

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the California State Board of Optometry is to serve the public and optometrists by promoting and enforcing laws and regulations which protect the health and safety of California's consumers and to ensure high quality care.



# FOCUS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION



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(916) 575-7170  
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The California State Board of Optometry issues licenses to optometrists so that they may practice in the state of California. Essentially, a license means that the Board finds an optometrist fit to treat patients. The Board has ensured that the optometrist has completed the proper education and training and has passed both the state and national examinations.

An optometrist practicing in California may have special certifications, or additions, to his or her optometric license. Such certifications include:

- Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agents (TPA)
- Glaucoma Certification (TPG)
- Lacrimal Irrigation and Dilatation (TPL)
- TPA with Lacrimal and Glaucoma (TLG)

When considering an optometrist, you may want to contact the California State Board of Optometry to ensure that the person you selected holds an active license and to find out whether he or she has been disciplined by the Board. Call (916) 575-7170 or visit [www.optometry.ca.gov](http://www.optometry.ca.gov).

Additionally, details on the laws and regulations related to the practice of optometry are available on the Board's Website at [www.optometry.ca.gov/lawsregs/law.pdf](http://www.optometry.ca.gov/lawsregs/law.pdf).

## TIPS FOR CONSUMERS

### PRESCRIPTIONS

Under Federal regulations, optometrists and ophthalmologists must give each patient a copy of his or her prescription immediately after an eye exam or the completion of a contact lens fitting process.

Your prescription, once obtained, should include the prescribing optometrist's name, license number, address, telephone number, and signature.

### MEDICAL RECORDS

You have the right to obtain a copy of your medical records from your optometrist. Once you submit your request in writing, the records must be provided within 15 days. The doctor may charge a fee to cover the cost of copying the documents.

### ADDITIONAL FEES FOR CONTACT LENS WEARERS

Some doctors charge an additional fee for a contact lens fitting and evaluation, partially because this requires additional time and expertise. Ask about fees and office policies before making an appointment.

### REIMBURSEMENTS

Fee disputes are often solved by contacting your provider or insurance company directly. However, should you choose to take this matter to the Board, be advised that the Board does not have the authority to require an optometrist to reimburse you for costs or services nor dictate to the optometrist the fees that he or she charges. If you wish to pursue reimbursement through small claims court, you may contact the Board for an informational packet.

## EXPIRED PRESCRIPTIONS

An expired eyeglass prescription may be refilled only if your glasses are lost or broken. If you need a prescription refilled, the Board recommends that you return to your eye doctor for an exam, even if you don't think your prescription has changed.

### COMPLAINTS ABOUT OPTOMETRISTS

You should contact the Board if you wish to file a complaint against an optometrist. The Board is responsible for investigating complaints and disciplining optometrists who violate the law.

Complaints against optometrists can include the following:

- Failure to provide appropriate medical care
- Dishonesty, including filing fraudulent insurance, Medicare, or Medi-Cal claims
- Gross negligence, incompetence, and unprofessional conduct
- Sexual misconduct
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Conviction of certain crimes
- Unsanitary working conditions

If the allegations are proven to be true, the optometrist could face license revocation, suspension, or probation.

