



# THE SPECTACLE

The California State Board of Optometry protects the health and safety of California consumers through licensing and regulation of the practices of optometry and opticianry.

## THE OPTICIAN EDITION

This edition is all about our optician program. With this edition, you will learn:

- What it means to be an optician.
- The requirements for becoming an optician.
- What skills are helpful to become an optician.

Helping people see more clearly is an important goal for each optician. Opticians are valuable assets to the optical community, as they assist patients with their eye care needs. Depending on the type of registration an optician is qualified for, they may fit and adjust spectacle and contact lenses.

The California State Board of Optometry issues registrations to opticians to practice in this field.

There are different ways in which opticians may dispense ophthalmic products. Below are the four types of registrations the Board issues:

- **Registered Dispensing Ophthalmic Business (RDO).**
- **Spectacle Lens Dispenser (SLD).**
- **Contact Lens Dispenser (CLD).**
- **Nonresident Ophthalmic Lens Dispensers (OS).**

Here are descriptions of the services that each profession is allowed to provide, by law:

- RDO locations are allowed to fit and adjust, as well as dispense spectacle and contact lenses. This registration allows registrants to provide this service outside of a medical facility or an optometry office.
- SLDs and CLDs are allowed to fit and adjust spectacle lenses at an RDO location.

- SLD and CLD registrations are not required if the fitting or adjusting is being performed in the office of an optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- Nonresident Ophthalmic Lens Dispensers are businesses that are located outside of California and dispense spectacle and/or contact lenses to California consumers.

### A POINT OF VIEW FROM BOARD MEMBER STACY HANCOCK, REGISTERED DISPENSING OPTICIAN:

"My sister-in-law recently started working part time at a local optometrist's office. During a visit, she asked if I would be interested in stopping by her new office to meet her co-workers. I was excited to share our new commonality of opticianry and see her workplace. When I stopped by, I noticed all the newest technology with a nicely laid-out dispensary.

"While chatting with the office staff, a patient stopped in to pick up her new glasses. Her tray was retrieved from the back, and her glasses were handed to her by the receptionist. The patient put on her new glasses, paid her balance, and left. I stood in shock, bewildered at what just took place. A lovely dispensary with two dispensing tables, tools, mirrors, and reading cards all readily available for use. This scenario took place not because of laziness or lack of care, but because there was not a person present with the skills or knowledge to provide a proper delivery and adjustment for the patient. It was a spotlight on the reality I've always known to be true. This all-too-common practice happens in offices up and down our state and devalues our occupation.

"A properly trained optician would have taken the time to sit with the patient to ensure their new glasses or contact lenses fit properly. Often, glasses do not fit a patient when first put on and require adjusting. In addition, this is also the time when prescription or manufacturer problems can be addressed.

"The same is true for contact-lens wearers, especially first-time wearers. New and longtime users of contact lenses should be reminded of how often to clean contact lenses and when to dispose of them to avoid eye infections.

“Opticianry is an interesting profession, as it blurs the lines between medical and retail. There is so much knowledge and instinct that comes with years or decades of experience on the job. I live and operate my independent optical boutique in a county of approximately 55,000 people, and I am the only RDO in the area and probably the only RDO in the two neighboring counties. The importance of licensing that requires proof of basic competency is crucial to the survival of our trade. Training and competency are crucial to providing our patients—the consumer—with quality eye care, vision, safety, and functionality. The more of us out there that take the initiative to obtain licensing can highlight the difference between a skilled and knowledgeable optician and a retail shop clerk.

“Please consider becoming an RDO, not because it is a requirement, but because it is how we gain and maintain the quality of care our patients deserve.”

\*Although optometrists are not required to employ opticians, an optician can bring another level of care and expertise to patients.

## Get Started on Your Path to Becoming an Optician

The American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners (ABO NCLE) is a national organization that administers the certification examinations required for applicants to become registered as Contact Lens Dispensers and Spectacle Lens Dispensers in California. On ABO NCLE’s **website**, you can obtain information regarding exam requirements, an explanation of the various certifications offered by ABO NCLE, the importance of certification, and other important and helpful information about the professions. There are also helpful candidate exam booklets available for preparing for the certification exams. For more information on becoming a registrant, please visit ABO NCLE’s website.

## Levels of Certification in the Optician Profession

There are three different levels of certification that can be issued to an optician:

**1 Basic Certification** In California, anyone who is 18 years of age and has a high school diploma or a GED diploma is eligible to sit for the optician exams. In states with conflicting regulations, those candidates must follow their own licensing board’s regulations.

**2 Advanced Certification** An advanced certification designation is only earned after a practitioner has attained several years of experience, completes a prescribed curriculum of advanced education, and achieves a passing score on the rigorous examinations, or is required by a state licensing board to pass the Advanced Certification Examination(s) in order to become licensed. Professionals with advanced certification credentials are equipped to work in a variety of practice settings, such as independent opticians, ophthalmology practices, university hospitals, commercial offices, HMO/managed care offices, optometric offices, large clinics, and optical product manufacturers.

**3 Master Designation** The Master in Ophthalmic Optics and Master in Contact Lens Technology demonstrates to the public and colleagues that an individual has attained a superior level in ophthalmic dispensing or contact lens technology. Any optician or contact lens practitioner who is currently certified by the American Board of Opticianry or National Contact Lens Examiners and has passed the appropriate ABO or National Contact Lens Examiners Advanced Examination is eligible to enroll in the appropriate master’s program.

## DID YOU KNOW?

As a registered optician, you are not required to submit proof of continuing education courses to the Board to renew your registration. However, ABO NCL may require those individuals with registrations to submit continuing education courses to them. Please contact ABO NCL for more information.

You can find more information on these topics and others at the Board's website: [www.optometry.ca.gov](http://www.optometry.ca.gov).

# HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING AN OPTICIAN BUT WERE UNSURE WHAT THE PROFESSION IS ABOUT?

## Below Are Explanations of Each Optician Profession



### REGISTERED SPECTACLE LENS DISPENSER

This registration is required for those who perform the fit and adjustment of spectacle lenses. To apply to become a California Registered Spectacle Lens Dispenser, applicants must have earned a passing score on the American Board of Opticianry (ABO) exam. Prior to filling out an application, please review [California Business and Professions Code sections 2559.1-2559.4](#), as they pertain to a Spectacle Lens Dispenser.



### REGISTERED CONTACT LENS DISPENSER

This registration is required for those who dispense contact lenses within a Registered Dispensing Business in California. This registration is for those who have earned a passing score on the National Contact Lens Examiners exam. Prior to filling out an application, please review [California Business and Professions Code sections 2560-2564.6](#), as they pertain to a Contact Lens Dispenser.

**These registrations only pertain to businesses, not individuals:**



### REGISTERED DISPENSING OPHTHALMIC BUSINESS

This registration is required for small businesses, corporations, and firms engaged in the business of filling prescriptions written by physicians, surgeons, and optometrists. The Registered Dispensing Ophthalmic Business registration authorizes the applicant and its employees to engage in the business of dispensing spectacle and contact lenses. Employees must obtain Spectacle Lens Dispenser and Contact Lens Dispenser registrations. Prior to filling out an application, please review [California Business and Professions Code sections 2564.90-2564.94](#), as they pertain to Registered Dispensing Ophthalmic Business.



### NONRESIDENT OPHTHALMIC LENS DISPENSERS

This certificate authorizes a business located outside of California to ship, mail, or deliver in any manner ophthalmic lenses at retail, pursuant to a valid prescription, to a patient at a California address. Prior to filling out an application, please review [California Business and Professions Code sections 2564.70-2564.80](#) as they pertain to Nonresident Ophthalmic Lens Dispensers.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE FOR OPTICIAN APPLICATIONS?

**A.** Payment is due upon submission of the application. The Board will not review an application until the application fee is paid, regardless of when it was opened/submitted.

### Q. WHAT IS THE PROCESSING TIME FOR APPLICATIONS?

**A.** Currently, application processing times are four to six weeks, but processing times can change, so it is always a good practice to check the Board's website for updates on **optician** and **optometrist** processing times.

### Q. IF THE BOARD HAS QUESTIONS ABOUT MY APPLICATION, HOW WILL THEY CONTACT ME?

**A.** The Board will contact you by email. **Always** include a current email address on your application.

### Q. IN BREEZE, MY APPLICATION SAYS "PENDING." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

**A.** A pending status means that your application requires an initial review or a reassessment by Board staff.

### Q. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A REGISTERED OPTICIAN?

**A.** The benefit of becoming a registered optician is the satisfaction of knowing you have the skills, willingness, and training to assist patients with their contacts and eyeglasses needs. First-time contact lens wearers require training before they can wear contacts for the first time and brand-new spectacles generally require an adjustment before a patient can begin wearing them. Registered opticians are valued for their skills and the quality of care they provide to their patients.

## Recent Disciplinary Actions Taken by the Board

For the most current list of citations issued and disciplinary actions, please visit <https://www.optometry.ca.gov/consumers/disciplinary.shtml>.

The Board provides information\*\* regarding administrative disciplinary actions for immediate access and convenience of interested persons. You can also access the “**Online License Verification**” to verify if a licensed optometrist has had any disciplinary action taken against their license or to verify the current status of a license.

(\*While the Board believes the information to be reliable, human or technical error remains a possibility, as does a possible delay in posting or updating information.)

### CITE AND FINE

#### **See U Again Optical (Unregistered)—Gardena**

Effective October 29, 2022, the Board issued a \$5,000 citation to See U Again Optical (Unregistered) for operating an opticianry business prior to obtaining a valid registration, advertising violations, and holding oneself out as being able to perform professional services as an optometrist. (BPC §§ 651(a), 3040(a), 2555.5(g), 2555.5(o), 2555.5(p), 2556.5 and 2564.91(a).)

[Click here to obtain a copy of the action.](#)

#### **Kingsolver, Stephanie Corinne (SLD 42780)—Petaluma**

Effective October 9, 2022, the Board issued a \$250 citation to Stephanie Corinne Kingsolver (SLD 42780), for making or giving false statements or information on her application to obtain licensure (BPC § 2555.5(j).)

[Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the registrant’s profile.](#)

#### **LensDirect.com—Garden City, NY**

On July 15, 2022, the Board issued a \$7,500 citation to LensDirect.com (Unregistered) for the unlicensed practice of a contact-lens dispensary selling and shipping contacts to California clients without a current and valid Nonresident Ophthalmic Lens Dispenser (formerly known as a Nonresident Contact Lens Seller) certification. (PC §§ 2555.5(a), 2555.5(p), 2564.71(a).)

[Click here to obtain a copy of the action.](#)

#### **Eye Vision Optical, Inc., formerly Nueva Vision Optical, Inc. (RDO 71046)—Lynwood**

On July 6, 2022, the Board issued a \$5,000 citation to Eye Vision Optical, Inc., formerly Nueva Vision Optical, Inc. (RDO 71046), for the commission of fraud, misrepresentation, or any act involving dishonesty or corruption that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions or duties of a registered optician; holding one’s self out as being able to perform or offering to perform, any professional services beyond the scope of the license authorized, and practicing without a valid, unrevoked, unexpired registration. (BPC §§ 2555.5(a), (e), (o), and (p).) [Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the registrant’s profile.](#)

#### **Licht, Paul (SLD 310)—Berkeley**

Effective June 13, 2022, the Board issued a \$5,000 citation to Paul Licht (SLD 310) for failing to update his address of record for his SLD registration, insurance fraud, fraud by an optician, and failure to return the certificate of registration to the Board no later than 10 calendar days after the change of ownership is completed. (BPC §§ 136(a), 810(a)(2), 2555.5(e), and 2564.94(a)(1).) [Click here to obtain a copy of the action or view the profile.](#)

#### **Site For Sore Eyes (RDO 71222)—Berkeley**

On June 13, 2022, the Board issued a \$5,000 citation to Site For Sore Eyes, (RDO 2434) for advertising the services of an optometrist, unregistered practice, engaging in the business of filling prescriptions of physicians and surgeons or optometrists prior to obtaining a registration, not applying for a new registration and not engaging in the practice until the registration is issued, and for failing to provide written notice of the change of ownership no later than 10 calendar days after the change of ownership is completed. (BPC §§ 655(d)(5) and (6), 2555.5(p), 2556.5, 2564.91(a), and 2564.94(a)(2).) [Click here to obtain a copy of the action or view the registrant’s profile.](#)

### PETITION TO REVOKE

#### **Soss, Edward H. (OPT 4847)—San Francisco**

On September 30, 2022, the Board filed a Petition to Revoke Probation against the license of Edward H. Soss (OPT 4847), with an address of record in San Francisco, CA, for multiple probation violations. Probationer Soss’ optometry license was placed on probation for three years, effective April 1, 2020, for engaging in fraudulent billing practices, unprofessional conduct, and insurance fraud. (BPC §§ 3110(a), and (e).) [Click here to obtain a copy of the action or view the doctor’s profile.](#)

**REVOKED**

**Smith, Loren Donnell (OPT 7354)—Berkeley**

On October 10, 2022, the license of Loren Donnell Smith (OPT 7354), with an address of record in Berkeley, CA, was revoked for multiple probation violations. Probationer Smith’s optometry license was placed on probation for five years, effective February 20, 2018, for a criminal conviction, and a conviction involving the use of alcohol. (BPC §§ 3110(k) and (l).)

[Click here to obtain a copy of the action or view the doctor’s profile.](#)

**STATEMENT OF ISSUES**

**Mirza, Haris (OPT Applicant)**

On July 22, 2022, the Board filed a Statement of Issues against Haris Mirza following the denial of his application for licensure as an optometrist. The basis for the denial was unprofessional conduct: unlicensed practice, unprofessional conduct: advertising/

holding self out as an optometrist, and violation of the Optometry Practice Act. (BPC §§ 2540, 3040(a), 3101, 3109(a), 3110, 3110(a), (s), and (t).)

[Click here to obtain a copy of the action.](#)

**Sharpe, Andre (SLD Applicant)**

On July 22, 2022, the Board filed a Statement of Issues against Andre Sharpe following the denial of his application for registration as a Spectacle Lens Dispenser. The basis for the denial was prior criminal convictions for assault with a firearm, lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14, and false statement of material fact in connection with application. (BPC §§ 475(a)(1), 480(a)(1)(A), and 2559.2.)

[Click here to obtain a copy of the action.](#)

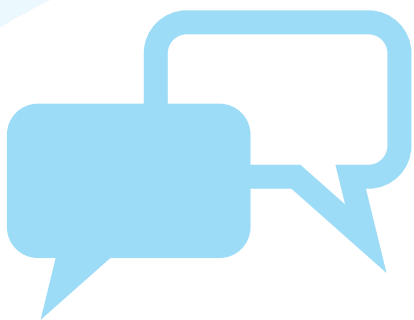
Do you have a question for the Enforcement Unit regarding a complaint that was filed against you? Are you looking for information regarding enforcement cases? Email us at [CSBOEnforcmnt@dca.ca.gov](mailto:CSBOEnforcmnt@dca.ca.gov).



## Ask an Analyst Is Here!

### Do you have a general question?

Submit your questions to [optometry@dca.ca.gov](mailto:optometry@dca.ca.gov) and look for the answer in the next edition of the *The Spectacle*! Be sure to include *The Spectacle* in the subject line.



## How Are We Doing?

The California State Board of Optometry strives to provide the best possible customer service. Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete our brief customer service satisfaction survey [here](#). Your participation is greatly appreciated.



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