



NEVADA BOARD OF DISPENSING OPTICIANS

COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR SAFE PRACTICE

UPDATED: April 21, 2020

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The use of simple cloth face coverings can slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders. [Instructions for a homemade cloth face covering can be found on the CDC website.](#)

UPDATED: April 16, 2020

To all Nevada Ophthalmic Dispensers and Apprentice Ophthalmic Dispensers:

In response to the Governor's emergency orders regarding COVID-19, the Board has issued the following guidelines for safe practice:

- 1) All ophthalmic dispensers should read and follow the [Emergency Directives](#) issued by Governor Sisolak as they are updated.
- 2) [Emergency Directive 010](#) has extended the state of emergency and closure of all nonessential businesses through April 30, 2020. Section 3 of that directive provides:

Individuals may leave their residences to provide services, perform work necessary, or obtain services from Essential Healthcare operations (as defined by Section 1 (a) of the March 20, 2020 Emergency Regulations) on behalf of themselves, pets, or those in their household.

The [Emergency Regulation](#) approved by Governor Sisolak on March 20, 2020 provides:

(a) "Essential Licensed Business" means a business operating in the state of Nevada that provides: Essential healthcare operations, including hospitals, medical offices, clinics, healthcare suppliers, home health care providers, mental health providers, dentists, orthodontists, oral surgeons, physical or occupational therapists, speech therapists and pathologists, chiropractors, licensed homeopathic medical providers, biomedical facilities, non-governmental emergency service providers, optometrist and ophthalmologist offices, offices for certified nurse-midwives, veterinary services, and pharmaceuticals;

(g) Businesses that sell or rent medical supplies

It is the opinion of the Board that ophthalmic dispensing falls within the definition of an Essential Licensed Business, and that the continued practice of optometrists and ophthalmologists necessitates the continued operation of retail locations that can fill prescriptions issued by these doctors. Therefore, the Board will not be initiating disciplinary action against ophthalmic retail locations or individual ophthalmic dispensers who continue operating at this time. However, this directive should not be construed to supersede any orders issued by any other state, local, or federal agency. Businesses and licensees may want to consult with their own attorneys about how emergency directives impact their businesses.

- 3) All ophthalmic dispensers must follow the [guidelines issued by the CDC for healthcare workers](#). The Board recognizes many of the [CDC guidelines relevant to pharmacy workers](#) also apply to ophthalmic dispensers and the Board is recommending the following safe practices:
- Provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol on counters for use by customers and have sufficient and easy access to soap and water or hand sanitizer for staff. Use of disinfectant wipes and sprays is recommended if hand sanitizer is unavailable.
 - Use gloves when handling paper prescriptions and insurance benefits cards, or have the customer read the information to you in a private setting. Wear protective gear such as gloves, safety glasses, face masks and/or plastic face shields when taking measurements or otherwise in close proximity with customers. After a prescription has been prepared, the package can be placed on a counter for the customer to retrieve, instead of being directly handed to the customer.
 - Avoid touching objects that have been handled by customers. If transfer of items must occur, staff should wash their hands afterwards with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. They should always avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Minimize physical contact with customers and between customers. Maintain social distancing (6 feet between individuals) for people entering the store as much as possible. Use signage/barriers and floor markers to instruct waiting customers to remain 6 feet back from the counter, other customer interfaces, and from other customers and staff. Limit the number of customers in the store at any given time to prevent crowding at the counter or checkout areas.
 - Frequently clean and disinfect all customer service counters and customer contact areas, including frames and displays. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, and doorknobs.
 - Promote the use of self-serve checkout registers and clean them frequently. Have hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes at register locations for use by customers. Promote social distancing by diverting as many customers as possible to curbside pick-up or home delivery, where feasible.

For further safe practice guidelines, licensees are encouraged to take the free ABO-approved CE course, [“The Hygienic Optician.”](#) offered by 20/20 Magazine through May 1st. The course is approved for one (1) hour of CE credit.

The Board thanks all its licensees for their compliance with the Governor’s and CDC’s orders during this unprecedented time. It is our goal to keep both licensed opticians and their customers safe while still providing necessary ophthalmic services to the public. The Board may update these directives periodically so please check back for more information.