

## FAQs

### Consumer FAQs

**Q: What is the difference between an optometrist, ophthalmologist, and an optician? A:** Doctors of optometry (i.e. OD's) are independent primary health care providers who examine, diagnose, treat (if TPA certified) and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associated structures. Optometrists are highly educated and trained to diagnose disease and pathological conditions manifested in the human eye, such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. An ophthalmologist is a physician who specializes in diagnosing and treating eye diseases. They also perform eye surgery and may prescribe corrective lenses. An optician fills prescription orders written by optometrists and ophthalmologists.

**Q: Can I have my prescription for eyeglasses? A:** Yes. According to a Federal Trade Commission ruling, optometrists are required to give a patient a copy of his or her prescription immediately following an eye exam.

**Q: Can I have my prescription for contact lenses? A:** Yes. The Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act, effective, February 4, 2004, requires an optometrist to release the contact lens prescription to the patient immediately following an eye exam and the contact lens fitting. A contact lens fitting is defined to mean the process beginning after an initial eye examination and ending when a successful fit has been achieved or, in the case of a renewal prescription, ending when it is determined that no change in prescription is required.

### Optometrist FAQs

**Q: How long does it take to become licensed? A:** The Board meets quarterly and reviews applications for licensure. All applications and supporting documents must be completed online in the e-License system (<https://elicense.ohio.gov>) one month prior to the board meeting.

**Q: How do I change my address? A:** Once you have set-up your online profile in the e-License system, you can update your address at any time. You must notify the board of any address changes.

**Q: How many hours of CE are required and what is the timeframe for obtaining CE? A:** Annually, on or before the twentieth day of October, every licensed optometrist, except as exempted in section 4725.16 of the Revised Code, as a prerequisite for license renewal, shall file with the executive director of the board proof of attendance for twenty-five clock hours which includes ten clock hours of instruction in pharmacology of board approved continuing education during the study compliance year. A service request can be completed in the e-License system to request an audit once the 25 hours is complete. The licensee may utilize the OE Tracker Program and request the Board staff conduct an online continuing education audit without submitting the course certificates.

The study compliance year shall extend from October first through September thirtieth for the subsequent license renewal year beginning January first and ending December thirty-first. Credit will be allowed only for the study compliance year in which the educational course was actually attended.

**Q: What continuing education is acceptable for license renewal? A:** To be acceptable, the continuing education must be sponsored by a state, regional (multi-state like SECO) or national optometric association, an accredited school of optometry or an accredited school of medicine, COPE, and other Board approved courses of study.

**Q: Other than lecture classes, what other method can one use to complete acceptable continuing education for license renewal? A:** You can choose to take ten hours annually from one of the following as long as the education is sponsored by a board-approved sponsor: 10 hours from the internet; or CD Rom; or correspondence; or audio digest, or a combination equal to 10 hours.

**Q: Can CE be carried over to the next renewal? A:** No.

**Q: Can I transfer a patients records and how long am I responsible for their records? A:** Upon retirement or termination of practice, patient records may be transferred to another therapeutic certified optometrist for custody. Patients should be notified of the transfer of records and also informed that the records can be forwarded to an optometrist of their choice. A reasonable charge may be made for copying lengthy records. If a therapeutic certified optometrist is retiring or terminating a practice and elects to retain his/her patient records, the optometrist shall notify current patients of the need to find another optometrist. Then with proper patient authorization, the vision records should be released to the designated optometrist. If the patient does not request that the records be transferred to another optometrist, **the records shall be retained for at least seven years by the optometrist or an authorized custodian.**

**Q: What happens to patient records when I terminate practice at a leased location?**

A: A therapeutic certified optometrist who is departing from a practice at a leased location may allow copies of his/her patient lens prescriptions and records to remain at the office he/she is leasing. This will benefit the doctor's former patients who wish to return to the same location for their future eyewear. The departing therapeutic certified optometrist shall not release full patient records to any non-licensed individual, unless the patient provides written authorization to the optometrist.

**Q: How do I apply for a DEA application? A:** The number to call for a DEA mid-level practitioner application is 1-800-882-9539 or you can go online to register at: **[www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov)**.

**Q: Can I put my license in inactive status? A:** Yes. Application for inactive status shall consist of a written notice prior to December 31st of the current licensing year to the Board of the optometrist's intention to no longer practice in this state.