

New Jersey State Board of Optometrists

consumer *brief*

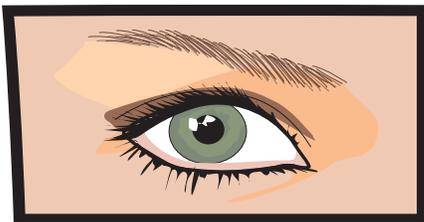
The New Jersey State Board of Optometrists was created to oversee the State's licensed optometrists. The practice of optometry includes:

- examining the eye for disease, such as glaucoma and cataracts;
- checking the visual status of the patient and prescribing correction in the form of glasses or contact lenses when necessary and;
- utilizing ocular pharmaceutical agents for treatment purposes.

There are five optometrists, two public members and one government member appointed by the Governor to three-year terms. In addition to being a New Jersey resident, each professional board member must be an optometrist who has been licensed and practicing for at least five years.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOARD IS:

- to protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of New Jersey;
- to regulate licensed optometrists and the practice of optometry in New Jersey;
- to take action against the unprofessional, improper, unauthorized or unqualified practice of optometry and guard against unprofessional conduct by licensed optometrists.



HOW DOES THE BOARD ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSE?

The Board protects the public by:

- making sure all optometrists who want to practice in New Jersey meet the requirements set by statute;
- investigating and prosecuting optometrists who break the State's consumer protection laws; and
- requiring all optometrists to be licensed and to renew their licenses every two years.

HOW DO OPTOMETRISTS BECOME LICENSED BY THE STATE?

Applicants seeking licensure to practice optometry in New Jersey must pass all sections of the national licensing examination and prove to the Board that they are at least 21 years old and of good moral character.

In addition to a high school diploma, applicants must have graduated from an approved school or college of optometry and have earned the degree of doctor of optometry.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT AN OPTOMETRIST?

Every consumer has a right to file a complaint against an optometrist and may obtain a complaint form by writing to:

New Jersey State Board of Optometrists
124 Halsey Street • P.O. Box 45012
Newark, NJ 07101

You may also download a complaint form at:
NJConsumerAffairs.gov.

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800-242-5846 • New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs
www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov



HOW ARE COMPLAINTS RESOLVED?

If the complaint is within the Board's jurisdiction:

- the complaint may be referred to an investigator who may contact you for additional information;
- the optometrist will be asked to respond to your concerns; and
- the Board will evaluate the complaint and the optometrist's response and determine if the complaint involves a violation of the law.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- If a violation did occur, the Board may issue a reprimand, or revoke or suspend the license of the optometrist. The Board may impose monetary penalties or take other appropriate action.
- During disciplinary proceedings, licensees may be represented by an attorney and are given the right to demonstrate their compliance with the law. Once the Board has taken action against the licensee, he or she has the right to appeal the action.

CONSUMER TIPS

- Before visiting an optometrist, call the Board at 973-504-6440 to make sure the individual is currently licensed and is in good standing.
- The Board can also provide you with any optometrist's date of licensure, license number and the business address.
- Ask if there are any public disciplinary actions the Board has taken against the optometrist. Public actions on file with the Board include: filed complaints from the Attorney General's office, consent orders or final orders imposing the revocation of licenses, and other public disciplinary or remedial actions taken against an optometrist such as a suspension, reprimand, probation or fine.
- If possible, select an optometrist the way you would a physician, lawyer or therapist: ask those you know and trust to make a recommendation.

If you have any questions you may contact the Board at 800-242-5846, or 973-504-6440, or via e-mail at AskConsumerAffairs@lps.state.nj.us.

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General **DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

Consumer Service Center

124 Halsey Street
P.O. Box 45025
Newark, NJ 07101

973-504-6200

800-242-5846
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