

# Dispensing Opticians Consumer Fact Sheet

## **Board of Registration of Dispensing Opticians**

Dispensing Opticians fit and dispense prescription ophthalmic eyewear including eyeglasses and contact lenses. Members of this profession fill eyeglass prescriptions, duplicate existing ophthalmic lenses and fabricate eyeglasses.

The Board of Registration of Dispensing Opticians protects the public through regulation of the practice by testing candidates and licensing those who are qualified, insuring compliance with state statutes and the Board's rules and regulations, and conducting hearings and facilitating resolutions to consumer complaints. The Board manages apprenticeship-training programs, approves educational standards for school-based opticianry programs, and monitors the continuing education requirements of licensees. The Board also works with other states' opticianry boards and professional organizations in furthering the qualifications of opticians.

Each board of registration administers and enforces its regulations regarding licensing requirements. The boards receive, investigate and adjudicate complaints against the respective licensed practitioners.

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## **Dispensing Opticians**

Dispensing opticians fit eyeglasses and contact lenses, following prescriptions written by ophthalmologists or optometrists. They help customers select appropriate frames, order the necessary ophthalmic laboratory work, and adjust the finished eyeglasses.

Dispensing opticians examine written prescriptions to determine lens specifications. They recommend eyeglass frames, lenses, and lens coatings after considering the prescription and the customer's occupation, habits, and facial features. They measure clients' eyes, including the distance between the centers of the pupils and the distance between the eye surface and the lens. For customers without prescriptions, dispensing opticians may use a lensometer to record the present eyeglass prescription. They also may obtain a customer's previous record, or verify a prescription with the examining optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Dispensing opticians prepare work orders that give ophthalmic laboratory technicians information needed to grind and insert lenses into a frame. The work order includes lens prescriptions and information on lens size, material, colors, and style. Some dispensing opticians grind and insert lenses themselves. After the glasses are made, dispensing opticians verify that the lenses have been ground to specifications. Then they may reshape or bend the frame, by hand or using pliers, so that the eyeglasses fit the customer properly and comfortably. Dispensing

opticians also fix, adjust, and refit broken frames. They instruct clients about adapting to, wearing, or caring for eyeglasses.

Some dispensing opticians specialize in fitting contacts, artificial eyes, or cosmetic shells to cover blemished eyes. To fit contact lenses, they measure eye shape and size, select the type of contact lens material, and prepare work orders specifying the prescription and lens size. Fitting contact lenses requires considerable skill, care, and patience. Dispensing opticians observe customers' eyes, corneas, lids, and contact lenses with special instruments and microscopes. During several visits, opticians show customers how to insert, remove, and care for their contacts, and ensure the fit is correct.

Dispensing opticians keep records on customer prescriptions, work orders, and payments; track inventory and sales; and perform other administrative duties.

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## **Lens Designs**

### **Single vision lenses:**

Single vision lenses function as all-purpose glasses for persons who have normal accommodation. Persons who normally wear bifocals or trifocals can use single vision for distance or near lenses. Single vision lenses can also function as occupational glasses for certain types of work. Single vision lenses are available in all lens materials.

### **Aspheric lenses:**

These lenses provide special visual and cosmetic benefits for stronger corrections and increase edge to edge clarity. Flatter than conventional lenses, aspherics eliminate the "bulgy" appearance of strong plus lenses and greatly enhance the appearance of finished eyewear. Persons with strong nearsighted corrections also benefit from thinner, lighter weight glasses when their lenses are aspheric. Because aspheric lenses are positioned closer to the face, there is less eye magnification with farsighted corrections and less of the "small eyes" look with nearsighted corrections. Aspheric lenses are often made of high index materials for the ultimate in thin lenses.

### **Flat-top bifocals:**

This bifocal format is available with the bifocal portion made in a variety of widths to help with various close-up occupations. Flat-top bifocals are made in every type of lens material.

### **Franklin Style Bifocals:**

Sometimes used for those who need a wide field of vision for near work (accountants, for example), Franklin style bifocals have a distinctive appearance and are thicker because of their design. They are generally only available in glass, hard resin and photochromic glass. They are being replaced by wide flat-top bifocals.

### **Trifocals:**

Trifocals come in a variety of designs. Flat-top trifocals are the most widely used form. The added segment provides clear vision at arm's length distance, the area that is usually blurred for bifocal wearers. Trifocals are available in all lens materials.

### **Progressives (no line bifocals):**

This is currently the most popular bifocal. These lenses provide all the benefits of bifocals but add the feature of continuous clear vision at all distances, including mid-range distance (arm's length). Progressives have the cosmetic advantage of appearing to be single vision lenses so they never reveal that the wearer is using bifocals. Progressives are available in all lens materials and also made in aspheric form. Because of their many benefits, they are becoming the lens of choice for bifocal and trifocal wearers. Occupational Requirements Many occupations impose demanding visual requirements on those who wear bifocals or trifocals. In addition to safety concerns, be sure to discuss the wearer's job tasks so the lenses can be designed for specific requirements.

### **Sports Glasses:**

All sorts of special lens designs are available for the needs of sports enthusiasts. Polycarbonate is the material of choice for active sports. Polarized sun lenses that eliminate reflected glare are especially appropriate for drivers, fishermen, hunters and all types of outdoors activities.

### **Computer Glasses:**

There are a variety of options for those who use computers. These include special filters and anti-reflection coatings. Optional Lens Treatments Scratch Protection Coating Light weight hard resin lenses can be more easily scratched than glass lenses. Special coatings have been developed to help protect lenses from normal scratching. The modest additional cost for such scratch coating is a prudent investment.

### **UV Protection:**

It is generally accepted that the ultraviolet rays in sunlight pose potential harm to the eyes. Special treatment for hard resin lenses completely blocks hazardous UV light. Lenses like Polycarbonate and high index include built-in UV protection. Anti-reflection Coatings Special anti-reflective coatings, much like those used for fine camera lenses, are available for spectacle lenses. These coatings are particularly effective for reducing eye fatigue for

computer operators and anyone driving at night. And, of course, AR lenses enhance appearance by removing all distracting reflections.

*After you have discussed the ways in which you will be using the new glasses, you can choose the exact combination to effect the "magical" result of better vision and eye protection.*

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## **Selecting Glasses**

If you need prescription lenses, there are a wide variety of lens types and frames to choose from, so you can look your best as well as see your best. However, not all lens sizes, tints and materials are appropriate for all prescriptions. Eyeglasses are designed, first and foremost, to meet your individual vision needs. Discuss your activities and fashion preferences with your optometrist so that your glasses will meet your vision needs and enhance your appearance.

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## **Contact Lenses**

If you need or prefer contact lenses, you can choose from daily wear soft and rigid gas-permeable, extended-wear frequent replacement, eye color enhancement lenses and standard hard lenses. Not all lenses are appropriate for all vision conditions.

Upon completion of a yearly eye exam contact lens measurements must be taken by your licensed eye care professional to ensure proper fit and comfort. Routine follow up and adherence to instructions for care and cleaning of your contacts are important to eye care health and continued successful contact lens wear.

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## **Consumer Tips**


Now that you have learned a little about eyecare, we hope that you will remember how important vision is. When your children go to school ... when you pick up a newspaper or book ... when you play your favorite sport ... when you get behind the wheels of your car ... and when you work at your job. And, we hope that you will remember that comprehensive, professional optometry care is a good way to make sure that you are seeing well, being more productive and enjoying life more.

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## **Filing a Complaint**

While the majority of licensees conduct themselves as true professionals, the Division of Professional Licensure will take action against those who fail to maintain acceptable standards of competence and integrity.

In many cases, complaints are made by dissatisfied consumers - but, dissatisfaction alone is not proof of incompetence or sufficient grounds for disciplinary action.

If you have a serious complaint against a licensed dispensing optician, call or write the Division's Office of Investigations and ask for a complaint form. Or download a copy of the [complaint form](#)  .

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