

**COLLEGE OF OPTICIANS OF ONTARIO  
STANDARD OF PRACTICE:  
REFRACTION**

**This Standard of Practice (SOP) sets out the criteria that opticians in Ontario must adhere to should they be granted authority by the College to refract. The SOP has been developed to ensure the highest possible level of patient care and to maximize patient choice and access to services within current legislation. The three scenarios outlined in clause 7 reflect the diversity in models of interprofessional collaboration in Ontario's vision care sector and allow opticians and prescribers to choose the approach that best serves their patients' as well as their own needs in varying individual circumstances.**

**Both this Standard of Practice and others can be expected to evolve over time as needs change, the vision care field adopts new technologies and as emerging trends in vision care become common practice.**

1. An optician must have successfully completed a training program, which includes an examination component that meets the most current refracting competencies established by College of Opticians of Ontario (COO). The respective training program will not be included within the general curriculum of the opticianry program, but will be available as a post-graduate course. COO will provide a list of all accredited education programs.
2. Each optician intending to refract must first apply to COO for 'refracting designation' through a process established by COO. Each optician who receives refracting designation will be issued a seal by the COO that is to be affixed to the optician's certificate of registration.
3. An optician who has obtained refracting designation must also submit to COO at least eight (8) College-approved continuing education credits that are *specific to refraction* and which are to be submitted *in addition* to the credits required for the optician's existing Quality Assurance cycle in order to retain his or her refracting designation.
4. Each refracting optician must complete the Patient Acknowledgment Form attached to this Standard of Practice for each patient and send a copy/facsimile of all completed forms to the COO on a quarterly basis.

5. An optician must ensure that he or she has the appropriate equipment to perform refraction such as, but not necessarily limited to, automated refraction equipment, phoropter, trial lenses, retinoscope and visual acuity charts.
6. An optician must not prepare and dispense vision devices based on the results of the refraction performed without a prescription, as set out in clause 7.
7. An optician may dispense vision devices when the optician has a prescription from an authorized prescriber. Dispensing may occur under three generic scenarios:

- (a) The patient has seen an authorized prescriber for a full oculo visual assessment within the last 365 days. The authorized prescriber has issued a written prescription for the patient indicating that the patient requires an optical appliance subject to determination of the refractive error of the eye by an optician.

In this circumstance, the optician may perform refraction and dispense the appropriate eyewear based on the results of the refraction. The results of the refraction and information on the optical appliance dispensed must be provided to the authorized prescriber as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date that the refraction was conducted.

- (b) The patient has seen an authorized prescriber for a full oculo visual assessment within the last 365 days. Pursuant to the patient's health status meeting a set of predetermined conditions, the prescriber has authorized the optician to dispense an optical appliance based on the optician's determination of the refractive status of the eye and on any other information the prescriber may have provided.

In this circumstance, the authorized prescriber has determined that the health of a patient satisfies certain predetermined health standards, where the prescriber has then authorized the optician to perform the refraction and dispense the appropriate eyewear based on the results of that refraction and any other additional information that the prescriber has provided. The results of the refractive error determination and information on the optical appliance dispensed must be provided to the authorized prescriber as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date that the refraction was conducted.

- (c) The patient has seen an authorized prescriber for a full oculo visual assessment within the last 365 days. The optician receives a referral from a prescriber to perform a refraction on a patient in order to assist the prescriber in preparing a prescription.

In this circumstance, the optician may perform the refraction and must provide the results of that refraction to the referring practitioner as soon as possible. The optician may subsequently receive a prescription from the authorized prescriber reflecting the results of the refraction, whereupon the optician may dispense appropriate eyewear to the patient.

8. An optician must use her or his knowledge, skills and judgment to refer to a physician or optometrist any indication or complications in the patient's visual or general health that comes to the attention of the optician as a result of performing the refraction.

9. In addition to the patient's file, the refraction health record for *every patient* upon whom an optician has performed a refraction must contain:
  - (a) The date of the refraction,
  - (b) Name of optician performing refraction and College registration number,
  - (c) Patient Acknowledgment Form (one completed copy per patient must be provided to the College by mail or facsimile on March 31, June 30, Sept 30 and Dec 31 of each year),
  - (d) Results of the refraction,
  - (e) Name of the prescriber, date and details of the prescription, as well as any other instructions.
10. The optician must expend her or his best efforts, in conjunction with the authorized prescriber, to ensure that the Canadian Ophthalmological Society evidence-based Clinical Practice Guidelines for periodic eye examinations in adults in Canada are adhered to.
11. An optician is prohibited from performing refractions other than in accordance with the provisions of this standard of practice.