



**Professional Standards of Practice for  
Opticians in the Province of  
Saskatchewan**



## INTRODUCTION

Opticians and contact lens practitioners in Saskatchewan are regulated health professionals under the Saskatchewan College of Opticians (SCO) [Opticians Act](#) and must be registered with the SCO in order to provide opticianry services to the public. All members of the SCO must meet competency-based educational requirements and pass examinations related to [dispensing of vision appliances](#). Registration also requires opticians and contact lens practitioners to keep their knowledge and skills current through continuing education.

In Saskatchewan, the SCO is responsible for establishing, maintaining and enforcing standards of practice and professional ethics to ensure the quality of the practice of the profession of Opticianry.

The SCO Standards of Practice apply to all registered opticians and contact lens practitioners in Saskatchewan, regardless of the environment in which they practice. Therefore, members in the practice of Opticianry are required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the [Opticians Act](#), [Regulatory Bylaws](#), [SCO Policies](#) and Standards of Practice.

## SCO's Mandate

The SCO regulates the practice of the profession and governs the members in accordance with the Opticians Act and Regulatory Bylaws to assure the public of the knowledge, skill, proficiency, and competency of the members in the practice of Opticianry. It is also the duty of the SCO to serve and protect the public, exercise its powers, and discharge its responsibilities in the public interest.

## Purpose and scope of the SCO Standards of Practice

In order to protect the public, the SCO Standards of Practice serve the following purpose:

1. The Standards of Practice establishes a standard of professional conduct, competency, education, and proficiency that is to be maintained by all members of the College, including governing the manner and the method of the member's practice.
2. The Standards of Practice also provide the SCO with benchmarks against which it can determine a member's conduct in the course of investigating complaints.
3. They provide the public with a clear understanding of the quality of care they should expect to receive from an optician in the practice of opticianry.
4. They are mandatory requirements and an obligation that all opticians must meet. It is professional misconduct to breach or fail to meet a Standard of Practice.

The Standards are not a step-by-step guide on how to practice opticianry. Instead, the Standards set out expectations for every optician. A core expectation is that opticians use their professional judgment to make appropriate decisions in providing care to patients. When dispensing a vision appliance, an optician must take full responsibility for meeting these standards and ensuring that the patient's best interests are met.



## Standards of Practice Overview

**Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice** – The optician ensures that every aspect of service delivery is centred around the patient'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 patient outcomes.

**Standard 4: Competence** – The optician develops and maintains competence to best serve patients and protect the public.

**Standard 5: Professionalism** – The optician meets the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice and honours patient boundaries.

**Standard 6: Safety and Infection** – 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 patients, other regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff.

**Standard 7: Dispensing of Vision Appliances** – The optician only dispenses vision appliances that are appropriate for the patient.

**Standard 8: Supervision** – The optician is responsible and accountable for the opticianry services provided by students or restricted licensed members working under their supervision.

**Standard 9: Privacy and Confidentiality** - The optician always respects the patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality of personal information and complies with privacy and confidentiality legislation at all times.

**Standard 10: Conflict of Interest** - The optician recognizes, prevents, and takes action to resolve direct, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

**Standard 11: Remote Practice and Technology** - The optician shall ensure that technology is integrated into the opticianry practice where appropriate and that it assists the remote services provided and done in a manner that serves the patient's best interest.

**Standard 12: Record Keeping and Billing** - The optician maintains accurate, complete, and timely patient and financial records in accordance with the [Opticians Act](#), [Bylaws](#) and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

**Standard 13: Communication and Marketing** - The optician communicates clearly, truthfully, and respectfully in any context that patient care may be impacted and adheres to SCO regulations in advertising and marketing their practice.

**Standard 14: Risk Management and Quality Improvement** - The optician engages in quality improvement and risk management activities to ensure patient safety and well-being.



## Standard 1: Patient-Centred Care

### Description

The optician integrates a patient-centred approach in all aspects of service delivery.

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect that they will be treated by an optician who continually demonstrates professional integrity and that their input will be valued, acknowledged, and integrated into all aspects of service delivery.

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 4: Competence
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 12: Record Keeping & Billing
- Standard 13: Communication and Marketing

### Criteria

- 1.1 Ensure that your conduct towards all patients is fair, inclusive, culturally sensitive and non-discriminatory.
- 1.2 Ensure any service or product that is recommended to the patient meets their needs.
- 1.3 Collect subjective and objective information to facilitate the patient's immediate and ongoing care.
- 1.4 Consider the relative importance or urgency of patient complaints to inform the development of recommendations, [service plan](#), and/or referral, where appropriate.
- 1.5 Develop a service plan in collaboration with the patient, following education and explanation of the recommended service or product.
- 1.6 Ensure the patient understands the scope of services provided or recommended to ensure that they are providing informed consent.
- 1.7 Obtain the patient's informed consent for the initiation and continuation of any services.
- 1.8 Produce a record that lists the patient's services received and any follow-up inquiries in a clear manner.
- 1.9 Be responsible for inspecting any product and determining the appropriateness of any solution provided to a patient.
- 1.10 Provide verbal, written, or electronic information concerning any instructions or recommended follow-up to the patient.
- 1.11 Advise the patient when their fit, visual acuity and vision health should be next evaluated during their contact lens assessment.
- 1.12 Record any patient follow-up information in the patient's record to maintain an appropriate perspective on the patient's ongoing care.
- 1.13 Be reasonably available to the patient or take reasonable steps to ensure continuity of care for the patient.



## Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice

### Description

The optician demonstrates evidence-informed practice in all aspects of service delivery. Evidence-informed practice is the ongoing process in our profession that uses evidence from research and other resources, expertise and patient preferences to guide practice-based decisions that best serve the patient.

### Expected Outcome

Patients can expect the optical services they receive from the optician:

1. Are based on relevant clinical research and professional experience and knowledge; and
2. Take into consideration the patient's circumstances and requirements.

### Criteria

- 2.1 Review various reliable sources of evidence and adapt practice in light of new evidence when appropriate.
- 2.2 Exercise critical thinking while identifying, interpreting, and applying evidence to practice.
- 2.3 Integrate good professional judgment into patient-centred care, evaluate practice regarding patient outcomes and available evidence, and modify approaches accordingly.
- 2.4 Share and exchange verifiable evidence with other opticians, regulated health care professionals, students, unregulated staff and patients to provide relevant care.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 4: Competence
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 12: Record Keeping & Billing
- Standard 13: Communication and Marketing



## Standard 3: Collaborative Care

### Description

The optician supports the development of inter- and intra-professional relationships and engages in ongoing collaboration with relevant regulated health care professionals, students, and unregulated staff, who play a role in providing assistive, safe, and ethical services to patients for optimal patient outcomes.

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect high-quality care based on inter-professional collaboration that allows opticians, relevant regulated health care professionals, students and unregulated staff to choose the approach that best serves their patients.

### Criteria

- 3.1 Communicate effectively with patients, team members, relevant regulated health care professionals, students and unregulated staff to facilitate collaboration, coordinate care, and provide collaborative assessment, as required.
- 3.2 Recognize the need to recommend the patient to relevant regulated healthcare professionals for assessment and/or treatment when the patient presents with a condition requiring evaluation or treatment considered to be outside the optician's scope of practice, competence and/or comfort.
- 3.3 Recommend a suitable professional to the patient when required, and discuss the recommendation with the patient.
- 3.4 Clearly document recommendations made to the patient in the patient record.
- 3.5 Clearly document any communications between health care providers, as part of a patient referral, in the patient record.
- 3.6 Ensure an information-sharing agreement is in place in a collaborative practice. The optician is the custodian of the eyeglass records completed by the optician. The licensed contact lens practitioner is the custodian of the contact lens records completed by the contact lens practitioner.
- 3.7 Obtain informed consent and maintain confidentiality with patients, relevant regulated health care professionals, students and unregulated staff at all times.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 9: Privacy & Confidentiality
- Standard 12: Record Keeping
- Standard 13: Communication and Marketing



## Standard 4: Competence

### Description

The optician shall develop and maintain competence to best serve patients and protect the public.

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect the optician to be competent in all areas of practice for which care is provided. Patients can expect that the optician maintains the necessary skills, qualifications, and experience to deliver quality care.

### Criteria

- 4.1 Be responsible for maintaining professional competence.
- 4.2 Maintain current knowledge of legislation, regulations, standards, policies and third-party agreements pertaining to the delivery of opticianry care and the patient's education and general well-being.
- 4.3 Participate in NACOR accredited or SCO Council pre-approved continuing education seminars/webinars to fulfill the SCO mandatory continuing education requirements.
- 4.4 Develop and maintain knowledge and competence in emerging and existing areas of practice.
- 4.5 Only perform tasks in which the optician has sufficient education, experience and capacity to do so and has maintained the necessary skills, knowledge, and judgment to perform competently and safely.
- 4.6 Refer to another optician or regulated health care professional, or assist patients in finding the necessary professional help in situations where the optician does not have sufficient competence to deliver quality care.
- 4.7 Do not engage in the practice of opticianry while the optician's ability to do so is compromised or impaired.

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 14: Risk Management





## Standard 5: Professionalism

### Description

The optician shall meet the profession's ethical and legal requirements and honour patient boundaries.

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 4: Competence
- Standard 10: Conflict of Interest

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect that the optician provides services in compliance with ethical and legal requirements applicable to their practice and respectful treatment in all interactions.

### Criteria

- 5.1 Function in accordance with the SCO's [Opticians Act](#), [Regulatory Bylaws](#), [Administrative Bylaws](#), [Policies](#), [Code of Ethics](#), and Standards of Practice.
- 5.2 Ensure professional standards are applied to all products dispensed.
- 5.3 Act in a manner consistent with the [Saskatchewan Human Rights Code](#) and respect the dignity and rights of the patient.
- 5.4 Act in a manner consistent with the [Accessible Canada Act](#).
- 5.5 Act in accordance with applicable employment legislation, including the [Saskatchewan Employment Standards](#)
- 5.6 Display your issued SCO optician/contact lens practitioner licence in a place and manner conspicuous to the public.
- 5.7 Report any incident of unauthorized practice to the SCO.
- 5.8 Report any incident of unauthorized use of the protected titles to the SCO.
- 5.9 Report unethical, unsafe or incompetent practice by any regulated health care professional to the appropriate College, in accordance with applicable legislative requirements.
- 5.10 Report any sexual misconduct, harassment or abuse by any regulated health care professional to the appropriate College in accordance with applicable legislative requirements.
- 5.11 Only provide treatment the optician knows or determines to be appropriate to meet the patient's needs.
- 5.12 Only continue treatment of a patient where such need is indicated and where the treatment continues to be effective.
- 5.13 To render opticianry services to all patients with equal diligence, respect and without discrimination.
- 5.14 To be responsible for the professional actions and consequences of actions of any student you have agreed to supervise.



- 5.15 Maintain appropriate boundaries with patients.
- 5.16 Do not engage in sexual relationships with patients.



## Standard 6: Safety and Infection Control

### 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 health and safety for patients and staff, other regulated health care professionals, students and unregulated staff.

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 14: Risk Management

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect the optician has determined and implemented methods of infection control to sterilize or sanitize all products and instruments used in patient care.

### Criteria

- 6.1 Adhere to all federal, provincial and municipal requirements, including health and safety, as per the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) and [WorkSafe Saskatchewan](#) and ensure the [practice environment](#) is compliant.
- 6.2 Stay up to date on current techniques used to disinfect the dispensary and control the transmission of infectious agents.
- 6.3 Take reasonable and appropriate measures to minimize the risk of contamination and subsequent transmission of infectious agents within their dispensing facility to assure health and safety for both patients and staff.
- 6.4 Have access to hot and cold running water, or as in the case of a mobile facility, some alternative options for hand hygiene in the practice environment.
- 6.5 Devise and/or follow a protocol that outlines frequency and specific responsibility for disinfection of the practice and instrumentation, as well as frame sanitization, as these items will have shared contact by patients. Best Practice - Regularly clean and/or sanitize eyewear at the optician's discretion.
- 6.6 Follow routine precautions at all times (e.g., hand hygiene and appropriate waste disposal).
- 6.7 Take reasonable steps to ensure that workplace safety protocols are followed.
- 6.8 Take reasonable steps to identify risk factors for eye infections.



## Standard 7: Dispensing of Vision Appliances

### Description

The optician or contact lens practitioner only dispenses optical appliances appropriate to the patient.

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect that optical services are delivered by an optician competent in all areas of practice for which care is provided. Patients can expect that the optician maintains the necessary skills, qualifications, and experience to deliver quality care.

### Criteria

- 7.1 Opticians shall own, be employed in or have access to a practice environment that meets the requirements outlined in the Standards of Practice to provide services.
- 7.2 Opticians employed by a dispensary will be held accountable for all vision appliances sold, dispensed or adjusted from that dispensary.
- 7.3 The optician's or contact lens practitioner's licence must be prominently displayed and clearly visible to the public in their practice environment.
- 7.4 Provide the SCO with details about the practice environment where the opticians' dispensing services take place, including the mailing address, telephone number, and electronic mail address.
- 7.5 Have access to the ophthalmic instrumentation necessary for the level of services offered in the practice environment.
- 7.6 Dispense vision appliances based on the prescription of an optometrist, ophthalmologist or other legally qualified medical practitioners, which contain:
  - a. The name and signature of a prescriber;
  - b. The patient's name;
  - c. The patient's prescription; and
  - d. The date of examination
- 7.7 The optician must inform the patient of the importance of regular eye examinations for the maintenance of eye health and the risks associated with failing to do so. Retain a copy of the original prescription as part of the patient's record. The optician shall make available the original or a copy of the current prescription on file when requested. If the patient requests a copy of an expired prescription, the patient should be directed to receive this from the original prescribing optometrist.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 12: Record Keeping & Billing
- Standard 13: Communications & Marketing

- 7.8 When duplicating the patient's current prescription, note the duplication in the patient record. Advise the patient of the risk associated with glasses duplication (accumulative variances that could cause visual problems for the patient). It is always best practice to dispense glasses based on a valid Rx by a valid prescribing doctor.
- 7.9 Analyze a patient's optical requirements in conjunction with a [prescription](#) to recommend an appropriate vision appliance.
- 7.10 Assist the patient in selecting appropriate vision appliances.

## Eyeglasses

**At least one licensed optician must be on the premises at all times when eyeglasses are being dispensed or adjusted.**

- 7.11 Review the patient's environment, occupation, hobbies, regular activities and/or physical factors when recommending ophthalmic lenses and frames.
- 7.12 Take the patient's measurements as appropriate to ensure the proper function of their eyeglasses.
- 7.13 [Verify](#) the accuracy of the patient's completed eyeglasses to ensure they are as ordered and within tolerance. Refer to the most recent version of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for Ophthalmics – [Prescription Ophthalmic Lenses Recommendations](#) for tolerance chart information.
- 7.14 Fit and adjust the eyeglasses to meet the patient's needs, making recommendations to allow for successful adaptation to eyeglasses based on the patient's visual expectations and work environments.
- 7.15 Record in the patient file the services received by the patient, including, but not limited to:
- a. Lens type;
  - b. Frame details (make, model, colour, size) and
  - c. Measurements, including pupillary distance, segment or ocular center heights.
- 7.16 Educate the patient on aspects of eyeglass wear, including, but not limited to, the use, expectations, limitations, adaptation period, and maintenance requirements of the eyeglasses.
- 7.17 If the eyeglasses are to be used as safety eyeglasses, adhere to safety standards and tolerances for personal protective eyewear.

## Contact Lenses

Only a [licensed contact lens practitioner](#) can fit, dispense or adjust contact lenses.

- 7.18 Record patient history and determine the suitability of the patient for [contact lens](#) wear by performing, but not limited to:
  - a. A detailed biomicroscopic assessment of the cornea, conjunctiva and lids, and the tear layer;
  - b. Corneal curvature;
  - c. Any relevant medications; and
  - d. Other relevant factors including the patient's environment, work, hobbies, daily activities, and patient history.
- 7.19 Educate the patient about the advantages, risks, and limitations of contact lens wear.
- 7.20 Recommend the most appropriate type of contact lens to the patient based on the information gathered.
- 7.21 Apply the patient's refractive error, visual requirements and other factors to determine the contact lens specifications.
- 7.22 Evaluate trial contact lenses on the patient for physical fit and best-corrected visual acuity and make modifications as required.
  - a. [Verify](#) the accuracy and/or acceptable tolerance of the contact lenses ordered for the patient.
  - b. Instruct the patient and record any relevant details or recommendations to the patient with respect to:
    - i. Hygiene;
    - ii. Lens insertion and removal;
    - iii. Lens care;
    - iv. Wear time and replacement schedules;
    - v. Adaptive symptoms;
    - vi. Contraindications to use;
    - vii. Follow-up schedules; and
    - viii. How and when to access emergency care.
- 7.23 Develop and provide an ongoing patient follow-up plan.
- 7.24 Proper follow-up assessments must be conducted after initial fittings, no matter the modality of the contact lens provided, to ensure that the fit of the lens and best-corrected visual acuity has been maintained throughout the contact lens trial period. Also, to ensure that corneal health and integrity have also been maintained during the trial period before a final supply of contact lenses can be dispensed.

- 7.25 After the patient has completed a successful follow-up assessment(s), consider a contact lens fitting complete, and the specifications as recommended are accurate.
- 7.26 Provide an initial fitting to a patient seeking replacement contact lenses who is not an established contact lens patient, properly documenting necessary information in a new patient file.
- 7.27 Release a contact lens record containing the updated specifications after completion of service as requested by the patient.
- 7.28 When providing replacement contact lens services for an established contact lens patient:
- a. Ensure the patient's clinical information is current, and if not, treat the patient visit as an initial fitting to the extent necessary in the circumstances;
  - b. Determine the need for alterations to previous lens specifications and make adjustments accordingly;
  - c. Advise the patient of the need for and extent of continuing care;
  - d. Confirm the parameters of contact lenses ordered;
  - e. Provide follow-up services in accordance with the [service plan](#); and
  - f. Re-release a contact lens record containing the updated specifications after completion of service as requested by the patient.
- 7.29 If a patient seeking replacement contact lenses, who is not an established patient, provides a [contact lens record](#), then contact lenses may be dispensed if the contact lens practitioner:
- a. Uses professional judgment to determine risks related to providing replacement contact lenses without an initial fitting and communicate this to the patient; Produces and maintains a patient record appropriate for the service, including retaining a copy of the contact lens record provided by the client; and document the reasons for providing replacement lenses without an initial fitting in the patient record.
  - b. Best recommended practice for the protection of the patient should be, at a minimum, to perform an assessment of the fit and best-corrected visual acuity of the contact lenses before dispensing a supply to the patient. For the fitting and dispensing of specialty contacts, including but not limited to RGP, scleral, ortho-K, etc., tolerances must be followed according to the latest ANSI standards for contact lenses. Refer the patient to another licensed professional if the competence or experience to perform specialty contact lens fittings and assessments is inadequate to best serve the patient's needs or safety.

## Low Vision Devices

- 7.30 Demonstrate and recommend low vision devices suited to the patient's visual requirements and functional needs.
- 7.31 Instruct the patient on the use of the low vision device.
- 7.32 Evaluate and monitor the success of the low vision device and recommend additional or alternative devices as necessary.
- 7.33 The optician will refer or assist patients in finding the necessary professional help when the condition or status of the patient falls outside of their scope of practice, education or experience.





## Standard 8: Supervision

### Description

The optician is responsible and accountable for the opticianry services provided by students or restricted licensed members working under their supervision.

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect that they are informed of the role of the supervised student or restricted licensed member and that the services provided by the student or restricted licensed member are supervised by the optician.

### Criteria

- 8.1 Oversee unregulated staff to assist in the practice environment by performing unrestricted activities under the opticians' direction.
- 8.2 Communicate with the patient about the roles, responsibilities, and reserved titles of the different personnel in the practice environment.
- 8.3 Ensure that any staff member who uses the title of a regulated health professional is a regulated member of that health profession.
- 8.4 Be responsible for the professional actions and consequences of actions of any student or restricted licensed member that the optician has agreed to supervise.
- 8.5 Assess the knowledge and skills of the student or restricted licensed member and assign only those tasks and activities that fall within their competence.
- 8.6 An optician who signs a supervisor agreement for a student optician/student contact lens practitioner enrolled in an optical training program or for a restricted licensed member must comply with all requirements of the supervisor agreement.
- 8.7 Employ supervision strategies (direct and indirect) to determine which patients are suitable to receive services from students or restricted licensed members and take into account the competence of the student or restricted licensed members, the patient care needs, and other factors related to the practice environment.
- 8.8 Regularly monitor and evaluate the delivery of services by unregulated staff, including monitoring documentation to confirm compliance with regulatory requirements. No optician/contact lens practitioner shall supervise more than two student members at any time.
- 8.9 An optician enrolled in a contact lens practitioner program can not supervise a student optician at the same time.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 12: Record Keeping & Billing
- Standard 13: Communications & Marketing



## Standard 9: Privacy and Confidentiality

### Description

The optician always respects the patient's rights to privacy and confidentiality of personal information and complies with privacy and confidentiality legislation at all times.

### Expected Outcome

Patients can expect that their optician safeguards their personal information and protects patient privacy and confidentiality wherever reasonable and possible.

### Criteria

- 9.1 Adhere to all relevant privacy and confidentiality legislation and regulatory requirements.
- 9.2 Perform services in an area of the practice environment with consideration of a patient's privacy and confidentiality.
- 9.3 Conduct assessment and treatment, conversations with patients, and consultations in a manner that preserves patient confidentiality and privacy.
- 9.4 Store, transfer, and dispose of patient records in a manner that protects patient confidentiality, except in circumstances specified by law.
- 9.5 Obtain patient consent prior to collecting, using, and disclosing confidential information to parties outside of the patient's circle of care, except in circumstances specified by law.
- 9.6 Only collect information that is necessary for the services that are being provided.
- 9.7 The information in the patient records belongs to the patient; an optician is only the custodian of these records.
- 9.8 Establish and follow a written agreement to establish ownership of records in a collaborative practice with other opticians, contact lens practitioners, or other regulated health care providers.
- 9.9 Collect only personal health information that is necessary for the circumstances.
- 9.10 Ensure that patient personal health information is accurate, complete, and up to date.
- 9.11 Report privacy breaches to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for Saskatchewan (OIPC) to ensure the optician manages and mitigates the risk of a privacy breach.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 7: Dispensing Vision Appliances
- Standard 12: Record Keeping & Billing
- Standard 13: Communications & Marketing



## Standard 10: Conflict of Interest

### Description

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

### Expected Outcome

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

### Criteria

- 10.1 Ensure financial and commercial practices do not compromise patient safety or vision care needs.
- 10.2 Avoid, identify and manage any situations of direct, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that are not in the patient's best interest.
- 10.3 Do not accept financial or other benefits or gifts that may be seen as affecting patient care, professional judgment, and/or trust in the profession.
- 10.4 Initiate, maintain and end appropriate optician-patient care relationships throughout the course of care.
- 10.5 If unavoidable, manage and provide full disclosure of the conflict of interest to patients and others, as appropriate, and document how the conflict was addressed in a complete, open, and timely manner.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 9: Privacy & Confidentiality



## Standard 11: Remote Practice and Technology

### Description

The optician shall ensure that technology is integrated into the opticianry practice where appropriate and that it assists the remote services provided and done in a manner that serves the patient's best interest.

### Expected Outcome

Patients can expect that the optician's use of technology in their care does not negatively impact their safety or the quality of care they receive.

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 9: Privacy & Confidentiality
- Standard 12: Record Keeping
- Standard 13: Communication & Marketing

### Criteria

- 11.1 Evaluate developments in clinical theory, opticianry techniques, and technology for clinical practice and apply and adapt as appropriate.
- 11.2 Only engage in remote practice, including remote communication, dispensing, and/or delivery of prescription eyewear where it is in the patient's best interest.
- 11.3 Ensure all patient information is collected, recorded, stored, and transmitted in a private manner.
- 11.4 Manage all patient information in compliance with the SCO's Standards of Practice and applicable privacy and anti-spam legislation.
- 11.5 Ensure any website or technology interface being used as part of remote opticianry practice:
  - a. Complies with the College's Advertising Policy and regulations;
  - b. Provides reasonable and timely access to an optician;
  - c. Identifies the full name and licence number of any optician who interacts with a patient through the interface;
  - d. Complies with applicable standards of practice, i.e. Standard 9, Standard 13;
  - e. Is in line with other relevant legislated requirements.



## Standard 12: Record Keeping and Billing

### Description

The optician maintains accurate, complete, and timely patient and financial records in accordance with the Opticians Act, Bylaws and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

### Expected Outcome

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

### Criteria

#### Record Keeping and Retention

- 12.1 Create and maintain an accurate and truthful patient record for each patient that contains the results of measurements and observations appropriate for the services provided.
- 12.2 Ensure that all records are truthful, accurate, and updated to reflect new information after it becomes available.
- 12.3 Organize and maintain records to facilitate retrieval and review of patient information in a timely manner.
- 12.4 Comply with all privacy [legislation](#) and [standards](#) related to the collection, access and disclosure of records.
- 12.5 Ensure records are legible and understandable by the optician, patient, SCO, and other regulated health care professionals.
- 12.6 Maintain patient records in a manner that ensures that a patient or authorized SCO representatives have access to the records.
- 12.7 Provide patients with reasonable access to the information maintained about them in the health record.
- 12.8 Facilitate the timely transfer of a patient record, to another regulated health care professional, at the patient's request in accordance with relevant legislation.
- 12.9 Ensure that electronic records are kept in accordance with all record-keeping standards of practice, and applicable privacy legislation, including:
  - a. Securely retaining a copy (e.g., scan) of the [prescription](#).
  - b. Securely retaining copies of other records (e.g., dispensing notes, work orders, vision appliance specifications, and other services provided).

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 9: Privacy & Confidentiality
- Standard 13: Communication & Marketing

- c. Ensuring adequate and timely patient access, reliable backup, privacy, and encryption.
  - d. Enabling amendments and corrections that do not obliterate the original record.
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- 12.10 Retain all patient records for a recommended six (6) years from the date of last entry, two (2) years past the age of majority for pediatric patients, or for (6) six years after the date of the last entry on record, whichever is the later date.
  - 12.11 Notify the SCO when the optician retires, sells their practice, or closes their practice for an extended period and ensure that files are not abandoned and are securely transferred in accordance with applicable privacy legislation.
  - 12.12 In the case of an extended closure, take reasonable steps to ensure that a patient can access their files during the closure.

### **Billing**

- 12.13 Understand professional fee structures and review and adhere to agreements with third-party contracts.
- 12.14 Keep clear and legible financial records pertaining to each service provided and any [dispensed vision appliance](#), including fees for services, product receipts, commercial laboratory work orders and/or invoices to patients.
- 12.15 Only opticians can sign insurance forms or submit insurance claims on behalf of the patient to assist a patient in ethically using their medical benefits.
- 12.16 Opticians or optical dispensaries may charge a suitable fee to the patient in return for conducting an inter-pupillary distance service. In doing so, it is best practice to have the patient sign a disclaimer form stating that the optician will not be held responsible for any discrepancies occurring from optical appliances received from any third-party suppliers.
- 12.17 Do not provide a specification for a patient who has not paid and completed follow-up for the service.
- 12.18 Charge a reasonable fee to the patient for providing a duplicate copy of the specification.



## Standard 13: Communication and Marketing

### Description

The optician communicates clearly, truthfully, and respectfully in any context that patient care may be impacted and adheres to the [SCO Advertising Policy](#) when advertising and marketing their practice.

### Expected Outcome

The patient can expect professional and respectful communication that promotes their understanding of proposed services and that the optician's communications, advertising, and marketing activities are in the public interest

#### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 9: Privacy & Confidentiality
- Standard 12: Record Keeping & Billing

### Criteria

- 13.1 Communicate effectively, using respectful, transparent, and straightforward communication in all professional interactions (verbal, written, online, and social media).
- 13.2 Communicate effectively with patients to promote their understanding of proposed services through active listening, use of plain language, and encouraging questions.
- 13.3 Identify potential barriers to communication and address those barriers using various tools and techniques, such as interpreters, technology, and visual educational materials, among others.
- 13.4 Communicate with patients to outline the risks and benefits of services and facilitate an understanding of the services being delivered.
- 13.5 Explain company policies, fees and billing, including policies on returns and discounts and expected care plans to patients in advance of provision of services to ensure that patients can make informed decisions.
- 13.6 Ensure that public communications and advertising through social media or other public forums are not false or misleading, illegitimate, unverifiable, or misrepresent the optician's expertise.
- 13.7 The only designations that may be placed after a member's name are Optician-LO; Contact Lens Practitioner-LCLP. Using any other optical term, title or designation, licence or diploma that the College does not recognize could be confusing or misleading to the public and may also result in being considered professional misconduct.





## Standard 14: Risk Management and Quality Improvement

### Description

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

### Expected Outcome

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

### Criteria

- 14.1 Collect feedback from patients and colleagues and engage in self-reflection to identify potential areas for quality improvement.
- 14.2 Incorporate policies and procedures into practice related to quality improvement and risk management and ensure that the optician and relevant personnel are well informed about these procedures.
- 14.3 Incorporate ongoing risk assessments and mitigation and management strategies into the practice.
- 14.4 Participate in emergency preparedness and response training appropriate to the practice setting (e.g., fire drills, CPR).
- 14.5 Assess near misses, adverse events, and service gaps and take immediate action to facilitate safe, patient-centred care and continuous quality improvement.
- 14.6 Document near misses and adverse events and disclose details to the patient promptly and transparently, according to best practice guidelines and employer policies and procedures.
- 14.7 Support the development of new evidence and best practices by participating in clinical research and program evaluation, as appropriate.

### Related Standards of Practice

- Standard 1: Patient-Centred Practice
- Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice
- Standard 3: Collaborative Care
- Standard 4: Competence
- Standard 5: Professionalism
- Standard 6: Safety & Infection Control
- Standard 12 Record Keeping & Billing
- Standard 13: Communication & Marketing



## Glossary of Terms

**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 patient's best interests, impartially and without bias.

**Contact lens** – ocular prosthetic devices placed on the ocular surface of the eye, used to correct refractive errors or for cosmetic or therapeutic reasons.

**Contact lens practitioner** – a dual licensed member authorized under the [Regulatory Bylaws](#) and [Opticians Act](#) to fit and dispense 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 practitioner or an individual with equivalent qualifications in another province or foreign jurisdiction.

**Dispense** – To design, prepare, fit, adjust, [verify](#), or supply

**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 and patient records.
  - ii. The duplication of corrective eyeglass lenses, with no change in refractive value, using a lensometer or similar device.
- b. Promotion of eye health and proper use of vision appliances.

**Practice environment** – A location in which an optician performs opticianry duties, including mobile services.

**Prescriber** – An optometrist, ophthalmologist or other qualified medical practitioner who produces an optical prescription or contact lens record based on an assessment that includes an eye health exam.

**Prescription** – A written record of:

- i. The power of a lens necessary to correct the refractive error of a patient's eye.
- ii. The reading adds, prisms and back vertex distance.
- iii. Including the prescriber's name, license number, signature, date of examination, expiry, and location of examination.

**Records** – A patient file that includes any documented patient information gathered from the complete performance of any and all opticianry services provided to the patient, including, but not limited to: patient identifying information such as name, date of birth, address, phone numbers, Saskatchewan Health number; insurance or third party billing, consent disclosures, date of visit(s) and services provided, lab orders, worksheet, invoices, records of communication, assessment charts, etc.

**Remote opticianry practice** – The performance of any dispensing activity without an in-person meeting, performed by a licensed optician/contact lens practitioner, can be done by telephone, email, video conference, etc.

**Restricted licensed member** – A member who has passed their accredited optical training program and is waiting to write the NACOR National Eyeglass or Contact Lens Examination; or a non-practicing member returning to active practice working under supervision for a specified length of time.

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

**Student** – a student member, registered with the College, enrolled in an accredited optical sciences eyeglass program working under the supervision of a licensed practicing member, optometrist or ophthalmologist.

**Student contact lens practitioner**- A practicing member registered with the College as a student contact lens practitioner, enrolled in an accredited optical science contact lens program working under the supervision of a licensed contact lens practitioner, optometrist or ophthalmologist.

**Supervision** –

- a. Direct supervision – The supervisor is directly observing and analyzing the student's performance during their accredited optical training program.
- b. On-site supervision – The supervisor is on the premises and available to the restricted licensed member or student for consultation.

**Unregulated staff** – Employees who are not registered and licensed with the SCO as opticians/contact lens practitioners, restricted members or student opticians/student contact lens practitioners. [Practice Notice: 002 Allowable Duties of Unregulated Staff.](#)

**Verify** – To inspect and confirm before supplying a product to a patient 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 patient or provided by another individual on behalf of the patient.
- b. In the case of contact lenses, the specifications set out in the contact lens record or authorizing document provided by the patient or provided by another individual on behalf of the patient.

**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 patient use.)