

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 24, 2012

CONSUMER ADVISORY: HALLOWEEN SAFETY

**Winnipeg, MB** - The Opticians Council of Canada (OCC) urges consumers to heed warnings when considering cosmetic contact lenses (non-corrective coloured lenses) for their Halloween costumes. Cosmetic lenses are sold over-the-counter as costume accessories at some retail outlets and online, and are used to change eye colour or to create an effect such as ‘vampire’ or ‘cat’ eyes. While cosmetic lenses are readily available, critical information about how to use and care for these devices is not provided by unregulated sellers.

“Improper lenses can lead to allergic reaction, infection, swelling of the cornea, and even blindness”, says Robert Dalton, Executive Director of the Opticians Association of Canada. “Severe eye infections have been reported in as little as 24 hours, and some of this damage can be difficult to treat or repair.”

The OCC recommends consulting a Licensed Optician to help you make the right decision on a product that won’t hurt your vision. A Licensed Optician can also provide training on contact lens use and instruction on hygiene.

“Getting a cheap pair of contact lenses for your werewolf outfit online or at the costume store seems like a great idea – until your eye is scratched and permanently damaged by a bad lens”, says Jodi Dodds, Executive Director of the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators. “This is when that cheap pair of lenses has cost you more than you bargained for.”

A private members bill has been passed in the House of Commons to amend the Food and Drug Act in Canada and classify these lenses as class II medical devices, the same as corrective lenses are now classified. The bill is currently before the Senate, however while we are waiting for this very important legislation, we strongly urge the public not to use these lenses. This is about people’s eyesight and in many cases young people’s eyesight.

Licensed Opticians are regulated eye health care professionals who ensure that you receive the essential care and education necessary when choosing contact lenses, eyeglasses or low vision aids. They are trained to recommend and safely fit a full range of devices that help improve eyesight and take into account your lifestyle, environment, and aesthetics.

To find out more about Licensed Opticians, or to find one in your area, go to [www.licensedoptician.ca](http://www.licensedoptician.ca).

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