

Professionalism Standards

Opticians must act in a professional manner that upholds the integrity and dignity of the profession and maintains public confidence.

Patient Expectations

The **patient**¹ can expect to receive safe, competent, ethical care from an optician who has met the requirements for registration with the College of Opticians of Alberta (COA).

Regulated Member² Requirements

1. An optician is responsible and accountable for their own practice, conduct and practicing ethically and within the legal requirements of the profession.

An optician must:

- 1.1. practice within all legislation and regulations that govern their practice;
- 1.2. meet the expectations in the COA *Code of Ethics*, the COA *Standards of Practice*, guidelines, and any other regulatory guidance;
- 1.3. maintain **competence** and participate in the COA continuing competence program;
- 1.4. practice within their individual level of competence and only perform tasks they are knowledgeable, skilled and competent to perform safely and ethically;
- 1.5. report unprofessional conduct, any findings of professional negligence, and any criminal charges or convictions to the appropriate person, agency, or regulatory college;
- 1.6. report incidents of unauthorized practice to the College. This includes unregulated staff performing dispensing without proper supervision or regulated health professionals working outside their competence or performing **restricted activities** they are not authorized to perform;
 - 1.6.1. report, in writing, as soon as reasonably possible, any findings of professional misconduct against them;
- 1.7. comply and cooperate with regulatory investigations;
- 1.8. maintain current registration with the COA if they meet the requirements of section 28(2) of the Health Professions Act (2000) (HPA) for registration as a regulated member and intends to provide one or more of the following:
 - **opticianry services** directly to the public
 - the teaching of the practice of a regulated profession to the regulated members or students of the regulated profession
 - the supervision of regulated members who provide professional services to the public
- 1.9. be insured under a professional liability insurance policy with policy minimums as outlined in the COA bylaws;
- 1.10. follow infection prevention and control measures to maintain a clean hygienic environment; and
- 1.11. put the best interests of the patient above their own best interests by:
 - 1.11.1. use professional judgement when recommending products and services;

¹ Words in bold font are listed in the glossary.

² The term “regulated member” and “registrant” may be used interchangeably

1.11.2. not taking advantage of a patient's insecurities or taking advantage of the power imbalance and trust established in the optician/patient relationship;

2. Conduct a **needs assessment** comprehensively appropriate based on the current need or request of the patient.

An optician must:

- 2.1. obtain informed consent when conducting opticianry services;
 - 2.2. educate the patient about the importance of regular eye health examinations conducted by prescribers;
3. An optician practices within their legislated scope of practice of the profession and within their level of competence.

An optician must:

- 3.1. only perform and provide supervision of restricted activities they are authorized and competent to perform and are appropriate in the clinical practice area being performed;
 - 3.2. perform the restricted activity in accordance with the standards of practice;
 - 3.3. perform services in an area of the dispensing facility that consider the privacy and confidentiality of the patient; and
 - 3.4. provide new or continued services required to address the needs and reasonable requests of the patient.
4. An optician must use the title, abbreviations, or initials consistent with the category on the register in which they are registered and as per schedule 16 of the HPA. The protected titles for opticians include:
 - a) optician;
 - b) ophthalmic dispenser;
 - c) optical dispenser;
 - d) contact lens fitter;
 - e) contact lens practitioner;
 - f) contact lens dispenser;
 - f.1) provisional optician;
 - g) R.O.;
 - h) R.C.L.P

An optician must:

- 4.1. have a valid practice permit to use a protected title;
 - 4.2. not use a title, abbreviation or initial alone or in combination with other words that implies or states they are registered in a category they are not³;
 - 4.3. only use the title, abbreviation, or initials consistent with the category on the register they are registered;
 - 4.4. display their practice permit where they provide professional services or, on request, make their practice permit available for inspection as per s 36(5) of the HPA;
 - 4.5. report any incident of unauthorized use of a restricted title to the COA; and

³ Opticianry students enrolled in an accredited opticianry program may use the term "student" in combination with the term "optician" while they are enrolled and until they successfully complete the program.

4.6. not use their professional title or mislead the public that they are acting as a registered optician when providing or promoting services and products outside the practice of opticianry.

5. An optician is accountable and responsible for respecting laws and ethical boundaries in all communication and must communicate in a clear, accurate, respectful, and effective manner.

An optician must:

- 5.1. use language that is clear so that a patient, legal guardian, or caregiver understands any recommendations, products, or services
- 5.2. not refuse service based on protected grounds under the Alberta Human Rights Act (2000);
- 5.3. treat all patients and staff with respect and equal treatment regardless of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation; and
- 5.4. respect the dignity and professional status of and relationships with their colleagues, including regulated and unregulated staff by
 - 5.4.1. avoiding unwanted, harmful, or inappropriate behaviour

6. An optician is accountable and responsible for acknowledging and incorporating cultural rights, values, and practices in patient care where possible.

An optician must:

- 6.1. consider care for patients that respect their holistic well-being, including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs.

Glossary Terms:

Competence: the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to provide professional services (HPA, 2000)

Patient: a person, or caregiver of a person, receiving professional services from a registrant of the College

Needs assessment: an assessment of the patient based on objective and subjective personal and health information used to determine the needs and best product (including, but not limited to eyeglasses, contact lenses, or low vision devices) to best satisfy the patient's opticianry needs

Opticianry service: a service that comes within the practice of the regulated opticianry profession. In their practice, opticians do one or more of the following:

- Based on an optical prescription, design, supply, prepare, adjust, and dispense optical appliances and prostheses, including corrective lenses;
- Promote eye health and the correct use of optical appliances and prostheses through education of consumers and regulated members;
- Perform refractions and identify the need for corrective lenses;
- Conduct or collaborate in optical related research;
- When providing professional services referred to in this section, conduct assessments and make referrals where appropriate;
- Provide restricted activities authorized by the regulations.

(HPA, 2000, Opticians Professions Regulation, 2011)

Regulated member: an optician registered as a member of the College of Opticians of Alberta under section 33(1)(a) of the HPA (2000).

Restricted activities: health service activities listed in the HPA and *Health Professions Restricted Activities Regulation* (2023) being performed that require specific skills and competence to be carried out safely. Restricted activities are not limited to any particular health profession and a number of regulated health practitioners may perform a specific restricted activity.

Related Documents:

College of Opticians of Alberta *Code of Ethics* (2000)

College of Opticians of Alberta *Health Information Privacy and Management Standards*

College of Opticians of Alberta *Practice Management Standards*

Health Professions Act (2000)

Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation (2023)

Health Information Act (2000)

Optician Profession Regulation (2011)

References:

Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, A-25

College of Dental Hygienists of Alberta. (2023). Advertising. Retrieved from:
<https://www.acdh.ca/standards-and-guidelines/project/advertising>

College of Opticians of British Columbia. (2024). Standard 6: Professionalism. Retrieved from:
<https://chcpbc.org/for-professions/opticians/resources/>

National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators. (2019). National competencies for Canadian opticians. Retrieved from: https://nacor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/National_Competencies_for_Canadian_Opticians_4th_edition_Oct_2019.pdf

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