 6 of the Schedule to the regulations. The recommendation and should be recorded in the health care consumer file along with the date upon which the recommendation was given.

13.7 The limitations contained in the Schedule to the Regulations do not apply, if a prescriber who has performed an eye health examination of the health care consumer has requested a registrant to conduct an independent automated refraction on the health care consumer.

13.8 The health care consumer must not be charged for an independent automated refraction if:

- a) due to an error during the independent automated refraction, no assessment record is produced or a corrective eyeglass lens or contact lens cannot be fitted or dispensed using information contained in the assessment record, or
- b) under section 6 of this Schedule, a corrective eyeglass lens or contact lens must not be fitted or dispensed using information contained in the *assessment record*.

13.9 The registrant must, in relation to the assessment record, must set out the health care consumer's inter-pupillary distance in the assessment record, as measured at the time of the independent automated refraction and provide, free of charge, a legible written or electronic copy to the health care consumer, whether or not requested by the health care consumer, and another person specified by the health care consumer, if requested by the health care consumer, and retain a copy with the health care consumer's health care record until it may be destroyed in accordance with the bylaws.

Health Care Consumer Referral

- 14.1 The need for referral to other professionals for assessment and/or treatment shall be recognized and should be discussed with the health care consumer.*
- 14.2 When indicated, referrals shall be made to members of other disciplines, other health care practitioners and/or other opticians.*
- 14.3 A suitable professional must be recommended to the health care consumer.*
- 14.4 The observations, and assessments leading up to the referral shall be included with the health care consumer record, identifying the assessing practitioner and dates of correspondence.*
- 14.5 The referral reply must be retained by the optician and his/her successor or agent for as long as necessary to satisfy the clinical, ethical, financial and legal obligations of the optician.*

Co-management with other Eye Care Professionals

- 15.1 Optician shall provide collaborative assessment as required see section 3.2.3.5.*
- 15.2 Post-treatment follow-up assessment and monitoring of signs according to the referred professional's requirements and the procedure must be undertaken as requested and/or required.*
- 15.3 Optician must arrange appropriate further post- treatment referral or assessment of complications that may be observed by the optician once the health care consumer has been returned to his/her care.*

Low Vision Devices

- 16.1 A range of low vision devices must be demonstrated.*
- 16.2 Low vision devices suited to the health care consumer's visual requirements and functional needs must be recommended.*
- 16.3 The health care consumer must be instructed in the use of the low vision device.*
- 16.4 The success of the low vision device must be evaluated and monitored and additional or alternative devices recommended as necessary.*

Vision in the Workplace

- 17.1 Advice must be provided on eye protection, visual standards and visual ergonomics in the workplace.*
- 17.2 Individuals must be counseled on the suitability of their vision for certain occupations.*

17.3 Certification of an individual's visual suitability for designated occupations or tasks must be provided when appropriate.

Health Care Consumer Education

18.1 The optician shall provide verbal, written or electronic information concerning any instructions, conditions or treatments provided or recommended to a health care consumer.