

Standard 10: Delegation

An optician shall be accountable for all controlled acts that they delegate to another individual, as well as for all controlled acts that the optician performs under the delegation of another regulated health professional.

Criteria:

1. Delegation by the Optician

This section sets out the criteria that must be adhered to in order for an optician to delegate the controlled act of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses and subnormal vision devices to an individual that is not authorized under the RHPA to performed that controlled act.

- 1.1. An optician shall establish a formal relationship with the patient prior to delegating. This includes a general consultation with the patient about their visual needs.
- 1.2. An optician is accountable for the decision to delegate, and for ensuring that:
 - a. they have assessed the potential risk of harm to the patient;
 - b. the patient has given their informed consent to receive services from the optician's delegate, and this consent has been noted in the patient record; and
 - c. the performance of the delegated act meets the standards of practice.
- 1.3. An optician shall clearly define the act(s) to be delegated, including the nature and extent of each task to be performed.
- 1.4. An optician shall only delegate those acts that form part of their regular practice and that they are competent to perform themselves.
- 1.5. An optician shall only delegate to an individual who has the appropriate skills, knowledge and judgment to perform the delegated task.
- 1.6. An optician shall be physically present in the practice environment at the time the delegated act is being performed by the delegate, and able to intervene as required.
- 1.7. An optician shall monitor and/or supervise the person performing the delegated act as may be required in the circumstances, having regard to the following considerations:
 - a. The nature of the act being performed by the delegate and its potential risk to the patient;
 - b. The training and experience of the person performing the act;
 - c. How well the optician knows the patient; and
 - d. The timing of the optician's past or expected future involvement with the patient.
- 1.8. An optician shall not delegate an act that has been delegated to them by another regulated health professional.

- 1.9. An optician shall keep a patient record for any patient that has received services from the optician's delegate. In addition to the requirements of Standard 5, where delegation occurs, the patient health record shall also include:
 - a. The identities of the delegating optician and the individual that will perform the delegated act(s); and
 - b. Documentation of the patient's informed consent to receive services from the optician's delegate.

Practice Guideline: Delegation

Controlled Acts

Opticians have the authority under the legislation to perform the controlled act of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses and subnormal vision devices. Opticians may, if they choose, delegate the performance of this controlled act to another individual who is not authorized to perform it. The delegation of controlled acts in appropriate circumstances and with appropriate safeguards can result in more timely delivery of quality vision care. In every instance of delegation, the primary consideration should be the best interests of the patient. No optician is required or expected to delegate unless they have decided it is in the patient's best interest to do so.

Delegation and Assignment

"Delegation" refers to the process whereby a regulated health professional transfers their authority to perform a controlled act to a person who is not authorized to perform that controlled act. Delegation can only occur where it complies with the requirements of this Standard.

"Assignment" refers to the process where a person is assigned to perform a task that is not considered a controlled act. Opticians may assign tasks to non-opticians where the task does not involve performing a controlled act (e.g. data entry, processing payments, minor repairs such as replacing a loose screw). As with delegation, the optician remains responsible for all patient outcomes, and should only assign tasks where they believe it is in the patient's best interest to do so, and where the person to whom they have assigned the tasks has the necessary skills, knowledge and judgment to carry it out.

Transferring Care to another Optician

Transferring care from one optician to another optician will not typically be considered a delegation or assignment. Instead, the receiving optician is taking responsibility for the patient as the most responsible dispenser. This may occur in a practice environment with more than one optician or optometrist, where multiple practitioners may participate in dispensing eyewear to an individual patient. In these situations, the receiving optician will become the most responsible dispenser and will be responsible for all preceding steps in the dispensing process, as well as the performance of the eyewear and any potential risk of harm to the patient. See Standard 3 for more information on the most responsible dispenser.

Delegation and Remote Practice

Opticians may engage in remote practice if they do so in accordance with these Standards, including Standard 3 (Dispensing) and Standard 7 (Remote Practice and Technology). Delegated acts, however, may not be performed via remote practice. The optician must be physically present in the practice environment and able to intervene when any act is being performed under their delegation.

This means that while the optician may, for example, use their judgment to permit the delivery of prescription eyeglasses before fitting and adapting them to the patient, they may not delegate the fitting and adapting itself to an unauthorized individual without being physically present when the fitting and adapting takes place.

Students and Interns

It is not necessary to delegate controlled acts to student opticians or intern opticians, as both groups are already required to dispense under the direct supervision of a registered optician.

Student and intern opticians do not have authority to delegate controlled acts. For more information see the [Student and Intern Supervision Policy](#).

Accountability

The optician remains responsible and accountable for all controlled acts that they delegate to another individual. The optician therefore remains the “most responsible dispenser” and is expected to maintain appropriate patient records and follow up with the patient as required under the Standards.

Informed Consent

Under Standard 6, opticians must ensure patient comprehension of any process. This means ensuring that a patient’s consent is informed. In the context of delegation, informed consent means that the patient must understand:

- the registration status of the person who is performing the controlled act (i.e. that the person is not an optician);
- that the optician is ultimately responsible to ensure that the act is performed properly and in a way that meets the standards of practice; and
- that the optician is available to assist and/or intervene as required.

It is expected that the optician will take the patient’s preferences and comfort levels into consideration. Where a patient is not comfortable with an act being performed under delegation, the optician should not delegate it.

Liability Insurance

It is the responsibility of the optician to ensure that they and their delegate(s) are covered at all times by adequate liability insurance. Opticians should check with their insurance provider to ensure that their coverage applies to delegated acts.

2. Receiving Delegation from another Regulated Health Professional

2.1. An optician shall not perform a controlled act under the delegation of another regulated health professional unless:

- a. The optician has sufficient skills, knowledge and judgment to perform the act competently and safely;
- b. A process for receiving delegation is in place;
- c. The delegated act is clearly defined, including the nature and extent of each task to be performed by the optician;
- d. The optician has a reasonable belief that the professional delegating the act is authorized to delegate the act, has the ability to perform the act competently, and is delegating in accordance with any relevant standards and/or regulations governing their profession;
- e. The optician has been provided with adequate resources to perform the act safely and effectively;
- f. The decision to delegate has been made in the best interest of the patient; and
- g. The optician has ensured that the patient has given their informed consent for the optician to perform the act under delegation, and this consent has been noted in the patient record.

2.2. An optician shall not perform a controlled act under the delegation of another regulated health professional, including another registered optician, where:

- a. The optician's certificate of registration has been suspended or they are otherwise not entitled to practice (e.g. where the optician does not hold appropriate liability insurance); and/or
- b. The optician's certificate of registration is subject to a term, condition or limitation that would prohibit them from performing the controlled act in question.

2.3. An optician shall not perform a refraction under the delegation or assignment of another regulated health professional unless they do so in compliance with Standard 8.

2.4. In addition to any patient records made and kept by the delegating professional, an optician shall keep a patient record for any patient for whom they perform services under delegation. In addition to the requirements of Standard 5, where delegation occurs, the patient health record shall also include:

- a. The identities of the delegating professional and of the optician that will perform the delegated act(s); and
- b. Documentation of the patient's informed consent to receive services from the optician under delegation.

Practice Guideline: Receiving Delegation

Controlled Acts

Opticians are authorized under the legislation to perform the controlled act of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses and subnormal vision devices, and may not perform any other controlled act set out in the RHPA unless it is under the proper delegation of a regulated health professional who is authorized to perform that act.

Delegation and Assignment

“Delegation” refers to the process whereby a regulated health professional transfers their authority to perform a controlled act to a person who is not authorized to perform that controlled act. Opticians may not perform the controlled act of another health profession unless it is under the proper delegation of that professional. For example, opticians may not perform eye examinations or issue optical prescriptions unless under the delegation of an optometrist or physician. Delegation can only occur where it complies with relevant standards and/or regulations governing the professional who is delegating the act.

“Assignment” refers to the process where a person is assigned to perform a task that is not considered a controlled act. Opticians may be assigned by another regulated health professional to perform tasks that are not considered controlled acts.

Pre-Testing

Opticians may be assigned by an optometrist or physician to carry out certain “pre-testing” tasks prior to an optometric exam or assessment. “Pre-testing” typically refers to the initial tests that take place as part of the standard eye exam or assessment by an optometrist or physician. Pre-tests do not typically include tasks that are considered controlled acts under the RHPA, and may be performed by an optician under the assignment of an optometrist or physician.

Different practitioners may apply different definitions to “pre-testing”. It is therefore the responsibility of the optician to ensure that they do not accept an assignment to carry out any pre-testing tasks that would be considered a controlled act that the optician is not authorized to perform (e.g. prescribing). Pre-testing that involves a controlled act may only be performed where it has been properly delegated in accordance with this Standard and any standards or regulations that govern the delegating professional.

In some circumstances, it may be permissible for an optician to carry out pre-testing on behalf of an optometrist or physician without that professional being physically present, or before the professional has seen the patient for the first time. It is the responsibility of the optician to ensure that any pre-testing is assigned to them in a manner that complies with the rules and standards governing the professional who is assigning the tasks.

Competence

Opticians are required to meet Standard 1 with respect to competence at all times, including while

receiving delegation or assignment from another professional. This includes the requirement to only perform tasks that the optician has sufficient knowledge, skill and judgment to perform competently and safely, and not engaging in tasks that are beyond the optician's capacity to perform.

In every instance of delegation or assignment, the primary consideration should be the best interests of the patient. No optician is required or expected to receive delegation or assignment unless they have decided it is in the patient's best interest to do so.

Informed Consent

Under Standard 6, opticians must ensure patient comprehension of any process. This means ensuring that a patient's consent is informed. In the context of receiving delegation, informed consent means that the patient must understand:

- the registration status of the person who is performing the controlled act (e.g. that they are an optician and not an optometrist or medical doctor);
- who the delegating professional is and that the delegating professional is the person ultimately responsible for ensuring that the act is performed properly and in a way that meets the standards of practice of that profession; and
- that the delegating professional is available to assist and/or intervene as required.

It is expected that the optician will take the patient's preferences and comfort levels into consideration. Where a patient is not comfortable with an act being performed by an optician under delegation, the optician should not perform it.