



COLLEGE OF OPTICIANS OF ALBERTA

Online Privacy and Security Policy

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Introduction

The College of Opticians of Alberta (the "COA") is committed to maintaining the accuracy, confidentiality and security of the personal information collected from members, applicants, public council representatives and employees.

The College of Opticians of Alberta ("COA") Privacy and Security Policy ("Privacy Policy") below is applicable to the following:

- <https://albertaopticians.ca/>
- <https://moodle.albertaopticians.ca/>
- <https://coa.alinityapp.com/Client/PublicDirectory>
- <https://coa.alinityapp.com/>

For the purpose of this policy, these sites collectively comprise the COA website ("the Website").

The COA has established this Privacy Policy to advise you of the kinds of personal information we may gather during your visit to the Website, why we gather your information, what we use your personal information for, when we might disclose your personal information, and how you can manage your personal information.

Please be advised that the practices described in this Privacy Policy apply only to information gathered through the Website. This Privacy Policy does not necessarily reflect our practices with respect to information gathered through other means.

Accountability

The COA is committed to protecting all of the personal information that is shared with us. The Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) is provincial legislation intended to protect the individuals submitting personal information to the COA. The policies and practices of the COA have been reviewed to ensure they meet the requirements of this legislation.

The COA has designated one person with the role and responsibilities of a Privacy Officer. The Officer is responsible for the COA's compliance with privacy Legislation.

Terms and Conditions

By visiting the Website, you are accepting, without modification, this Privacy Policy. If you do not agree to any portion of this privacy policy, please exit the Website immediately.

We reserve the right to change, modify, add, or delete the terms of our Privacy Policy from time to time without further notice. Your continued use of the website following the posting of changes to this Privacy Policy means you agree to the new terms.

If we make material changes to this Privacy Policy, we will post the changes on this page and will indicate at the top of this page the date these terms were last revised. If we intend to apply the modifications or amendments to this Privacy Policy retroactively, we will provide you with notice of the modifications and amendments.

If you have any questions about this Privacy Policy or do not see your concerns addressed here, please contact us using the Privacy Officer contact information provided in the Contact Us section below.

Cookies and Analytics

Essential cookies are enabled for this Website. We do not receive any information from these cookies; they are there to assist you with your browsing experience. Without these cookies, the Website would not run as quickly or as smoothly for you.

You can delete cookies from your browser by clearing your cache (usually in the “history” section of your browser menu). Please be aware that when you clear your cache, the Website may run more slowly until new cookies are gathered.

We also use Google Analytics to bring us anonymized data about visitors to our site. We do not use the advertisement features of Google Analytics in any manner whatsoever.

Personal Information

The primary collection of applicant information is through registration and renewal. This information is used for determining eligibility for registration, as well as to perform other regulatory functions and provide membership benefits through COA.

The COA may use your personal information to provide services available through the Website, track your compliance with the site’s rules and regulations, or for editorial and feedback purposes (to the extent that is explained when you provide the information).

If the COA plans to publicly post any of your personal information on the Website (as for instance, a photo of you), you will be provided prior notification of such posting and given the option to accept or decline.

Personal Information may also be collected through other registration member services and may be used in aggregate, non-identifiable form. Under sections 33-34 of the Health Professions Act and Opticians Profession Regulations, the COA must maintain a register of individuals who are regulated by the COA. This information is not for or intended to be used for any other purpose, including marketing research.

Anonymous Information

Through your use of the Website, the COA may also gather certain information that does not identify you individually (“Anonymous Information”). Generally, this information is collected through “traffic data”. The COA collects and stores certain other information automatically whenever you interact with the Website.

For example, IP address, browser information, and reference site domain name are collected each time you visit the site. Information is also collected on user-traffic patterns and site usage. This information is used to analyze and improve the Website and to provide users with an accessible and useful experience.

The COA may use Anonymous Information to provide statistical “ratings” information in aggregated form to our partners and other third parties about how site users collectively use the website. We may also use or share Anonymous Information (or other information, other than Personal Information) in any other manner that is deemed appropriate or necessary.

Consent

The COA will limit the collection of personal information to those elements we require to meet our obligations. This information is collected by the COA during the application for initial registration and annual application for renewal of registration.

Contact and Personal Information is not shared with unaffiliated third parties except those we are satisfied are legitimately requesting the information (such as when required by law). Other uses of personal information will be identified either prior to or at the time the information is collected.

The COA will communicate verbally, electronically, or in writing for the primary purpose of collecting personal information outside of those uses listed above.

Spyware

The COA never uses or installs spyware on your computer, nor does the COA use spyware to retrieve information from your computer.

Subscription Communications

We may use the email address of all users who subscribe to any of our communications. Except to our third-party agents (as described below), this information is not shared with any third parties.

Anyone who no longer wishes to receive communications from the COA may, at any time, follow the “Unsubscribe” instructions located within each communication.

Children and Privacy

The COA does not collect any personal information from anyone known to be under the age of 13. If you are under the age of 13, you should use the Website only under the

immediate supervision of a parent or guardian and should not submit any personal information to COA.

Third-Party Disclosure and Agents

Except as disclosed in this Privacy Policy, the COA does not use or disclose information about your individual visits to the Website or your personal information collected online to any companies not affiliated with us. If the COA proposes to permit any use of your personal information, you will be provided an opportunity to decline such contact.

The COA may occasionally have third-party agents, subsidiaries, affiliates, and partners that perform functions on our behalf, such as marketing, analytics, security, etc. These carefully selected entities may have access to the personal information needed to perform their functions and will be contractually obligated to maintain the confidentiality and security of that Personal Information. They are restricted from using, selling, distributing, or altering this data in any way other than to provide the requested services to the site.

Retention policies have been developed for the organization based on the relevant legislation.

Emergency Situations

The COA may also use or disclose personal information if required to do so by law or in the good-faith belief that such action is necessary to: (a) conform to applicable law or comply with legal process served on us or the Website, or (b) act under emergency circumstances to protect the personal safety of the COA, our affiliates, agents, or the users of the Website or the public.

Securing Personal Information

The COA shall not use or disclose personal information for purposes other than those identified in this policy unless express consent has been received or the disclosure is otherwise permitted or required by law or legislation.

Personal information collected by the Website is stored in secure operating environments that are not available to the public. Only those employees who need access to your personal information to do their jobs are allowed access. Any employee who violates our privacy and/or security policies is subject to disciplinary action, including possible termination and civil and/or criminal prosecution.

To protect the security of your information during transmission, we use Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) software, which encrypts information you input. Most browsers will give a visual indication of when your connection is secure (for example, Internet Explorer will show a padlock icon in the lower right of the browser window).

The COA attempts to safeguard your personal information once we receive it. However, you understand and agree that no transmission of data over the internet or any other public network can be guaranteed as 100% secure.

While we use encryption to protect sensitive information transmitted online, we also protect your information offline. Only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to personally identifiable information. We take precautions to safely dispose of any printed information once a transaction is complete, and do not share the information that you provide through the Website.

Linking to Other Sites

The COA may link to other websites not operated by the COA. The practices described in this Privacy Policy do not apply to information gathered through these other websites. These other sites may also send their own cookies to you, collect your data, or solicit your personal information.

The COA is not responsible for the actions and privacy policies of third parties and other websites. Be aware when you leave our site and read the privacy policy of each other website you visit.

The COA uses third party plugins to facilitate your online experience. By entering your contact information into the e-newsletter signup form ([MailChimp](#)) or browsing the Website with analytics ([Google Analytics](#)), you are agreeing to the privacy policies of each organization. The COA does not sell or lease your information.

Governing Law

The COA Website is published in Canada and is intended for users from Canada. This policy shall be governed and construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the Province of Alberta with the Country of Canada.

Recently, the European Union passed the *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) that websites need to provide informed consent for the use of cookies. Although we are a

provincial regulatory body for Canadian citizens, we do have some international visitors to our site so you will be asked to agree to the use of cookies when you first access the site.

Your Alberta Access and Privacy Rights

Alberta's Access and Privacy Legislation, the [*Personal Information Protection Act*](#) (PIPA), applies to the COA. PIPA came into force on 1 January 2004 and provides individuals with the right to request access to their own personal information while providing private sector organizations with a framework for conducting the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information.

The [*Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner*](#) of Alberta (OIPC) is legislated to provide review and resolution of decisions made by organizations in response to access to information requests under PIPA.

Public Access to Information

When a member of the public asks for information about a regulated member and specifies the member by name, the COA must provide the following information:

- The member's registration number;
- Any conditions imposed on the member's practice permit
- Whether the member's practice permit has been suspended, cancelled, or restricted to a specific time frame;
- The member's practice specialization recognized by the college, if applicable;
- Whether or not the member is authorized to provide a restricted activity normally provided by regulated COA members; and
- Whether a disciplinary hearing is scheduled to be held or has been held.

Notification of Conditions on Practice Permits

If a member's registration is suspended or cancelled or if conditions are imposed on it, the COA must notify:

- The registrant's employer(s) (including anyone who employs the member as a consultant, contractor, or volunteer);
- The health authority where the member provides services;
- The hospital if the member is a member of the hospital's professional staff;
- The Minister of Health or any organization that administers the payment of fees for the professional services the registrant provides;

- Another health professional college if the Registrar knows the regulated member is also a member of the other college; and
- The governing bodies of any similar profession in other provinces or territories in Canada.

If after a review or appeal, a cancellation or suspension is lifted or imposed conditions are varied or removed, the COA will notify the same parties.

How to Access and/or Correct Personal Information for Accuracy

If you wish to verify, correct, or update any of your personal information, you may contact the Registration department. Additionally, you may contact the Privacy Officer via the contact information provided in the [Contact Us](#) section below.

It is important to note that an individual may challenge the accuracy and completeness of their personal information that the COA has in its custody and control and may request a correction form to request to have it amended if appropriate.

To obtain the date of a disciplinary hearing, a member of the public may call during business hours, name the regulated member whose hearing they wish to attend, and if there is a scheduled date the information will be provided.

To obtain a copy of a decision of a hearing tribunal and/or a transcript of the testimony given before the hearing tribunal, a member of the public must submit a request in writing to COA and pay the administration and reproduction costs. The request must be submitted within five (5) years of the date of the disciplinary hearing to which it related. A record will be kept of the member of the public who receive the information.

Transparency

The COA will share information on the policies and procedures that apply to the management of personal information when requested by any member of the public.

Policy Revisions

Sep 8/22: Public Directory and Registrant Portal links updated. Policy name updated from "Website Privacy and Security Policy" to "Online Privacy and Security Policy."

Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns about the Privacy Policy for this Website or its implementation, please contact the COA's Privacy Officer.

Jennifer Bertrand
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The Alberta Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
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Need Help Creating Your Own Website's Privacy Policy?
Contact Rustruct Consulting: info@rustructconsulting.com