

Please see the enclosed bulletin from the College of Opticians of Ontario regarding the delivery of essential opticianry services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize that you may have chosen to keep your dispensary open to provide essential services. If so, please refer to the recommendations made below to reduce the chance of transmission of the COVID-19 virus. We also remind you that dispensing of eyeglasses and contact lenses remains a controlled act and that ultimately the responsibility to dispense lies with the registered optician. As mentioned below, these opticians are bound by the government directive to suspend all non-essential in-person patient care.

This is a summary of the information and recommendations that the College of Opticians has made to its registrants regarding the practice of opticianry during the COVID-19 pandemic and in light of recent government directives concerning the delivery of health care services.

On March 20, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer issued a [directive](#) that requires all health care providers in Ontario to immediately cease all non-essential and elective services, or reduce them to minimal levels, until further notice. Allowable exceptions can be made for time sensitive circumstances to avert or avoid negative patient outcomes or to avert or avoid a situation that would have a direct impact on the safety of patients.

As of March 24, 2020 all at-risk workplaces in Ontario have been ordered to close, with only those businesses that have been deemed essential permitted to remain open.

While these directives remain in effect, the College has advised opticians that they are required to **suspend all non-essential in-person patient care**.

Service can only be considered essential in cases where the patient's eye health or their ability to function would considerably decline if service was not provided. All other services, while an important part of one's overall vision care, would be considered non-essential during this time. What constitutes essential service will be up to each optician's individual judgement. It may include such circumstances as providing replacement eyeglasses or contact lenses where the patient is without. If an optician determines that a particular service is essential, they are still encouraged to consider whether the service can be provided remotely, or to otherwise avoid or limit any close patient contact.

Some of the measures that the College has recommended to opticians include:

- Scheduling appointments ahead of time for any essential service they may need to provide, ensuring only one patient in the dispensary at a time
- Asking patients to complete [a pre-screening tool](#) before accepting appointments
- Avoiding physical contact with patients when providing service and maintain a distance of at least 2 metres. For example, if the optician must repair a broken pair of glasses in-person, ask the patient to put the eyewear in a tray, disinfect the eyewear prior to repairing them and then again before placing back in a disinfected tray for the patient to pick up.
- **In urgent scenarios that require care at a distance that is less than the recommended safe working distance (2 metres), use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), or consider referring the patient to a colleague who has PPE available**
- To assist with maintaining the recommended 2 metre distance, consider performing adjustments not deemed essential, at a later date.
- Sanitize surfaces and equipment between patients
- Wash hands between patients

The College has developed a list of [FAQs](#) to provide additional guidance to its registrants on essential services and safety measures.