

REPORT VIOLATORS

If you are aware of any business or individual selling cosmetic contact lenses without a license, please report the person or business to the California State Board of Optometry. The Board will investigate the matter. Fines for selling contact lenses without a license can range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per incident.



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COSMETIC CONTACTS

CHANGE THE LOOK
OF YOUR EYES
SAFELY AND LEGALLY



Cosmetic contact lenses are a fun way to temporarily change your eye color to match an outfit or a mood. Cosmetic contacts can give you tiger eyes, bloodshot eyes, or other effects to make a Halloween costume scarier.

However, the real scare comes from buying cosmetic contacts without a prescription from an unlicensed dealer. You could end up with an eye infection, scratched cornea, impaired vision – or worse.

In California, cosmetic contacts, just like contacts to correct your vision, must be prescribed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. You must buy your lenses only from licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist or from a licensed contact lens dispenser.

You may find cosmetic contacts for sale at flea markets, beauty salons, or accessory stores, but that doesn't mean the sales are legal.

Selling cosmetic contact lenses without a State license is against the law.

WHAT ARE COSMETIC CONTACT LENSES?

Cosmetic contact lenses can be plano (zero-powered) lenses, meaning they have no prescriptive power, or they can be vision-correction lenses with added cosmetic touches. Both kinds are regulated medical devices under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

What if you just want zero-powered cosmetic contacts to wear once or twice?

You still need an eye exam and a prescription from an eye doctor, to be sure the lenses will fit you properly. The doctor or his or her assistant will show you how to handle and clean the lenses.

WHAT ABOUT ONLINE SALES?

Out-of-state companies that sell contacts on the Internet to California residents also must be licensed. These companies must verify your prescription with your eye doctor.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A COMPANY OR YOUR DOCTOR IS LICENSED?

VERIFY THE LICENSE

Optometrists are licensed by the Board of Optometry to conduct eye examinations, treat various eye conditions, and prescribe glasses and contact lenses. Optometrists provide the majority of Americans' eye care. Verify an optometrist's license at www.optometry.com.

Ophthalmologists (medical doctors who specialize in care and treatment of eyes) are licensed by the Medical Board of California. You may verify an ophthalmologist's license at www.mbc.ca.gov.

Registered Dispensing Opticians and/or optical shops are authorized to fill contact lens prescriptions and are registered by the Medical Board of California. To verify if someone is an optician, visit www.mbc.ca.gov.

