

College of Opticians of Ontario

- COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines
- COVID-19 FAQs
- 2021 Fee Reduction
- Questions & Answers

Membership Update

May 15, 2020

Return to Practice Guidelines

Activity TBA -PG

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Introductions

Our COVID19 Team

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COVID-19 Virus

Protecting your patients, protecting yourself

(2)

COVID-19 Virus

- The COVID-19 Virus Pandemic has presented an unprecedented health care crisis and Opticians on the front line of eyecare have risen to the challenge.
- The College is trying to support opticians in maintaining safety and ensuring the best care for their patients in these challenging times.
- On a daily basis we are working on creating resources to provide updates from the government and put together to assist opticians in their practice.

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COVID-19 Virus

- The College attends daily briefings by the Ministry of Health and will continue to update you as information is available. Follow us on social media for regular updates.



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COVID-19 Directive 2 Mar 17.20

Requirements for Health Care Providers (Regulated Health Professionals or Persons who operate a Group Practice of Regulated Health Professionals)

The following steps are required immediately:

1. All non-essential and elective services should be ceased or reduced to minimal levels, subject to allowable exceptions, until further notice. Allowable exceptions can be made for time sensitive circumstances to avert or avoid negative patient outcomes or to avert or avoid a situation that would have a direct impact on the safety of patients.
2. Clinicians are in the best position to determine what is essential in their specific health practice. In making decisions regarding the reduction or elimination of non-essential and elective services, regulated health professionals should be guided by their regulatory College, and the following principles:

COVID-19 Virus

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- Infection Control: Under Standard 4 of the Standards of Practice, opticians must take reasonable and appropriate measures to minimize the risk of contamination and subsequent transmission of infectious agents within their professional practices. Opticians must ensure that the practice site is equipped and maintained, and that procedures are in place, to ensure health and safety for both patients and staff. These measures include:

COVID-19 Virus

- Taking reasonable precautions at all times, such as hand washing and appropriate waste disposal
- Properly disinfecting equipment (such as pupilometer, slit lamp, keratometer, etc.) tools (PD ruler, pliers, screw drivers, etc.) and display frames after each use
- Asking staff or patients who are ill to stay home or delay their visit

COVID-19 Virus

Return to Practice Guidelines

Protecting your patients, protecting yourself
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COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines

- All health regulators are developing Return to Practice Guidelines for their registrants.
- Most of the regulators have used a similar framework to develop their guidelines however, some regulators may use a prescriptive approach, telling you very specifically what to do.

COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines

- We recognize that there are many differences between practice environments, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. For that reason, the Guidelines have been drafted broadly to accommodate these differences while emphasizing the need for registrants to keep health and safety considerations paramount.

COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines

- It is also important to be aware that a return to practice does not mean a return to business as usual. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a public health risk, it will be incumbent on all registrants to take extra precautions to ensure safety for themselves, their patients and their staff.

COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines

The Guidelines will provide information to registrants in areas such as:

- Setting up your dispensary
- Dispensing considerations
- Screening patients and staff
- Personal Protective Equipment

COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines

Each section of the Guideline document starts with directions that are imperative to adhere to in order to meet your requirements under Standard #4, Infection Control.

Subsequently, you will find a section called 'Additional Considerations'. While not mandatory, these recommendations should be seriously considered when looking at preparing your dispensary and dispensing during this pandemic.

COVID-19 Return to Practice Guidelines

Bring up Return to Practice Guidelines for a
high-level overview
(aprox. 15 minutes)

COVID-19 Virus

Frequently Asked Questions

Protecting your patients, protecting yourself
(2)

COVID-19 FAQs

The College has been regularly receiving calls and emails from registrants, both employed or business owners as well as several large chains. We have assembled some FAQs to discuss here to hopefully assist you.

COVID-19 FAQs

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What is an Essential Service?

COVID-19 FAQs

- Services can only be considered essential in cases where the patient's eye health or overall wellbeing and function would be compromised or decline if services were not provided.
- Ultimately this decision rests with the practitioner.

COVID-19 Essential or Urgent Care

Yes:

Critical repairs

Replacement of lost or broken eyewear

Replacement contact lenses

COVID-19 Essential or Urgent Care

No:

I need a second pair

My insurance is running out

While I'm here, let me look at what's new

COVID-19 FAQs

(2)

What if someone is providing more than 'essential services'?

COVID-19 Essential or Urgent Care (2)

If an optician decides to keep their practice open and provides services beyond what is considered essential or urgent in nature, this could be seen as a violation of the Ministry of Health Directive and could be considered an act of Professional Misconduct by the College.

COVID-19 FAQs

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Can I make patients wear masks or undergo temperature checks?

COVID-19 FAQs

(2)

The guidelines require opticians to screen patients who enter the practice environment, but leave it up to the optician's own professional judgment to decide what form the screening will take and what, if any, personal protective equipment patients will be required to wear.

COVID-19 FAQs

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Can I refuse to treat a patient who does not have a mask or refuses to wear a mask?

COVID-19 Virus

- Continuity of Care: Under Standard 2 of the Standards of Practice, opticians are required to be reasonably available to patients, or take reasonable steps to ensure continuity of care.
- It is appropriate to decline a service if, based on your professional judgement, you cannot provide the service safely in the absence of a mask or other PPE.
- Before declining the service, opticians are encouraged to consider if there are alternate ways to deliver the service safely (e.g. via remote practice)

COVID-19 FAQs

(2)

Should dispensary staff be screened before every shift?

COVID-19 FAQs

(2)

Opticians that operate a dispensary have a professional obligation to ensure that their staff are healthy when they report to each shift. Whatever staff screening policy that is put in place should be thorough enough to capture any changes in a staff member's health on a shift-by-shift basis.

COVID-19 FAQs

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What happens if a staff member contracts COVID-19? Do all staff who came in contact with that staff member have to self-isolate?

COVID-19 FAQs

(2)

Any staff person that came in direct contact (without PPE or other barriers/protections) with an individual who recently tested positive for COVID-19 should immediately self-isolate in accordance with public health guidelines. If you are unsure, contact public health authorities for guidance.

COVID-19 FAQs

Where can I get PPE? (2)

COVID-19 FAQs

A. The College does not regulate business practices nor gets involved in product procurement. This is the responsibility of the dispensary operator.

Surgical masks are being sourced by the various associations and societies as well as optical wholesale equipment distributors.

COVID-19 FAQs

What if I don't have access to PPE? (2)

COVID-19 Virus

- Ultimately, if you don't have the proper protective equipment to work at close range, aside from not providing the service, employ alternate ways to achieve a beneficial outcome for your patient that balances patient outcomes and mutual health and safety.
- Please note that a cloth mask, while useful in reducing the spread of droplets, does not qualify as PPE

COVID-19 FAQs

Can I refuse to work if my employer can't provide me with PPE or I feel otherwise unsafe? (2)

COVID-19 FAQs

As an optician, you are a health professional first, and you have a professional obligation to keep your patients safe. Opticians must adhere to professional standards regardless of instructions from their employer.

If you are concerned for your own health and safety, you should seek out legal advice or consult employment standards resources.

COVID-19 FAQs

Do I need to wear an N95 respirator or is a surgical mask adequate? (2)

COVID-19 FAQs

Public Health Ontario only recommends use of N95 masks by health care workers for aerosol-generating medical procedures performed on suspect or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

For other direct care to patients, including patients with suspect or confirmed COVID-19, N95 masks are not currently indicated. Rather, surgical masks with other PPE is recommended.

COVID-19 FAQs

Can I operate a dispensary with just some of the return to practice recommendations in place? (2)

COVID-19 FAQs

You are required to implement all of the broad measures that are listed in the guidelines as indicated as being “must” dos.

Each of these broad measures can be accomplished in a number of ways, and certain measures can be implemented individually or in the combination that the opticians determines to be appropriate for their circumstances

COVID-19 FAQs

How many people can I have in my practice at one time?(2)

COVID-19 FAQs

It is recommended that you limit the number of people in the practice environment as much as possible. This includes spreading out shifts, and limiting entry by patients by scheduling and spacing out appointments and/or limiting walk-ins.

COVID-19 FAQs

Do I have to use peroxide to clean my frames?(2)

COVID-19 FAQs

The Guidelines require you to disinfect frames in between patients, but do not mandate one specific way to do this. Opticians should ensure that whatever method they select will be effective, and consult any manufacturer specifications or recommendations.

COVID-19 FAQs

Do patients have to wash their hands before entering the practice? What if I don't have a wash station at the entrance?(2)

COVID-19 FAQs

The guidelines require you to make a hand sanitation station available at the entrance/exit. In the absence of a hand washing station, it is appropriate to provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has been approved by Health Canada.

COVID-19 Virus

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- As a reminder, under recent updates to the Practice Guidelines, opticians may use professional judgment to engage in remote practice, including, where appropriate:
 - Delivering prescription eyeglasses to a patient prior to fitting/adapting
 - Remote delivery of contact lens refills for established contact lens patients
 - Communicating via telephone, email, video conference, etc.
 - Delivery of finished eyewear via mail/courier
 - Arranging a pickup by someone other than the patient (e.g. family, friend)

Updated Standards of Practice

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Utilize the new provisions of the updated Standards of Practice:

- ✦ Spectacle Delivery prior to adjustment
- ✦ Direct shipment of refill contact lenses

Eyeglass Delivery

Background

- Previous Standards/guidelines required an in-person meeting to fit and adapt prescription eyeglasses before they could be delivered.
- The COO is committed to ensuring the Standards meet patient needs and preferences to provide for greater flexibility and convenience in the delivery of prescription eyeglasses.

Eyeglass Delivery



- The dispenser may use their **professional judgment** to determine whether it is appropriate to deliver eyeglasses prior to an in-person fitting, having regard to factors such as:
 - Age
 - Degree of ametropia and/or anisometropia
 - Lens type (e.g. single vision vs multifocal)

Replacement Contact Lens Services



Contact Lens Refills

Dispensing Contact Lenses Refills

A physical, in-person meeting between the optician and patient is necessary during initial selection and fitting and for required follow up care.

Opticians may use their professional judgement in determining if it is appropriate to dispense replacement/refills of contact lenses without the patient having to physically attend the dispensary.

COVID-19 Virus

2021 Registration Fee Accommodation

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2021 Registration Accommodation Amendment to the Bylaw ⁽¹⁾

The College acknowledges that the Pandemic and the subsequent shut down of most practices has had a significant financial impact on registrants and practice operators.

2021 Registration Accommodation Amendment to the Bylaw ⁽¹⁾

The Board of the College met Monday May 11, 2020 to consider options in bringing financial relief to registrants and to assist opticians in meeting their registration obligations for the coming year.

2021 Registration Accommodation Amendment to the Bylaw ⁽¹⁾

Each year the College budgets some portion of the registration dues towards building contingency funds including a General Reserve to address situations such as this.

2021 Registration Accommodation Amendment to the Bylaw ⁽¹⁾

Based on the reserves on hand, the Board is proposing a reduction the 2021 registration fee by \$200 (slightly over 20%).

As this is a Bylaw amendment, the College is circulating this for stakeholder feedback and will finalize this at its next Board meeting in July.

2021 Registration Accommodation Amendment to the Bylaw ⁽¹⁾

Please ensure you participate in the Stakeholder Feedback survey being sent out by the College.

New website and email addresses (2)

The College has updated its domain name to:

www.collegeofopticians.ca

New website and email addresses



The screenshot shows the homepage of the College of Opticians of Ontario. At the top left is the logo, a stylized green and white circle with the text "College of Opticians of Ontario". To the right of the logo is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for "Home", "News", "Contact Us", "Virtual Boardroom", and "Registrant Log In". Below the navigation menu are buttons for "Public", "Registrants", "Applicants", "Find an Optician", and "Make a Complaint". A red banner on the right side of the page reads "COVID-19 Updates". The main content area features a large image of a pair of black-rimmed glasses with a cityscape reflected in the lenses. Below the image, the text reads "Protecting the Public" and "The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) regulates the practice of Opticianry in the public interest." Below this are two columns: "Our Mission" and "Recent News".

College of Opticians of Ontario

Search... Home News Contact Us Virtual Boardroom Registrant Log In

Public Registrants Applicants Find an Optician Make a Complaint

COVID-19 Updates

Protecting the Public

The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) regulates the practice of Opticianry in the public interest.

Our Mission

We protect the public by regulating Ontario opticians, to ensure they maintain a high Standard of Practise and professionalism.

Recent News

April 8, 2020
Office Holiday Closure
The COO offices will be closed for Easter on Friday, April 10 and April 13, 2020. [\[read more \]](#)

March 11, 2020
By-Laws Consultation – Feedback Requested

COVID-19 Q&A


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Q&A

Thank you!



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