

The purpose of this policy is to establish a fair process for members who are not practising in Ontario, but who wish to maintain their registration with the College of Opticians of Ontario (the “COO”), while ensuring delivery of high quality, safe and ethical opticianry care to the public of Ontario.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all Registered Opticians. It does not apply to Registered Student Opticians or Registered Intern Opticians.

**Background**

It is a requirement that all Registered Opticians have liability insurance in order to have their certificates of registration (“certificate”) issued, renewed or reinstated. The COO recognizes that members may need or want to stop practising in Ontario for a variety of personal and professional reasons. Those members may not want to resign or suspend their certificate with the COO, but they also may not want to maintain insurance coverage while they are not employed.<sup>1</sup>

The COO does not currently have an “inactive” class of membership<sup>2</sup> which would permit a member to remain registered without requiring insurance coverage. However, the regulation does permit uninsured members to remain registered provided they undertake not to practise while they are uninsured.

Accordingly, we have developed this policy to establish the process to follow when a member requests non-practising status with the COO, as well as the steps that are required for a member with non-practising status to return to practise in Ontario.

**What is Non-Practising Status?**

As noted above, the COO does not currently have a non-practising or inactive class of registration. Non-practising status is recognition that a person is still a Registered Optician, but he or she has agreed not to practise opticianry in Ontario until certain conditions are met (namely, they submit evidence of insurance). The member’s status on the COO’s public register will be “Non-Practising”, which will make it clear to the public that the member, although registered with the COO, is not permitted to practice opticianry in Ontario.

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<sup>1</sup> Members who have professional liability insurance coverage but are not employed in the profession, or are employed outside of the profession have the option of either applying for a non-practising status or maintaining an active status with the COO.

<sup>2</sup> The COO is in the process of updating our Registration Regulation to include an inactive class.

**Requesting Non-Practising Status**

A member who does not have professional liability insurance may change his or her status to non-practising by signing and delivering an [Undertaking Form](#) to the COO. In order to obtain non-practising status, the member must agree to:

- not practise opticianry in Ontario while the member has non-practising status;
- not supervise or direct a student or intern optician while the member has non-practising status;
- not to dispense under the delegation of a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario or the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
- provide information to the COO, renew his or her certificate annually and pay all registration fees required under the Opticianry Act, the Regulations and the COO's by-laws;
- fulfill the mandatory continuing education requirements of the Quality Assurance Program; and
- have the fact of the undertaking posted on the COO's public register.

Upon receipt of an acceptable undertaking, the COO will change the member's status to non-practising, notify the member of the change and update the public register. Due to constraints of our current system, we are not able to note the change in the register in the short term. However, we are updating our system to allow for us to make note of the member's status as "Non-Practising" going forward.

We remind members that breaching the terms of the undertaking would be considered professional misconduct, and could result in disciplinary action by the COO or prosecution for unauthorized practice.

**Lifting the Non-Practising Status**

A member may request to lift the Non-Practising Status in accordance with the terms of the undertaking in effect on his or her certificate by completing and submitting the following to the COO:

- an [Address Change Form](#), and
- a [Certificate of Being Insured Under a Professional Liability Insurance Policy](#).

While we will make every effort to process status change applications in a timely manner, we urge members to consult with the COO's registration team prior to making any employment arrangements. A member will not be eligible to practice until the COO confirms that his or her undertaking has been lifted and that their status has been updated on the register.

**References to Relevant Legislation**

[Registration Regulation](#), O. Reg. 869/93 under the Opticianry Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 34, s. 8