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**NOTICE OF ADOPTION A POLICY STATEMENT**

**Title of Policy Statement:** Best Practices for Eye Exams

**Issuing Entity:** Board of Optometry

**Subject Matter:** To clarify best practices optometrists when performing eye examinations

**Effective Date:** June 7, 2019

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OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
FILED

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**TIME: 1:45 PM**

**WSR 19-14-068**

# **Policy Statement**

<i>Title:</i>	Best Practices for Eye Examinations	<i>Number: OD 18-02</i>
<i>References:</i>	WAC 246-851-520, Chapter 18.195 RCW and Chapter 18.54 RCW	
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<i>Effective Date:</i>	June 7, 2019	
<i>Supercedes:</i>	n/a	
<i>Approved By:</i>	<u>Bob Davis, OD</u> Chair, Board of Optometry	

## **Conclusion**

The Board of Optometry (board) seeks to clarify best practices for optometrists when performing eye examinations as described in chapter 18.195 RCW and WAC 246-851-520.

## **Background**

The role of the board is to ensure public health, safety, and welfare of vision care. As such, the board seeks to clarify appropriate testing necessary to prescribe glasses, contact lenses, and adaptive aids. The board also intends to clarify practices that promote public safety and adhere to rules previously issued by governmental entities.

The Consumer Access to Vision Care Act, RCW 18.195.020(2), defines an “eye examination” as “a testing process administered by a prescriber that includes the process of determining the refractive condition of a patient’s eyes. If requested by the patient, it also determines the appropriateness of contact lenses.” RCW 18.195.020(2). An eye examination is commonly referred to as a comprehensive eye examination.

WAC 246-851-520, which defines a contact lens prescription, refers to a “comprehensive vision and eye health examination”: “A contact lens prescription is a written, signed order from an optometrist to another optometrist, physician, or dispensing optician describing optical and physical characteristics of the contact lenses to be dispensed. It shall be based upon a comprehensive vision and eye health examination, followed by a diagnostic or trial evaluation, and a final evaluation of the contact lens on the eye by a prescribing doctor.”

The board believes that patients will benefit from increased education about the difference between refractive testing and a comprehensive vision and eye health examination.

## Statement

### Comprehensive eye examination

It is the board's position that, where the condition of the patient and the purpose of the examination allow, the best practice for a comprehensive vision and eye health examination includes the following components:

- (1) Case history.
- (2) Visual acuities, O.D., O.S., O.U.
- (3) Binocular, Stereo or Cover test.
- (4) Gross visual fields.
- (5) Pupil examination.
- (6) Extra ocular motility.
- (7) External examination with slit lamp.
- (8) Anterior Chamber assessment.
- (9) Intraocular pressure.
- (10) Internal ophthalmoscopic examination.
- (11) Objective or subjective refraction
- (12) Other tests must be made and recorded as necessary for the visual health and welfare of the patient.

The American Optometric Association Clinical Practice Guidelines define an objective or subjective refraction as a test that is a part of an eye examination performed by an optometric physician<sup>1</sup>.

Refraction testing is ordered and reviewed by the examining optometric physician. A refraction test may be used by the optometric physician to:

- Determine the focusing power of the eye.
- Use as part of the testing when determining a glasses or contact lens prescription.
- Use as part of the testing when determining the health of the eyes.

Following a comprehensive vision and eye health examination, optometrists should record an appropriate diagnosis and treatment plan which conform to the American Optometric Association's clinical guidelines<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> American Optometric Association Optometrical Clinical Practice Guideline, I B.  
<https://www.aoa.org/documents/optometrists/CPG-1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> American Optometric Association Optometrical Clinical Practice Guideline.  
<https://www.aoa.org/documents/optometrists/CPG-1.pdf>