

REGISTRATION POLICY

Retiring or Resigning from the College

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to registrants who are no longer practising as an optician in Ontario and who would like to retire or resign their certificate of registration (certificate) with the College of Opticians of Ontario (COO).

Scope

This policy applies to all registrants of COO.

Background

COO's Registration Regulation does not currently recognize a "retired" or "resigned" status for registrants. We are in the process of updating it to include the option to resign. In the interim, our by-laws permit registrants to "cease to be a registrant" and require both the reason for ending their registration and the date upon which they cease to be a registrant to be noted in the public register. This policy will address how registrants can inform the COO of their request to resign or retire their certificate.

How do you "Cease to be a Registrant" of COO?

1. Administrative Suspension: Registrants who are no longer practicing opticianry in Ontario, have the option of not renewing their certificate. If a certificate is not renewed it will be considered in default for non-payment of the renewal fees. Once the required notice period passes, the certificate will be administratively suspended and the public register will be updated to reflect that the registrant has been suspended. Please note that once a certificate is suspended, registrants will not be permitted to do the following:
 - a) perform the controlled acts of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses or sub-normal vision devices as a Registered Optician in Ontario, even under the delegation of a registrant of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario or an optometrist¹;
 - b) use the title Registered Optician, Registered Student Optician or Registered Intern Optician;
 - c) hold themselves out as a registrant of COO; or
 - d) supervise any Registered Student Optician or Registered Intern Optician or delegate any controlled acts to non-opticians.

¹ This does not apply to students who are practising under supervision under section 29(1) (b) of the Regulated Health Professions Act while fulfilling the requirements to become a registered optician.

Additionally, the registrant's employer(s) listed in the Public Register will be notified of the suspension.

After being administratively suspended, if a registrant engages in any of the prohibited activities noted above, they may be subject to prosecution for unauthorized practice. Please be aware that suspended registrants are still subject to COO's jurisdiction in cases of alleged professional misconduct or incompetence for their conduct during the period of time before they were suspended². Therefore, an administrative suspension will not prevent COO from investigating a suspended registrant's alleged professional misconduct or incompetence.

While administratively suspended, if a registrant decides to return to the practice of opticianry, the registrant may apply for reinstatement. If the registrant applies within three years from the date of suspension, and meets the requirements for reinstatement, the Registrar will lift the suspension and reinstate the registrant's certificate.

Applications for reinstatement received more than three years from the date of suspension will be referred to the Registration Committee, which will review the registrant's qualifications and determine if they have to meet any examination and/or Quality Assurance Program requirements prior to reinstatement.

Registrants may choose to remain administratively suspended indefinitely. However, we are aware that some members would prefer to use alternative language, such as "retired" or "resigned", as there can be a negative connotation to the term "suspended".

2. Retiring from COO: As noted above, our Registration Regulation does not provide a process for retiring from the practice of opticianry. However, registrants can advise COO that they are not renewing their certificate because they wish to retire. While we are required to note such a member as administratively suspended in the public register in the short term, we are updating our system to allow for us to make note of a registrant's status as "retired".

Effectively, the consequences are the same if a registrant retires or is administratively suspended; the main difference is what will be listed on the public register.

3. Resignation of Certificate: Resignation differs from retirement in that it terminates registration with COO. As a general rule, we do not recommend that members give up their registration unless they are certain of not returning to the practice of opticianry.

Registrants who are certain that they will not return to the practice of opticianry and would like to voluntarily resign their certificate, must submit the following to the COO:

- a) a completed Resignation Form if resigning outside of the renewal period (October 31st to December 31st) or
- b) notice of resignation via the online registrant portal if resigning during the renewal season; and

² Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18, s. 14(2)

- c) the reason for resignation.

Resignations received throughout the year will have a resignation date effective the date received by COO. Resignations received during the membership renewal period (October 31st to December 31st) will have a resignation date of December 31st.³

We will make the fact of registrants' resignation known to both the public and their last employer as follows:

- a) update the public register to note that the registrant has resigned and is no longer a registered optician/student/intern. Currently, our system will only permit us to note a certificate as "suspended"; we are in the process of updating it to allow us to indicate when registrants cease to be a member because they have resigned and state the date of the resignation.
- b) send notification of the resignation to the registrant's employer(s) listed in the public register.

Resigned registrants are subject to all of the same restrictions listed above for a member under suspension. After a registrant resigns, if they engage in any of the prohibited activities noted above, the registrant may be subject to prosecution for unauthorized practice. Please be aware that after resigning, a registrant is still subject to COO's jurisdiction in cases of alleged professional misconduct or incompetence for conduct during the period of time before resignation⁴. Therefore, a resignation will not prevent the COO from investigating a registrant's alleged professional misconduct or incompetence.

Unlike registrants who are administratively suspended, resigned registrants are not eligible for reinstatement of their certificate. Resigned registrants who wish to return to the practice of opticianry in the future will be required to submit an application for new registration with COO and meet the registration requirements in place at the time of application.

Please contact the COO's Registration team at registration@collegeofopticians.ca if you have any questions regarding the resignation process.

³ If a resignation is received after December 31 of any year, the registrant will be deemed to have resigned in default of payment and the effective date will again be the date received by COO. Fees related to the default payment will be due if the registrant applies for registration in the future.

⁴ Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18, s. 14(1)