



# Summary of Prescription Eyeglass Regulations in the United States



iCareRx Eyeglass Seller Certification Program

October 2016



## Introduction

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This publication is designed as a 50 state survey of regulations governing Internet sales of eyeglasses. It is intended to be a single reference point for participants in LegitScript's iCareRx Eyeglass Seller Certification Program. Where applicable, each state summary includes the following: eyeglass prescription components, expiration dates, modes of transmission, and record keeping requirements.

An optometrist is a licensed practitioner whose practice includes examining the eyes, writing prescriptions for eyeglasses and contact lenses, and fitting and dispensing the same. An ophthalmologist is a licensed physician who specializes in the medical and surgical care of the eyes. As part of their practice, ophthalmologists write prescriptions for and dispense eyeglasses and contact lenses. In all states, optometrists and ophthalmologists must release a prescription for eyeglasses to a patient, upon request.

An optician dispenses eyeglasses pursuant to a valid prescription of a licensed physician or optometrist. Opticians do not have prescriptive power and may not modify a prescription. Unlike the practice of optometry or ophthalmology, opticianry does not require licensure in all 50 states. In this document, states marked with an asterisk (\*) require optician licensure.

## State Summaries

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### Alabama

In Alabama, a license to practice optometry is not required for the sale, preparation, or dispensing of eyeglasses on the prescription of a licensed ophthalmologist or licensed optometrist in a retail optical dispensary or from a store, shop, or other permanently established place of business with an optical department. A reasonable expiration date shall be set forth on all prescriptions. After the expiration date, a practitioner must release the

prescription only to a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist of the patient's choice and the prescription shall be clearly marked with the expiration date and the words "EXPIRED. FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY." Records pertaining to a patient should be maintained for a period of at least 7 years.

Helpful Links:

[Alabama Optometry Law](#)

[Alabama Optometry Administrative Code](#)

## Alaska\*

In Alaska, a prescription for eyeglasses is a written formula by a licensed optometrist that contains the: (1) name of the patient; (2) issue date of the prescription; (3) expiration date; and (4) name, office location, and contact information of the prescriber. Prescriptions must also contain the dioptric power of spheres, cylinders, prisms, the axis of cylinders and position of prism base, and the designation of interpupillary distances. Every optometrist shall keep a record of examinations and visual analyses made and prescriptions issued, and for whom the prescriptions were prepared. These records should be maintained for a period of at least 5 years.

Helpful Links:

[Alaska Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)  
[Alaska Dispensing Opticians Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Arizona\*

In Arizona, prescriptions for eyeglasses must include the name of the patient, refractive power of the lenses, interpupillary distance, printed name, office address, telephone number, and signature of the optometrist, and the date of the examination and expiration date of the prescription. If a prescription written by an optometrist is filled by another provider of ophthalmic goods, the optometrist shall be available to verify that the prescription is accurately filled. The optometrist may charge a fee for verifying the accuracy or quality of ophthalmic goods dispensed by another provider. Optometrists shall create and maintain a complete record of each examination and ensure that a patient record is maintained for at least 6 years.

Helpful Links:

[Arizona Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)

[Arizona Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)  
[Arizona Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Arkansas\*

In Arkansas, opticians can only dispense prescription eyeglasses upon a written prescription signed by a licensed optometrist or physician who conducted the examination from which the prescription was prepared. Additionally, any person or legal entity who conducts an office or place of business in Arkansas where ophthalmic dispensing services are offered or performed must first obtain an office permit from the Arkansas Board of Dispensing Opticians pursuant to board regulations for each such office or place of business.

Prescriptions written by a licensed optometrist in Arkansas must contain and comply with the following: (1) the name of the prescribing optometrist must be printed on each prescription in a legible manner; (2) the address and telephone number of the prescribing optometrist must be placed on the type printed form on the prescription; (3) the state license number (as issued by the Arkansas State Board of Optometry to the prescribing optometrist) must be clearly written on the prescription; (4) the prescribing optometrist must place his signature on each prescription; (5) the body of the prescription must be legible in order to clearly communicate the quantity and strength of the substance or item to be prescribed as well as any instructions for a medication or use of the item in order to insure safety of the patient; (6) the name of the patient for whom the prescription is written must be clearly printed on the prescription; and (7) the date that the prescription is given to the patient must be written on the prescription.

Before an optometrist can destroy a patient's record, the patient must be notified and

given thirty days to respond before the record is destroyed. However, if a patient has not been examined for 5 years or more, that patient's record may be destroyed by the examining optometrist without notifying the patient.

Helpful Links:

[Arkansas Optometry Statutes](#)

[Arkansas Optometry Regulations](#)

[Arkansas Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Arkansas Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## California\*

Individuals, corporations, and firms engaged in the business of filling prescriptions of physicians or optometrists licensed in California for prescription lenses are considered dispensing opticians and cannot engage in that business unless registered with the Division of Licensing of the Medical Board of California. A separate certificate of registration is required for each address where business is conducted.

A prescription for eyeglasses must include all of the following: (1) dioptric power of the lens; (2) expiration date of the prescription; (3) date of the issuance of the prescription; (4) name, address, telephone number, prescriber's license number, and signature of the prescribing optometrist or physician and surgeon; and (5) name of the person to whom the prescription is issued. When the prescription needed by the patient has not changed since the previous examination, the prescriber may write on the prescription form "copy lenses currently worn" instead.

The expiration date of a prescription for eyeglasses should not be less than 2 to 4 years from the date of issuance unless the patient's history or current circumstances establish a reasonable probability of changes in the patient's

vision of sufficient magnitude to necessitate reexamination earlier than 2 years, or the presence or probability of visual abnormalities related to ocular or systemic disease indicates the need for reexamination of the patient earlier than 2 years. In no circumstances should the expiration date be shorter than the period of time recommended by the prescriber for reexamination of the patient.

A prescriber of eyeglasses shall orally inform the patient of the expiration date of a prescription at the time the prescription is issued. The expiration date of a prescription may be extended by the prescriber and transmitted by telephone, electronic mail, or any other means of communication. An oral prescription for eyeglasses shall be reduced to writing and a copy of that writing shall be sent to the prescriber prior to the delivery of the lenses to the person to whom the prescription is issued.

An optometrist must retain a patient's record for a minimum of 7 years.

Helpful Links:

[California Optometry and Dispensing Opticians Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Colorado

In Colorado, opticians, persons, and corporations may supply or sell eyeglasses pursuant to a valid prescription. An optometrist's electronic signature on an eyeglass prescription shall be considered to have the same force and effect as an original signature.

Every optometrist should maintain patient records for a period of 7 years, commencing on the termination of optometric services or on the date of last contact with the patient, whichever is later. Records for minor patients should be kept for a minimum of 7 years after the patient

reaches the age of majority.

Helpful Links:

[Colorado Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Colorado Optometry Regulations](#)

## Connecticut\*

In Connecticut, no prescription eyeglasses can be sold at retail except under the supervision of a licensed optician and in a registered optical establishment, office, or store. Any establishment under the personal and direct supervision of a licensed optician may be granted permission to sell prescription glasses at retail, and to dispense or supply them to the ultimate wearer. Each individual retail or service unit located at a recorded address is a separate establishment requiring a separate permit. This applies, even when a store or unit is part of an interstate or intrastate chain.

A licensed optician shall keep a record for each client fitted with prescription eyeglasses. A client record for prescription eyeglasses shall include: (1) doctor's prescription and date, including name of prescribing doctor; (2) date of delivering said prescription, including any duplication of existing lenses; (3) facial measurements, including but not limited to: interpupillary measures; frame size determinations, including eye size, bridge size, temple length; (4) name of frame provided; and (5) lens description, including: lens materials; placement of optical centers; lens tint; and, when applicable, multifocal type and placement of multifocal.

Helpful Links:

[Connecticut Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Connecticut Optometry Regulations](#)  
[Connecticut Opticians Statutes](#)  
[Connecticut Opticians Regulations](#)

## Delaware

In Delaware, optometrists should maintain adequate records on each patient for a period of at least 7 years from the date of the most recent service rendered. Additionally, an optometrist must honor a patient's request to forward the patient's complete prescription to another licensed physician of medicine, osteopath, or optometrist.

Helpful Links:

[Delaware Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Delaware Optometry Regulations](#)

## Florida\*

Prescriptions for eyeglasses must include the sphere power and, if necessary, the cylinder power, cylinder axis, prism amount, multifocal add power, and any other information necessary to accomplish the objective of the prescription. All prescriptions written by a licensed optometrist must contain the name, address, telephone number, and signature of the licensed practitioner who wrote the prescription. Prescriptions for eyeglasses are valid for 5 years.

Optometrists must keep patient records for at least 2 years. If the practitioner maintains electronic patient records, the practitioner may use an electronic signature which can be generated by using either public key infrastructure or signature dynamics technology. The electronic signature must be: (1) unique to the person using it; (2) capable of verification; (3) under the sole control of the person using it; and (4) linked to the record in such a manner that it is invalidated if any data in the record is changed.

An optical establishment, defined as any establishment which offers, advertises, and performs opticianry services for the general public,

must obtain a permit from the Department of Health. A permit issued to an optical establishment is for that establishment only and is valid for as long as that establishment operates at that location. Prescriptions for eyeglasses shall be kept on file for a period of 2 years with the optical establishment that fills such prescription.

Helpful Links:

[Florida Optometry Statutes](#)

[Florida Optometry Regulations](#)

[Florida Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Florida Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Georgia\*

In Georgia, a prescription for eyeglasses means an optometrist's or ophthalmologist's handwritten or electronic order based on an eye examination that corrects refractive error. A person shall not dispense or adapt eyeglasses without first receiving authorization to do so by a written prescription, except when authorized orally to do so by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. Optometrists must maintain patient records for 7 years.

Helpful Links:

[Georgia Optometry Statutes](#)

[Georgia Optometry Regulations](#)

[Georgia Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Georgia Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Hawaii\*

In Hawaii, a prescription for eyeglasses is an order or formula issued by a practitioner to prescribe prescription ophthalmic lenses, setting forth refractive powers for the manufacturing of any lens which has a spherical, cylindrical prismatic power or value, or any combination thereof. Expiration dates for a prescription for eyeglasses is

determined by the professional judgment of the licensed practitioner.

Helpful Links:

[Hawaii Optometry Statutes](#)

[Hawaii Optometry Regulations](#)

[Hawaii Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Hawaii Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Idaho

An eyeglass prescription must contain the sphere, cylinder, axis, prism power, and additional power, if applicable. The standard expiration date of the prescription must be at least 1 year from date of original issue. All prescription files and records shall be maintained by optometrists for at least 5 years.

Helpful Links:

[Idaho Optometry Statutes](#)

[Idaho Optometry Regulations](#)

## Illinois

In Illinois, no prescription eyeglasses may be sold or delivered to an individual without a prescription signed by a licensed optometrist or a physician licensed to practice medicine. All patient records, including prescriptions, shall be maintained by the optometrist for 6 years. Records can be maintained on paper or in electronic format.

Persons, firms, and corporations who manufacture or deal in eyeglasses in a store, shop, or other permanently established place of business, and who neither practice nor attempt to practice optometry, may engage the services of one or more licensed optometrists.

Helpful Links:

[Illinois Optometry Statutes](#)

## Illinois Optometry Regulations

### Indiana

In Indiana, prescriptions for eyeglasses should be written or, if transmitted by other means of communication, must be immediately reduced to writing. However, prescriptions may also be transmitted electronically if they are recorded in an electronic format from the optometrist to the ultimate user of the eyeglasses. A prescription should contain the: (1) name and address of the patient; (2) date of issue; (3) name and strength or size (if applicable) of the device; (4) amount to be dispensed (unless indicated by directions and duration of therapy); (5) adequate directions for the proper use of the device by the patient; and (6) name and certification number of the prescribing optometrist. A prescription in writing requires the written signature of an optometrist and an electronic prescription requires an electronic signature.

Helpful Links:

[Indiana Optometry Statutes](#)

[Indiana Optometry Regulations](#)

### Iowa

A prescription for eyeglasses in Iowa shall contain the: (1) date of issuance; (2) name and address of the patient for whom the ophthalmic lens or lenses are prescribed; (3) name, address, and signature of the practitioner issuing the prescription; and (4) all parameters necessary to properly duplicate the ophthalmic lens prescription. The expiration date for prescriptions must not exceed 2 years.

Prescriptions must be in written format and eyeglasses must not be dispensed without first receiving authorization to do so by a written,

electronic, or faxed prescription from a licensed person. Optometrists must maintain patient records for at least 5 years. A dispenser of eyeglasses must keep a valid copy of the prescription on file for 2 years.

Helpful Links:

[Iowa Optometry Statutes](#)

[Iowa Optometry Regulations](#)

### Kansas

A prescription for eyeglasses in Kansas is a verbal or written order directly from a licensee and must include the: (1) printed name and license registration number of the prescribing licensee; (2) address and telephone number at which the patient's records are maintained and at which the prescribing licensee can be reached for consultation; (3) name of the patient; (4) signature of the prescribing optometrist; (5) date of issuance (6) date of the examination; (7) expiration date, and; (8) if appropriate, any instructions necessary for the fabrication or use of the ophthalmic lenses, and any special instructions. Prescriptions must also include: (1) sphere power; (2) cylinder power; (3) axes location; (4) prism power and base direction; and (5) type, size, and power. Optometrists must maintain patient records for at least 5 years.

Helpful Links:

[Kansas Optometry Statutes](#)

[Kansas Optometry Regulations](#)

### Kentucky\*

In Kentucky, licensed opticians can dispense eyeglasses upon a valid written prescription. Any establishment where ophthalmic dispensing services are offered must be supervised by a Kentucky-licensed optician. Optical establishments do not include any

establishments that come under the practice of medicine by a duly licensed physician, the practice of osteopathy by a duly licensed osteopath, or the practice of optometry by a duly licensed optometrist.

A licensed health care professional providing eye and vision services via telehealth shall be licensed by the Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners or the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure, if services are provided either by or for a person physically located in Kentucky. Treatment and consultation recommendations made in an online setting, including a prescription or a prescription for eyewear via electronic means, shall be held to the same standards of appropriate practice as those in traditional practice (that is, face-to-face settings). Treatment, including issuing a prescription for eyewear based solely on an online autorefractometer, shall not constitute an acceptable practice or standard of care.

Helpful Links:

[Kentucky Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)  
[Kentucky Ophthalmic Dispenser Statutes](#)  
[Kentucky Ophthalmic Dispenser Regulations](#)

## Louisiana

In Louisiana, every written prescription must contain an expiration date and the signature of the optometrist issuing the prescription. The expiration date may not exceed 18 months, unless the optometrist documents a valid medical reason in the chart for so doing. When filling a prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses, optometrists are required to keep the original prescription.

Helpful Links:

[Louisiana Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Louisiana Optometry Regulations](#)

## Maine

Prescriptions for eyeglasses must: (1) contain all the information necessary to be properly dispensed; (2) specify whether it is for contact lenses or ophthalmic lenses; and (3) include the name of the patient, date of prescription, name and office location of prescriber, and an expiration date of not more than 2 years from the date of the eye examination. All prescriptions must be reduced to writing and filed with the complete record of all eye examinations for each patient. Patient records must be available from the optometrist for a period of not less than 10 years.

Helpful Links:

[Maine Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Maine Optometry Regulations](#)

## Maryland

In Maryland, optometric examinations includes writing the lens formula and other prescription data when needed as well as specific instructions for future care. Opticians are not prohibited from providing glasses on the prescription of a licensed optometrist or a physician. Dealers may also sell eyeglasses or lenses if the dealer does not practice or claim to practice optometry.

Helpful Links:

[Maryland Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Massachusetts\*

A prescription for eyeglasses in Massachusetts is defined as a written order bearing the original handwritten or electronic signature of an optometrist, or an oral order issued directly by an optometrist, that authorizes the provision of specified ophthalmic lenses or



spectacle eyeglasses. At a minimum, prescriptions must contain the: (1) name, office address, office telephone number, and registration number of the optometrist issuing said prescription; (2) name of the patient to whom or for whom the prescription is issued; (3) date on which the prescription is issued and the date on which said prescription shall expire; (4) sphere power, cylinder power and axis, prism power, and position of the base for the ophthalmic lenses or spectacle eyeglasses to be furnished; (5) lens material, if clinically significant; (6) interpupillary measurement for distance and/or near, if applicable; (7) near add power, if applicable; (8) the segment type and size, if applicable; (9) tint or coating, if applicable; and (10) any and all appropriate notations as to when the lenses or spectacle eyeglasses are to be worn. Optometrists must maintain patient records for at least 7 years.

No business organization or entity shall perform, provide, or offer to perform or provide, any function or service which is included within the practice of opticianry, unless at least one individual who is employed by that business organization or entity is a licensed dispensing optician. In addition, the functions or services which are included within the practice of opticianry must be provided or performed by a licensed optician, a registered apprentice optician, a licensed physician, or a registered optometrist. However, duplications, replacements, reproductions, or repetitions may be done at retail without prescription.

Helpful Links:

[Massachusetts Optometry Statutes](#)

[Massachusetts Optometry Regulations](#)

[Massachusetts Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Massachusetts Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Michigan

In Michigan, a license to practice optometry is not required to sell (as an article of merchandise) eyeglasses on prescription from an optometrist or physician. Optometrists must maintain patient records for at least 7 years.

Helpful Links:

[Michigan Optometry Statutes](#)

[Michigan Optometry Regulations](#)

## Minnesota

In Minnesota, optometrists must maintain patient records for at least 5 years. It is unlawful for any person who is not licensed as an optometrist to sell or solicit any order for the sale of eye glasses for the correction of vision in any place within the state other than at an established place of business where eye glasses are commonly sold and dealt in, or to sell at retail any eyeglasses for the correction of vision except under the supervision of a licensed optometrist who is in charge of and in personal attendance at the place where eyeglasses are sold. However, these restrictions do not apply to sales upon prescription from persons legally authorized by the laws of Minnesota to examine eyes and prescribe glasses.

Helpful Links:

[Minnesota Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Mississippi

In Mississippi, written prescriptions for eyeglasses of a licensed optometrist must include the: (1) name of the patient; (2) date the prescription is written; (3) expiration date of the prescription; (4) sphere power; and (5) if necessary, the cylinder and axis power, prism and base amount, and bifocal power. A prescription is valid

for no more than 2 years. Optometrists must maintain patient records for at least 2 years.

Helpful Links:

[Mississippi Optometry Statutes](#)

[Mississippi Optometry Regulations](#)

## Missouri

In Missouri, persons, firms, and corporations not engaged in the practice of optometry may sell eyeglasses in a store, shop, or other permanently established place of business on prescription from persons authorized under the laws of Missouri to practice either optometry or medicine and surgery. A prescription must have the full name and license number of the optometrist printed or typed on its face, as well as the signature of the optometrist or the initials "O.D." A prescription may be conveyed verbally as long as it includes the full name and license number of the prescribing optometrist.

Helpful Links:

[Missouri Optometry Statutes](#)

[Missouri Optometry Regulations](#)

## Montana

The laws and regulations of Montana do not directly address prescription requirements for eyeglasses. Each licensed optometrist must maintain accurate patient records for at least 5 years from the last date of treatment. Opticians in Montana are not required to be licensed by the state and opticians working under an order or signed prescription by a licensed physician, surgeon, or optometrist are exempted from the regulations governing optometrists. Persons who sell eyeglasses without attempting to traffic upon assumed skill in adapting them to the eye are also exempted.

Helpful Links:

[Montana Optometry Statutes](#)

[Montana Optometry Regulations](#)

## Nebraska

The laws and regulations of Nebraska do not directly address prescription requirements for eyeglasses or record keeping requirements. However, it is considered unprofessional conduct to provide treatment or consultation recommendations via electronic or other means, including issuing a prescription, unless the optometrist has: (1) obtained a history and evaluation of the patient adequate to establish diagnosis and identify underlying conditions and/or contraindications to the treatment recommended/provided; and (2) arranged availability for follow-up patient care.

Helpful Links:

[Nebraska Optometry Statutes](#)

[Nebraska Optometry Regulations](#)

## Nevada\*

In Nevada, a prescription for eyeglasses must specify the refractive power necessary for best vision and contain instructions concerning the times at which the lenses are to be worn. Prescriptions must also have an expiration date to be determined by the doctor. Unless otherwise specified by the practitioner who wrote the prescription, a prescription received by a dispensing optician will be deemed to have an expiration date of 2 years after the date the prescription was issued.

Helpful Links:

[Nevada Optometry Statutes](#)

[Nevada Optometry Regulations](#)

[Nevada Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)  
[Nevada Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## New Hampshire\*

A prescription for eyeglasses in New Hampshire is a dated and signed, written or oral direction not more than 24 months old from an ophthalmologist or optometrist for therapeutic or corrective lenses which states the prescribed refractive power and when necessary, the vertex distance, cylinder axis, and prism. Oral prescriptions must be recorded and kept on file for one year by the ophthalmic dispenser. Patient records must be maintained for a minimum of 7 years.

Helpful Links:

[New Hampshire Optometry Statutes](#)  
[New Hampshire Optometry Regulations](#)  
[New Hampshire Ophthalmic Dispensing Statutes](#)  
[New Hampshire Ophthalmic Dispensing Regulations](#)

## New Jersey\*

In New Jersey, written prescriptions shall be issued only on New Jersey Prescription Blanks, which shall be numbered consecutively and shall be printed on non-reproducible, non-erasable safety paper bearing the optometrist's license number and National Provider Identifier Number, if applicable. Every optometrist shall provide the following on all prescriptions: (1) the prescriber's full name, address, telephone number, license number, and academic degree or identification of professional practice (this information should be preprinted on all prescriptions); (2) full name of the patient; (3) date of issuance of prescription; and (4) hand-written signature of the prescriber.

Licensed ophthalmic dispensers are required to maintain for a period of at least 6 years, at a New Jersey establishment, the following: (1) all original prescriptions, or copies of prescriptions, which the licensee or licensee's apprentices fill; and (2) all data required in the preparation and dispensing of eyeglasses.

Helpful Links:

[New Jersey Optometry Statutes](#)  
[New Jersey Optometry Regulations](#)  
[New Jersey Ophthalmic Dispensers Statutes](#)  
[New Jersey Ophthalmic Dispensers Regulations](#)

## New Mexico

A prescription for eyeglasses is a written order by an optometrist or a physician for an individual patient for ophthalmic lenses. Prescriptions must include the: (1) name of the patient; (2) date of the prescription; (3) expiration date of the prescription; (4) name and address of the prescriber; (5) dioptric power of spheres, cylinders and prisms; (6) axes of cylinders; (7) position of the prism base; (8) light transmission properties and lens curve values (if desired by the prescriber); and (9) designation of pupillary distance. While expiration dates for prescriptions are not specifically addressed, it is unlawful for an optometrist to replace eyeglasses when the prescription is more than 2 years old without written authorization from the patient.

Helpful Links:

[New Mexico Optometry Statutes](#)  
[New Mexico Optometry Regulations](#)

## New York\*

In New York, eyeglasses may be sold by any person, firm, or corporation at retail, only on prescription of a licensed physician or licensed optometrist and only if a licensed physician, optometrist or ophthalmic dispenser is in charge of and in personal attendance at the place of sale. All prescriptions for eyeglasses are required to contain the: (1) date the prescription is written; (2) prescriber's name, address and phone number; (3) prescriber's profession and registration number; (4) patient's name, address, and age; (5) name, strength and quantity of the prescribed device; and (6) directions for use by the patient. Prescriptions must also include the name, address, and signature of the prescriber. Unless otherwise provided by law, all patient records must be retained for at least 6 years.

Helpful Links:

[New York Optometry Statutes](#)

[New York Optometry Regulations](#)

[New York Ophthalmic Dispensing Statutes](#)

[New York Ophthalmic Dispensing Regulations](#)

## North Carolina\*

A prescription is a written direction from an ophthalmologist or optometrist for eyeglasses, contact lenses, or other ophthalmic appliances. The prescriber retains discretion in determining the number and type of measurements which will be placed upon the prescription and determines whether the patient is medically or physiologically suited for, or has need for eyeglasses. The optician takes the measurements necessary to fill the prescription and determines the makeup of the lenses, supplementing but not contradicting the prescription. In the event of a question regarding interpretation of the prescription, the question will be discussed with the prescriber and his response

shall be recorded in writing by the optician. An expiration date of not less than one year from the date of the prescribing examination shall appear on every such prescription. Prescriptions shall be kept on file by the prescriber and the person filling the prescription for at least 24 months after the prescription is filled.

All eyeglasses ground or assembled in connection with a given formula prescribed by a licensed physician or optometrist must be dispensed under the supervision of a licensed dispensing optician and in a registered optical establishment or office. A licensed dispensing optician must also be on-staff in registered establishments during all business hours.

Helpful Links:

[North Carolina Optometry Statutes](#)

[North Carolina Optometry Regulations](#)

[North Carolina Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[North Carolina Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## North Dakota

In North Dakota, every prescription for eyeglasses should have an expiration date not to exceed 36 months. Records must be kept for each patient for a minimum of 6 years from the last contact with the patient.

Helpful Links:

[North Dakota Optometry Statutes](#)

[North Dakota Optometry Regulations](#)

## Ohio\*

In Ohio, a prescription is defined as the written or verbal directions or instructions as specified by a physician or optometrist licensed by any state for preparing an optical aid for a patient. Prescriptions must include the date of issuance,

and sufficient information to enable the patient to obtain (from the supplier of the patient's choice) the optical accessory or other vision correcting item, device, or procedure that has been prescribed. Generally, prescriptions for eyeglasses expire at the end of 2 years; however, the expiration date may be shorter than 2 years based on the medical judgment of the examining optometrist with respect to the ocular health of the patient. The specific medical judgment must be documented in the patient's records.

Records can be maintained as paper or electronic files. If records are maintained electronically, a backup file should be maintained offsite.

Helpful Links:

[Ohio Optometry Statutes](#)

[Ohio Optometry Regulations](#)

[Ohio Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Ohio Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Oklahoma

It is unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, company, or partnership not licensed as an optometrist in Oklahoma to fit, adjust, adapt, or to in any manner apply lenses, frames, prisms, or any other optical appliances to the face of a person. It is also unlawful to duplicate any lenses or other optical appliances which have been prescribed, fitted, or adjusted for visual correction, or which are intended to aid human vision. However, a licensed optometrist in Oklahoma may, on written prescription or its duplicate, authorize any optical supplier to interpret the prescription. The optical supplier may then, in accordance with a written prescription or its duplicate, measure, adapt, fit, prepare, dispense, or adjust such lenses, spectacles, or eyeglasses.

Optometrists may not render optometric care in any retail or mercantile establishment which sells merchandise to the general public. It is unlawful for any person to display, dispense, sell, provide, or otherwise purvey to the public, prescription eyeglasses within or on the premises of any retail or mercantile establishment in which the majority of the establishment's income is not derived from the sale of such prescription optical goods and materials.

Helpful Links:

[Oklahoma Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Oregon

In Oregon, any dispensing optician may grind any such lens in conformity with the signed prescription or oral instruction, followed by a written prescription, of any optometrist. Any dispensing optician may supply any such lens in conformity with the prescription and the specified expiration date thereof.

Prescriptions for eyeglasses should include the: (1) patient's name; (2) examination date; (3) date on which the patient receives a copy of the prescription; (4) doctor's name, postal address, telephone number, and facsimile telephone number; (5) sphere, cylinder, axis, and/or ADD; and (6) any special features such as the type of bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lens style, prism, material, tints, coatings, or edge polish. Prescriptions must also include a reasonable and clinically-prudent expiration date.

An optometrist must release or verify the patient's prescription to a third party upon direct communication from the patient or anyone designated to act on behalf of the patient. Direct communication can be by telephone, facsimile, mail, or electronic mail.

Optometrists must keep complete and accurate records for patients such that an appropriate provider could continue care without requiring additional information and without detriment to the patient. Records must be kept in an accessible or electronic format for a minimum of 7 years from the date of the last office visit. If a patient is a minor, the records must be kept for 7 years or until the patient is 21 years of age, whichever is longer.

Helpful Links:

[Oregon Optometry Statutes](#)

[Oregon Optometry Regulations](#)

## Pennsylvania

Prescriptions for eyeglasses in Pennsylvania shall bear the: (1) name, address, telephone number, facsimile telephone number, and license number of the optometrist; (2) name of the patient; (3) date the prescription is issued by the licensed practitioner; and (4) expiration date. Eyeglass prescriptions should also specify any information that would be relevant to manufacturing glasses, including the dioptic value of the sphere, astigmatism, prism, slab off, add power and axis or orientation of the astigmatism correction.

The expiration date for an eyeglass prescription cannot exceed 2 years. Nothing shall prohibit the sale, duplication, and reproduction or dispensing of frames, lenses, spectacles, or eyeglasses by any person provided that no changes or modifications are made to lens power except on a signed written order of a licensed doctor of optometry or licensed physician and surgeon. Patient records must be maintained for a minimum of 7 years after the last consultation with a patient.

Helpful Links:

[Pennsylvania Optometry Statutes](#)

[Pennsylvania Optometry Regulations](#)

## Rhode Island\*

In Rhode Island, prescriptions for eyeglasses must contain all of the information necessary for the accurate fabrication, fitting, and dispensing of the eyeglasses. It is unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to sell as merchandise, in any store or established place of business in the state of Rhode Island, any eyeglasses, spectacles, or lenses for the correction of vision, unless a licensed optometrist, physician, or optician under the laws of this state is in charge and in personal attendance at the booth, counter, or place where those articles are sold in a store or established place of business.

Helpful Links:

[Rhode Island Optometry Statutes](#)

[Rhode Island Optometry Regulations](#)

[Rhode Island Opticians Statutes](#)

[Rhode Island Opticians Regulations](#)

## South Carolina\*

The services and appliances related to ophthalmic dispensing must be dispensed, furnished, or supplied to the intended wearer or user only upon prescription issued by a physician or an optometrist; however, duplications, replacements, reproductions, or repetitions may be provided without prescription and are deemed to be ophthalmic dispensing, as if performed on the basis of a written prescription. Oral prescriptions are permitted if the optician maintains a written record.

An optician shall maintain patient records for at least 3 years from the most recent date of

service, including but not limited to, the patient's name and date of service; copy of prescription and service rendered; patient financial record and name of licensed optician providing service.

Helpful Links:

[South Carolina Optometry Statutes](#)  
[South Carolina Optometry Regulations](#)  
[South Carolina Opticianry Statutes](#)  
[South Carolina Opticianry Regulations](#)

## South Dakota

The laws and regulations of South Dakota do not directly address prescription requirements for eyeglasses or record keeping requirements.

Helpful Links:

[South Dakota Optometry Statutes](#)  
[South Dakota Optometry Regulations](#)

## Tennessee\*

Opticians may only dispense prescription eyeglasses on the written prescription of an optometrist or physician. Optometrists must keep patient records for at least 10 years from last contact with the patient.

Persons, firms, or corporations that are wholesale suppliers of lenses or eyeglasses to opticians, optometrists, or ophthalmologists may sell prescription eyeglasses as long as the lenses or eyeglasses are prepared only under the written order of an ophthalmologist or optometrist; and delivered directly to the ophthalmologist, optometrist, or dispensing optician. Such persons, firms or corporations must not engage in advertising the price of either the finished product or any part thereof.

A recording of every advertisement communicated by electronic media, and a copy of every advertisement communicated by print media, and a copy of any other form of advertisement shall be retained by each optometrist for 2 years and by each optician for 1 year from the last date of broadcast or publication and be made available for review upon request by their respective Boards.

Helpful Links:

[Tennessee Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Tennessee Optometry Regulations](#)  
[Tennessee Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)  
[Tennessee Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## Texas

A prescription for eyeglasses in Texas must include: (1) the signature of the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist; and (2) the information and parameters the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist considers relevant or necessary. The prescription may not contain a restriction that limits the parameters to a private label not available to the optical industry as a whole.

A prescription can be transmitted by: (1) delivering an original signed copy of the prescription to the patient or to another person when requested by the patient; (2) faxing an original signed prescription to a person authorized to fill the prescription; (3) email or other computerized electronic means; or (4) if the optometrist determines that the patient needs an emergency refill of the spectacle prescription, the prescription may be telephoned to a person authorized to fill the prescription. When faxing a prescription, the optometrist shall write "by fax" or similar wording on the original prescription prior to faxing. When transmitting a prescription by computerized electronic means, the optometrist must attach a digital signature in a commonly recognized format.

The computerized electronic transmission should also include the office address and license number of the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist.

As of September 1st, 2015, opticians are no longer required to be licensed in the state of Texas.

Helpful Links:

[Texas Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Texas Optometry Regulations](#)

## Utah

In Utah, a person does not need to be a licensed optometrist to sell prescription eyeglasses if they are dispensed pursuant to an unexpired prescription from a licensed optometrist or physician. A prescription for eyeglasses does not expire unless the optometrist or physician includes an expiration date on the prescription that is based on medical reasons which are documented in the patient's file.

Eyeglasses must be dispensed by a person within or from the state and in the ordinary course of trade from a permanently located and established place of business. A person dispensing prescription eyeglasses cannot attempt to traffic upon assumed skill in licensed testing of the eye.

Helpful Links:

[Utah Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Utah Optometry Regulations](#)

## Vermont\*

In Vermont, statutes governing the licensing of optometrists and opticians do not prohibit any person, firm, or corporation engaged in grinding lenses and filling prescriptions from replacing

lenses or filling prescriptions issued by a duly licensed optometrist or physician. Persons, firms, and corporations may also supply ophthalmic materials and supplies directly to licensed physicians, licensed optometrists, or opticians.

Helpful Links:

[Vermont Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Vermont Optometry Regulations](#)  
[Vermont Optician Statutes](#)  
[Vermont Optician Regulations](#)

## Virginia\*

Prescriptions for eyeglasses in Virginia must have the: (1) printed name and signature of the prescribing optometrist; (2) address and telephone number at which the patient's records are maintained and the optometrist can be reached for consultation; (3) name of the patient; (4) date of examination; and (5) expiration date, if medically appropriate, as well as any special instructions. Patient records should be maintained for a minimum of 5 years following the last patient encounter.

It is unlawful for an optometrist to practice as either an employee or lessee of a commercial or mercantile establishment. It is also unlawful for an optometrist to advertise that he is a licensed practitioner and is practicing or will practice optometry as a lessee of or in the commercial or mercantile establishment. A commercial or mercantile establishment is a business enterprise engaged in the selling of commodities.

Helpful Links:

[Virginia Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)  
[Virginia Optician Statutes](#)  
[Virginia Optician Regulations](#)



## Washington\*

In Washington, licensed opticians can dispense prescription eyeglasses on the written prescription of a physician or optician. An initial prescription from a prescriber for corrective lenses shall, at a minimum, include the: (1) patient's name; (2) prescriber's name, address, professional license number, phone number and/or facsimile number; (3) date of the eye exam; (4) expiration date; and (5) signature of the prescriber. The expiration date for a prescription for eyeglasses is 2 years, unless shorter time is warranted by the ocular health of the eye. If a prescription expires in less than 2 years, an explanatory notation must be made in the patient's record and a verbal explanation given to the patient at the time of the eye examination.

Optometrists shall maintain records of eye examinations and prescriptions for a minimum of five years from the date of examination or prescription. Opticians must maintain eyeglass records for a minimum of 5 years. These records must include a copy of the original prescription and a copy of the refractive powers obtained when neutralizing an eyeglass lens for the purpose of duplicating the lens, and the date the lens was neutralized.

An optometrist can buy or rent space from, and practice optometry on, the premises of a commercial or mercantile concern, provided that the practice is solely owned by the optometrist or in conjunction with other licensed optometrists and is under the exclusive control of the optometrist(s). The prescription files are the sole property of the optometrist. The space must be definite and distinct from space occupied by other occupants of the commercial or mercantile concern and the optometrists must be clearly identified to the public. Furthermore, all signs, advertising, and display must be separate from that of the other occupants

and of the commercial or mercantile concern. All advertisements or announcements on the premises of a commercial or mercantile concern shall not make references which could reasonably convey the impression that the optometric practice is controlled by or part of the commercial or mercantile concern.

Helpful Links:

[Washington Optometry Statutes](#)

[Washington Optometry Regulations](#)

[Washington Dispensing Opticians Statutes](#)

[Washington Dispensing Opticians Regulations](#)

## West Virginia

The laws and regulations of West Virginia do not directly address prescription requirements for eyeglasses or record keeping requirements.

Business entities, such as an association, company, corporation, limited partnership, limited liability company, or other entity owned by a licensed optometrist, may not render any service or engage in any activity which constitutes the practice of optometry except through a licensed practitioner. However, business entities may sell or manufacture prescription eyeglasses in a permanently established place of business if they do not practice nor attempt to practice optometry.

Helpful Links:

[West Virginia Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Wisconsin

A prescription is a written order that contains the specifications for ophthalmic materials for a particular patient for the purpose of treating the refractive or functional abilities of the visual system or the enhancement of visual performance. A prescription must be signed by a licensed

optometrist and have the words "lens prescription" written or typed on its face. When a prescription changes or becomes outdated, an optometrist should print or stamp on the face of the prescription: "Warning: This lens prescription may be outdated and may not be relied upon for proper fit and correction," or "Warning: This lens prescription expires on \_\_\_\_\_, and may not be relied upon after this date for a proper fit or correction," or "Expired."

Patient records must be maintained for at least 6 years and contain the: (1) name and date of birth of the patient; (2) date of examination and examination findings, including a clear and legible record of the tests performed, the results obtained, the prescription ordered and the patient's far and near visual acuity obtained with the prescription ordered; (3) date of the prescription; (4) lens verification of lenses dispensed, including the date of verification and identification of the person verifying the lenses; (5) name, signature and license number of the examining optometrist.

Before eyeglasses are delivered to a patient, an optometrist must verify (or ascertain that a delegate of the optometrist has verified) the accuracy with which the prescription of the lenses dispensed by the optometrist or the optometrist's employer is compounded. The optometrist must record the verification.

Helpful Links:  
[Wisconsin Optometry Statutes and Regulations](#)

## Wyoming

The laws and regulations of Wyoming do not directly address prescription requirements for eyeglasses or record keeping requirements.

Helpful Links:  
[Wyoming Optometry Statutes](#)  
[Wyoming Optometry Regulations](#)

## District of Columbia

In the District of Columbia, a prescription for eyeglasses expires 1 year after the issue date unless there is a medical reason that warrants a prescription for less than 1 year. These medical reasons should be documented in the patient's medical record. Optometrists must maintain a record for each patient that accurately reflects the evaluation and treatment of the patient. These records must be kept for at least 7 years.

Helpful Links:  
[District of Columbia Optometry Regulations](#)