



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



# Standards of Practice

May 2022

# Introduction

Opticians in British Columbia are regulated health professionals under the [Health Professions Act](#) and must be registered with COBC in order to provide services to the public. All registrants of COBC must meet competency-based educational requirements and pass examinations related to dispensing of vision appliances. To maintain their registration, opticians must also keep their knowledge and skills current through continuing education.

In BC, the public has entrusted COBC—through Section 16(2)(d) and (g) of the [Health Professions Act](#)—with the responsibility of establishing, monitoring, and enforcing standards of practice and professional ethics to ensure the quality of practice across the profession of opticianry.

## What is a Standard?

A standard is the minimum level of performance and professional practice required of an optician to ensure service that is ethical and safe for the public. It is an expected and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be measured.

## Why have Professional Standards?

The primary purpose of standards is to promote, guide, and direct professional practice. COBC's Standards of Practice are used by opticians, the public, employers, COBC, and other stakeholders to:

1. Promote a shared understanding of COBC's expectations for how opticians conduct themselves in their practice.
2. Explain what an optician is and what opticians do.
3. Establish a foundation for the assessment of professional performance.
4. Address incompetent, impaired, or unethical practice among opticians.
5. Provide the public with a clear understanding of the quality of care they should receive from an optician.
6. Assist in the development of job descriptions that identify expectations for practice.
7. Develop training and education programs.
8. Create performance appraisal tools.

The Standards of Practice apply to all opticians in BC, regardless of the environment in which they practice. The Standards are not a step-by-step guide of how to practice opticianry; rather, they set out expectations for every optician. A core expectation is that opticians use their professional judgment to make appropriate decisions in providing care to clients. An optician must take full responsibility for meeting these standards and ensuring that the client's best interests are met.

# Standards of Practice Overview

## Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice

The optician ensures that every aspect of service delivery is centred around the client's immediate and ongoing visual needs.

## Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice

The optician applies verifiable evidence, critical thinking, and professional judgment to all aspects of service delivery.

## Standard 3: Collaborative Care

The optician pursues and supports the development of inter- and intra-professional relationships and engages in ongoing collaboration with relevant regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff to promote optimal client outcomes.

## Standard 4: Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility, and Anti-racism

Coming soon

## Standard 5: Competence

The optician develops and maintains competence to best serve clients and protect the public.

## Standard 6: Professionalism

The optician meets the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice and honours client boundaries.

## Standard 7: Safety and Infection Control

The optician takes reasonable and appropriate measures to minimize the risk of contamination and transmission of infectious agents within their professional practice and practice environment to ensure the health and safety of clients, other regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff.

## Standard 8: Dispensing of Vision Appliances

The optician only dispenses vision appliances that are appropriate for the client.

## Standard 9: Independent Automated Refraction

The optician obtains the applicable certification from COBC before performing independent automated refractions and adheres to the mandated criteria.

## Standard 10: Remote Practice and Technology

The optician ensures that technology is integrated into their opticianry practice—including technology to support remote provision of services—when it is appropriate and in the client's best interests.

## Standard 11: Delegation and Supervision

The optician takes responsibility and accountability for opticianry services provided by personnel who are working under their supervision or to whom they have delegated tasks.

## Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality

The optician respects clients' rights to the privacy and confidentiality of their personal and health information and complies with applicable legislation at all times.

## Standard 13: Conflict of Interest

The optician recognizes, prevents, and takes action to resolve conflicts of interest—whether direct, potential, or perceived.

## Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing

The optician maintains accurate, complete, and timely client and financial records in accordance with COBC's bylaws and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

## Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

The optician communicates clearly, truthfully, and respectfully in any context that may impact client care and adheres to COBC's advertising bylaw when advertising and marketing their practice.

## Standard 16: Risk Management and Quality Improvement

The optician engages in quality improvement and risk management activities to ensure the safety and well-being of clients.

# Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice

## Description

The optician ensures that every aspect of service delivery is centred around the client's immediate and ongoing visual needs.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that their input will be acknowledged, valued, and integrated into all aspects of service delivery.

They can expect professional integrity from their optician.

## Criteria

- 1.1 Ensure that services or products are recommended to the client based specifically on their visual needs, lifestyle, and budget.
- 1.2 Collect subjective and objective information to facilitate immediate and ongoing care.
- 1.3 Consider the relative importance or urgency of client concerns when developing a recommendation, service plan, and/or referral.
- 1.4 Educate the client about the recommended service or product, then collaborate with them to develop a service plan.
- 1.5 Ensure the client understands the scope of services provided or recommended—as well as the cost of those services—before asking for their consent.
- 1.6 Obtain the client's informed consent for the initiation and continuation of all services.
- 1.7 Produce a client record that lists the services provided and any follow-up inquiries in a clear manner.
- 1.8 Take responsibility for inspecting all products and determining their appropriateness for the client.
- 1.9 Provide the client with verbal, written, and/or electronic instructions for follow-up.
- 1.10 Advise the client of when their fit, visual acuity, and vision health should be next evaluated.
- 1.11 Update the client record with all applicable follow-up information.
- 1.12 Be reasonably available to the client or take other steps to ensure continuity of care.
- 1.13 Engage in self-reflective and anti-racist practice that encourages safe, trauma-informed vision care access for all clients, including Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), who are disproportionately subjected to prejudice, bias, discrimination, and racism when seeking health care services.

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 5: Competence
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 5: Competence
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

### Description

The optician applies verifiable evidence, critical thinking, and professional judgment to all aspects of service delivery.

### Expected Outcome

The client can expect that the optical services they receive from their optician:

1. Are informed by relevant clinical research, professional experience, and knowledge.
2. Are specific to their circumstances and individual needs.

### Criteria

- 2.1 Review a variety of reliable sources of evidence.
- 2.2 Use critical thinking to identify, interpret, and adapt evidence in practice.
- 2.3 Evaluate practice based on client outcomes and available evidence, and use professional judgment to modify approaches accordingly.
- 2.4 Exchange verifiable evidence with other opticians, relevant regulated health care professionals, students, unregulated staff, and clients to ensure continuity of care.



# Standard 3: Collaborative Care

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 5: Competence
- Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Description

The optician pursues and supports the development of inter- and intra-professional relationships and engages in ongoing collaboration with relevant regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff to promote optimal client outcomes.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect their optician to collaborate with relevant regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff to choose the approach that will result in the highest quality of care.

## Criteria

- 3.1 Communicate effectively with clients, relevant regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff to coordinate care and provide collaborative assessment, as required.
- 3.2 Recognize the need to refer the client to a relevant regulated health care professional for assessment and/or treatment when the client presents with a condition requiring evaluation or treatment that is outside the optician's scope of practice, competence, and/or comfort level.
- 3.3 Recommend a suitable professional to the client, when required, and discuss the recommendation with the client.
- 3.4 Clearly document recommendations in the client record.
- 3.5 Update the client record with documentation of any communications between health care professionals as part of a client referral.
- 3.6 Ensure an information-sharing agreement is in place in an optician owned collaborative eyecare practice, acknowledging that the optician is responsible for the eyeglass records, contact lens records, and assessment records they produce, but that they are not responsible for optometric records.
- 3.7 Obtain informed consent and maintain confidentiality with clients, regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff at all times.

Standard 4:  
**Indigenous Cultural Safety,  
Cultural Humility, and Anti-racism**

NOT IN EFFECT

# Standard 5: Competence

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 16: Risk Management and Quality Improvement

## Description

The optician develops and maintains their competence to best serve clients and protect the public.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect their optician to be competent in all areas of practice for which care is provided. This requires that the optician maintain the necessary skills, qualifications, and experience to deliver quality care.

## Criteria

- 5.1 Take responsibility for maintaining professional competence.
- 5.2 Maintain up-to-date knowledge of legislation, standards, policies, and third-party agreements pertaining to the delivery of opticianry care and to the education and general welfare of clients.
- 5.3 Develop and maintain knowledge and competence in existing and emerging areas of practice.
- 5.4 Actively engage in self-reflection to identify competency gaps and learning needs.
- 5.5 Participate in educational activities to address self-identified learning needs and meet the continuing education requirements of COBC.
- 5.6 Where the ability to practice opticianry is compromised or impaired, do not provide services.
- 5.7 Only perform tasks if sufficiently educated and experienced to do so, having maintained the necessary skills, knowledge, judgment, and capacity to perform those tasks competently and safely.
- 5.8 Where competent and high-quality care cannot be provided, refer the client to another optician or regulated health care professional, or assist them in finding the necessary professional help.



# Standard 6: Professionalism

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 5: Competence
- Standard 13: Conflict of Interest

### Description

The optician meets the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice and honours client boundaries.

### Expected Outcome

The client can expect their optician to provide respectful treatment and services in compliance with ethical and legal requirements.

### Criteria

- 6.1 Act in accordance with the provincial [Health Professions Act](#), the [Opticians Regulation](#), [COBC's bylaws & Code of Ethics](#), and COBC's Standards of Practice.
- 6.2 Display applicable COBC certificate(s) of registration in the [practice environment](#).
- 6.3 Ensure professional standards are applied to all products [dispensed](#).
- 6.4 Act in accordance with the [British Columbia Human Rights Code](#) and respect the dignity and rights of the client.
- 6.5 Act in accordance with the [Accessible Canada Act](#).
- 6.6 Act in accordance with applicable employment legislation, including the [Employment Standards Act](#).
- 6.7 Cooperate with any investigation facilitated by COBC.
- 6.8 Respond as required and in a timely manner to communications received from COBC.
- 6.9 Report any incident of unauthorized practice to COBC.
- 6.10 Report any incident of unauthorized use of a protected title to COBC.
- 6.11 Report unethical, unsafe, or incompetent practice by any regulated health care professional to the appropriate regulatory body in accordance with applicable legislative requirements.
- 6.12 Report sexual abuse by any regulated health care professional to the appropriate regulatory body in accordance with applicable legislative requirements.
- 6.13 Only provide treatment that is appropriate to the visual needs of the client.
- 6.14 Only continue to treat a client for as long as treatment remains necessary and in the client's best interests.
- 6.15 Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients in accordance with the [Professional Boundaries booklet](#).
- 6.16 Do not engage in a sexual relationship with any client.

# Standard 7: Safety and Infection Control

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 16: Risk Management and Quality Improvement

## Description

The optician takes reasonable and appropriate measures to minimize the risk of contamination and transmission of infectious agents within their professional practice and practice environment to ensure the health and safety of clients, other regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that their optician has sterilized or sanitized all products and instruments used in client care, and that relevant safety plans and protocols will be followed throughout service delivery.

## Criteria

- 7.1 Adhere to all federal, provincial, and municipal requirements (including health and safety, as per the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) and [WorkSafeBC](#)) and ensure the practice environment is compliant.
- 7.2 Stay up to date on current techniques used for disinfecting the office and controlling transmission of infectious agents.
- 7.3 Take reasonable and appropriate measures to minimize the risk of contamination and transmission of infectious agents within the practice environment.
- 7.4 Maintain access to hot and cold running water or, in a mobile facility, an alternative means of performing hand hygiene in the practice environment.
- 7.5 Maintain a protocol for disinfecting the practice environment and instrumentation.
- 7.6 Follow routine precautions at all times (e.g., hand hygiene, appropriate waste disposal).
- 7.7 Take reasonable steps to ensure that workplace safety protocols are followed.
- 7.8 Take reasonable steps to identify risk factors for eye infection.

# Standard 8: Dispensing of Vision Appliances

## Description

The optician only dispenses vision appliances that are appropriate for the client.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect their optician to conduct an assessment, take appropriate measurements, and produce vision appliances that meet the client's visual needs.

## Criteria

- 8.1 Own, be employed in, or have access to a practice environment that meets the requirements for providing services, as outlined in the Standards of Practice.
- 8.2 Provide COBC with contact information for the practice environment where dispensing services take place, including the mailing address, telephone number, and email address.
- 8.3 Have continuous access to all ophthalmic tools and equipment necessary for the services offered in the practice environment.
- 8.4 Only dispense vision appliances based on a prescription or assessment record that contains all the following:
  - a. The name and signature of the prescriber (if using a prescription) or the name and licence number of the optician who performed the refraction (if using an assessment record).
  - b. The client's name.
  - c. The client's refractive error.
  - d. The date of the examination/assessment.
- 8.5 Educate the client about the importance of regular eye health examinations conducted by prescribers.
- 8.6 Retain a copy of the original prescription or assessment record as part of the client record.
- 8.7 Analyze the client's visual needs and use their prescription or assessment record to recommend appropriate vision appliances.
- 8.8 Assist the client in selecting appropriate vision appliances.

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 10: Remote Practice and Technology
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## EYEGLASSES

- 8.9 Review the client's environment, occupation, hobbies, regular activities, and other applicable considerations when recommending ophthalmic lenses and frames.
- 8.10 Take the client's measurements as required to ensure proper functioning of their eyeglasses.
- 8.11 Verify that the client's completed eyeglasses are as ordered and within tolerance.
- 8.12 Adjust, fit, and adapt the eyeglasses to meet the needs of the client.
- 8.13 Document in the client record the services provided and products dispensed to the client, including (but not limited to):
  - a. lens type
  - b. frame details (make, model, colour, size)
  - c. measurements
  - d. which, if any, components of the dispensed product(s) (e.g., lenses, frames) were brought into the practice environment by the client, having been obtained or purchased separately
- 8.14 Educate the client about eyeglass wear, including (but not limited to) the use, expected results, limitations, adaptation period, and maintenance requirements of eyeglasses.
- 8.15 If the eyeglasses are to be used as safety glasses, adhere to safety standards and tolerances for personal protective eyewear.
- 8.16 When duplicating the client's prescription from an existing pair of eyeglasses, note the duplication in the client record.

## CONTACT LENSES

- 8.17 Be registered with COBC as a contact lens fitter.
- 8.18 Review the client's history to determine the suitability of contact lenses as a vision solution based on all the following:
  - a. An assessment of the cornea, the conjunctiva and lids, and the tear layer.
  - b. The corneal curvature.
  - c. Any relevant medications.
  - d. Other relevant factors, including client's environment, work, hobbies, daily activities, and history.

- 8.19 Educate the client about the advantages, risks, and limitations of contact lens wear.
- 8.20 Recommend the most appropriate type of contact lens based on the client information.
- 8.21 Consider the client's refractive error, vision requirements, and environmental factors when determining contact lens specifications.
- 8.22 Use trial contact lenses to evaluate physical fit and visual performance, and make modifications as required.
- a. Verify that the client's completed contact lenses are as ordered and within tolerance.
  - b. Provide—and document as provided—any relevant details or recommendations related to:
    - i. Lens hygiene.
    - ii. Lens insertion and removal.
    - iii. Lens care.
    - iv. Wear time and replacement schedules.
    - v. Adaptive symptoms.
    - vi. Contraindications.
    - vii. Follow-up schedules.
    - viii. How and when to access emergency care.
- 8.23 Develop and provide an ongoing client follow-up plan.
- 8.24 After the client has completed the successful follow-up assessment(s), document that the contact lens fitting is complete and the recommended specifications are accurate.
- 8.25 Provide an initial fitting to a client who is seeking replacement contact lenses but does not have a prior contact lens record on file.
- 8.26 After completion of service, provide the client with a contact lens record containing their updated specifications.
- 8.27 When providing replacement contact lenses or services to a client who has a contact lens record on file:
- a. Ensure the client's clinical information is current; if it is not, treat the client visit as an initial fitting.
  - b. Determine the need for alterations to previous lens specifications and make adjustments accordingly.
  - c. Advise the client of the need for continuing care, and explain what to expect.



- d. Confirm the parameters of the contact lenses ordered.
  - e. Provide follow-up services in accordance with the service plan.
  - f. Provide the client with a new contact lens record containing their updated specifications after completion of service.
- 8.28 When providing replacement contact lenses or services to a client who does not have a prior contact lens record on file but who has provided their own contact lens record:
- a. Determine any risks related to providing replacement contact lenses without an initial fitting, and communicate these risks to the client.
  - b. Produce and maintain a client record appropriate for the service, and retain a copy of the contact lens record provided by the client.
  - c. Document the reasons for providing replacement contact lenses without an initial fitting in the client record.

## LOW VISION DEVICES

- 8.29 Demonstrate and recommend low vision devices suited to the client's visual requirements and functional needs.
- 8.30 Instruct the client on the use of the recommended low vision devices.
- 8.31 Evaluate and monitor client success with their low vision device(s) and recommend additional or alternative devices, as necessary.

# Standard 9: Independent Automated Refraction

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Description

The optician obtains the applicable certification from COBC before performing independent automated refractions and adheres to the mandated criteria.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that independent automated refraction services will be provided by an optician who is trained and certified to perform independent automated refractions safely and effectively.

## Criteria

- 9.1 Be certified by COBC to conduct independent automated refractions.
- 9.2 Comply with the Opticians Regulation when conducting independent automated refractions.
- 9.3 Have access to the appropriate equipment to perform independent automated refractions, including one or more computerized components.
- 9.4 Before conducting an independent automated refraction, work with the client to complete the client notice forms required by the bylaws and obtain informed consent.
- 9.5 Document any referral or request to provide an independent automated refraction from a prescriber in the client record.
- 9.6 Communicate the fee for the independent automated refraction to the client prior to providing the service.
- 9.7 Ensure that all assessment records generated for use in preparing vision appliances are signed by an optician who is certified to perform independent automated refractions and retained in the client record.
- 9.8 Recommend that the client see a relevant regulated health care professional regarding any indications or complications in the client's visual or general health as observed during the independent automated refraction.
- 9.9 After completion of service, provide the client with a copy of the assessment record that:
  - a. Includes the pupillary distance.
  - b. Is free of charge.
- 9.10 Maintain the client record in accordance with Standard 14 and the Opticians Regulation.

# Standard 10: Remote Practice and Technology

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Description

The optician ensures that technology is integrated into their opticianry practice—including technology to support remote provision of services—when it is appropriate and in the client’s best interests.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that their optician’s use of technology will not negatively impact their safety or the quality of care they receive.

## Criteria

- 10.1 Evaluate, apply, and adapt developments in clinical theory, opticianry techniques, and technology for clinical practice.
- 10.2 Only engage in remote practice—including remote communication, dispensing, and/or delivery of prescription vision appliances—where it is in the client’s best interests to do so.
- 10.3 Collect, record, store, and transmit client information in a private manner.
- 10.4 Manage all client information in compliance with COBC’s Standards of Practice and applicable privacy and anti-spam legislation.
- 10.5 Ensure that any website or technological interface used as part of remote opticianry practice:
  - a. Complies with COBC’s [advertising bylaw](#).
  - b. Provides the client with reasonable and timely access to an optician.
  - c. Identifies the full name and licence number of any optician who interacts with a client through the interface.
  - d. Complies with applicable Standards of Practice (i.e., Standard 11, Standard 14).
  - e. Meets other relevant legislated requirements.

# Standard 11: Delegation and Supervision

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Description

The optician takes responsibility and accountability for opticianry services provided by personnel who are working under their supervision or to whom they have delegated tasks.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect to be informed of the roles of supervised personnel and made aware that the services provided by these personnel are supervised or delegated by the optician.

## Criteria

- 11.1 Delegate unrestricted activities to unregulated staff and provide direction as necessary.
- 11.2 Communicate with the client about the roles, responsibilities, and reserved titles of the different personnel in the practice environment.
- 11.3 Ensure that any individual using the title of a regulated health care professional is licensed to do so.
- 11.4 When supervising or delegating tasks to a student or unregulated staff member, maintain responsibility for that individual's professional actions and the consequences of those actions.
- 11.5 Assess the knowledge and skills of unregulated staff and assign only those tasks and activities that fall within their competence.
- 11.6 Adhere to all signed supervision agreements.
- 11.7 Employ supervision and delegation strategies to determine which clients can receive services from students and unregulated staff, taking into account the competence of the student or unregulated staff member, the client care needs, and any other applicable factors related to the practice environment.
- 11.8 Regularly monitor the delivery and documentation of services by students and unregulated staff to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.
- 11.9 As a contact lens fitter, supervise contact lens fittings conducted by personnel who are not contact lens fitters, as required by the Opticians Regulation.
- 11.10 Ensure independent automated refractions are performed only by opticians who are certified with COBC to perform independent automated refractions.

# Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality

## Description

The optician respects clients' rights to the privacy and confidentiality of their personal and health information and complies with applicable legislation at all times.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that their optician will safeguard their personal and health information and protect their privacy and confidentiality as required by relevant legislation.

## Criteria

- 12.1 Adhere to all relevant privacy and confidentiality legislation and regulatory requirements.
- 12.2 Perform services in a manner with consideration for client confidentiality.
- 12.3 Conduct assessments, treatments, conversations, and consultations in a manner that preserves client confidentiality and privacy.
- 12.4 Store, transfer, and dispose of client records in a manner that protects client confidentiality, except in circumstances specified by law.
- 12.5 Obtain client consent before collecting, using, and/or disclosing confidential information to parties outside of the client's circle of care, except in circumstances specified by law.
- 12.6 Only collect information that is necessary for the services being provided.
- 12.7 Ensure that client personal and health information is accurate, complete, and up to date.
- 12.8 Report privacy breaches to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia (OIPC) to ensure management and mitigation of risk.

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 8: Dispensing of Vision Appliances
- Standard 9: Independent Automated Refraction
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 16: Risk Management and Quality Improvement



# Standard 13: Conflict of Interest

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality

## Description

The optician recognizes, prevents, and takes action to resolve conflicts of interest—whether direct, potential, or perceived.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that their optician will deliver services in the client's best interests and that conflicts of interest will be disclosed and managed.

## Criteria

- 13.1 Ensure that financial and commercial practices do not compromise the client's safety or vision care needs.
- 13.2 Avoid, where possible—and manage, where necessary—any direct, potential, or perceived conflict of interest that is not in the best interests of the client.
- 13.3 Refuse to accept gifts, money, or other incentives from clients that may be perceived to affect client care, professional judgment, and/or trust in the profession.
- 13.4 Take steps to appropriately initiate, maintain, and terminate optician–client relationships throughout the course of care.
- 13.5 Where a conflict of interest is unavoidable, disclose the conflict to clients and others, as appropriate, and document in a complete, open, and timely manner how the conflict was managed.

# Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Description

The optician maintains accurate, complete, and timely client and financial records in accordance with COBC's bylaws and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that the health and financial records kept by their optician are accurate, understandable, complete, and confidential, and will be provided or transferred at the client's request.

## Criteria

### RECORD KEEPING AND RETENTION

- 14.1 Create and maintain an accurate and truthful client record for each client, including measurements and observations based on the services provided.
- 14.2 Ensure that all records are updated to reflect new information as it becomes available.
- 14.3 Comply with all privacy [legislation](#) and [standards](#) related to the collection of, access to, and disclosure of records.
- 14.4 Ensure that records are legible and can be understood by the optician, the client, COBC, and other regulated health care professionals.
- 14.5 Maintain client records in a manner that enables timely access, as required, by the client or by an authorized COBC inspector.
- 14.6 Provide the client with reasonable access to the information maintained about them in their client record.
- 14.7 Upon client request, facilitate the timely transfer of the client record to another regulated health care professional, in accordance with relevant legislation.
- 14.8 Ensure that electronic records are kept in accordance with the Standards of Practice and the applicable privacy legislation.
- 14.9 Retain all client records for a mandatory minimum of three years and a recommended maximum of seven years from date of last entry.
- 14.10 Destroy records containing personal or health information in a secure manner.

- 14.11 Upon retirement, sale of the practice, or extended closure of the practice, notify COBC of the change, and ensure that files are not abandoned and are securely transferred in accordance with applicable privacy legislation.
- 14.12 During an extended closure, take reasonable steps to ensure that clients can access their records.
- 14.13 In the absence of a written agreement to the contrary that has been signed by both parties, note that a client record remains with the practice where the record was created.

## BILLING

- 14.14 Understand professional fee structures, and review and adhere to third-party agreements.
- 14.15 Keep clear and legible financial records for all services provided and all vision appliances dispensed, including:
  - a. fees for services
  - b. product receipts
  - c. commercial laboratory work orders
  - d. invoices to clients
- 14.16 As applicable, sign an insurance form or submit an insurance claim on behalf of the client to assist them in ethically using their benefits.
- 14.17 Charge a suitable fee for conducting a pupillary distance service, as long as it is not performed as part of an independent automated refraction.
- 14.18 Do not provide an incomplete contact lens record or assessment record when a client has not paid or completed their service.
- 14.19 Charge a reasonable fee for providing a duplicate copy of the contact lens record or assessment record.

# Standard 15: Communication and Marketing

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 12: Privacy and Confidentiality
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing

## Description

The optician communicates clearly, truthfully, and respectfully in any context that may impact client care and adheres to COBC's [advertising bylaw](#) when advertising and marketing their practice.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect their optician to communicate in a professional, transparent, and respectful manner that promotes their understanding of the proposed services. They can expect that the optician's communications, advertising, and marketing activities are in the public interest.

## Criteria

- 15.1 Use respectful, transparent, and straightforward communication in all professional interactions (verbal, written, and online, including on social media).
- 15.2 Promote client understanding of the proposed services through active listening, use of plain language, and encouragement of questions.
- 15.3 Explain risks and benefits of the services being delivered.
- 15.4 Identify potential barriers to communication and address those barriers using appropriate tools and techniques (e.g., interpreters, technology, visual educational materials).
- 15.5 Provide details about billing procedures, fees, company policies—including policies on returns and discounts—and the expected [service plan](#) before providing services, to ensure the client can make informed decisions.
- 15.6 Ensure that public communications and advertising through social media and other platforms are not false, misleading, illegitimate, or unverifiable.

# Standard 16: Risk Management and Quality Improvement

## Description

The optician engages in quality improvement and risk management activities to ensure the safety and well-being of clients.

## Expected Outcome

The client can expect that quality improvement activities will be an integral component of their optician's practice and that all efforts will be taken to minimize risk and ensure quality care.

## Criteria

- 16.1 Collect feedback from clients and colleagues and engage in self-reflection to identify areas for quality improvement.
- 16.2 Incorporate policies and procedures related to quality improvement and risk management into practice, and ensure that relevant regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff are informed about these procedures.
- 16.3 Incorporate ongoing risk assessments and mitigation and management strategies into practice.
- 16.4 Participate in emergency preparedness and response training as applicable to the practice setting (e.g., fire drills, CPR).
- 16.5 Document client complaints and adverse events, and disclose details to the client promptly and transparently, in accordance with best practice guidelines and employer policies and procedures.
- 16.6 Assess client complaints, adverse events, and service gaps, and take immediate action to facilitate safe, client-centred care and continuous quality improvement.

## Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centred Practice
- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 5: Competence
- Standard 6: Professionalism
- Standard 7: Safety and Infection Control
- Standard 14: Record Keeping and Billing
- Standard 15: Communication and Marketing



# Glossary of Terms

## **Assessment record:**

The record produced based on an independent automated refraction conducted by a person who is authorized under the Opticians Regulation to conduct independent automated refractions.

## **Conflict of interest:**

Any circumstance in which your personal interests; the interests of a close friend, family member, business associate, corporation or partnership in which you hold a significant interest; the interests of a person to whom you owe an obligation; or the interests of an organization of which you are a member or with which you have any other affiliation could influence your decisions and impair your ability to act in a client's best interests, impartially and without bias.

## **Contact lens:**

A lens or mold designed or offered for the purpose of being placed on the surface of the cornea or other anterior surface of the eye to correct the refractive error or induce physiological change in the eye.

## **Contact lens fitter:**

A registrant authorized under the bylaws to fit contact lenses.

## **Contact lens record:**

A record of contact lens specifications derived from a contact lens fitting using information contained in an authorizing document and prepared by a contact lens fitter or an individual with equivalent qualifications in another province or foreign jurisdiction.

## **Delegate:**

To assign part or all of an unrestricted activity to an unregulated staff member or student.

## **Dispense:**

To design, prepare, fit, adjust, verify, or supply.

## **Independent automated refraction:**

A procedure conducted without the involvement of a prescriber that assesses the refractive error of the eye—without assessing eye health—and assists in determining whether a client may require a vision appliance to correct deficiencies in their visual acuity. Also commonly referred to as a “sight test.”

## **Opticianry:**

The health profession in which the following services are provided:

- a. Dispensing of vision appliances, through:
  - i. The use of information contained in prescriptions, contact lens records and assessment records.
  - ii. The duplication of corrective eyeglass lenses, with no change in refractive value, using a lensometer or similar device.
- b. Conducting of independent automated refractions, including those performed upon prescriber request.
- c. Promotion of eye health and proper use of vision appliances.

**Practice environment:**

A location in which an optician performs opticianry duties, including mobile service.

**Prescriber:**

A qualified medical practitioner (most often an optometrist or ophthalmologist) who produces an optical prescription or contact lens record based on an assessment that includes an eye health exam.

**Remote opticianry practice:**

The performance of any dispensing activity without an in-person meeting; can be done by telephone, email, video conference, etc.

**Service plan:**

A plan created to ensure that a client has appropriate and continuous vision care.

**Supervise:**

To maintain a constant presence and close contact with a supervisee in the same practice environment, and to review and approve all services provided to clients by the supervisee.

**Unrestricted activity:**

An activity or task that can be performed by an unregulated individual (e.g., dispensing of eyeglasses); an activity that is not restricted by a regulation.

**Verify:**

To inspect and confirm, before supplying a product to a client, that the following specifications are met:

- a. In the case of corrective eyeglass lenses, the specifications set out in the authorizing document provided by the client or provided by another individual on behalf of the client.
- b. In the case of contact lenses, the specifications set out in the contact lens record or authorizing document provided by the client or provided by another individual on behalf of the client.

**Vision appliance:**

An appliance or device designated or offered for a vision condition, including a corrective eyeglass lens, contact lens, or low vision aid (but excluding complete ready-to-wear eyeglasses not designated or offered for client use).