

Form 1A : Sight Testing—Client Information Sheet

Your optician is required to provide this information to any client seeking an independent automated refraction (sight test). Before you can proceed, you must review this form (Form 1A) **and** complete Form 1B. These requirements are laid out in the [Opticians Regulation](#) Schedule.

Purpose

Your optician has recommended an automated refraction, commonly referred to as a sight test. This information sheet will highlight what a sight test is and what it is not.

What is a sight test?

A sight test is a refraction conducted for the purpose of determining the refractive error of the eye. In other words, it tests your eyes' ability to focus. The results will help to determine what vision appliance, such as eyeglasses or contact lenses, is most appropriate to correct any deficiencies in your visual acuity—which tools will help you see better. However, a sight test does not include an eye health examination. Therefore, it is only an appropriate option if you need new eyeglasses or contact lenses but are not yet due for your next eye health examination.

What is an eye health examination?

In addition to determining refractive error, an eye health examination looks at the entire eye and visual system. It may detect eye diseases or disorders as well as other systemic health problems. An eye health examination may only be provided by an optometrist or other medical practitioner (e.g., an ophthalmologist).

What do opticians do?

Opticians are regulated health professionals who complete post-secondary education and licensing examinations to support the eye care needs of the public in BC. Opticianry skills may include (but are not limited to):

- Dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses, or low vision aids.
- Promoting proper use of vision appliances.
- Promoting eye health.
- Working collaboratively with other eye care professionals.
- Conducting independent automated refractions (sight testing).

The opticians who conduct sight tests have received additional training for this skill and must be certified by the College of Opticians of British Columbia to provide the service to the public.

Who can receive a sight test?

There are limits and conditions on who may receive a sight test. These limits are stated in the Opticians Regulation—a provincial law that opticians must adhere to. Healthy adults aged 19 to 64 can receive a sight test. If you are under 19 or 65 or older, or have a history of the eye conditions or diseases listed below, you cannot receive a sight test unless an optometrist or other medical practitioner has already performed an eye health examination on you and has subsequently requested that a sight test be provided.

If you are 19 or older, you may only receive a sight test if you have had at least one eye health examination since turning 19. If you are aged 40 to 64, you may only receive a sight test if you have had at least one eye health examination since turning 40.

You cannot receive a sight test if you are currently experiencing or have a history of any of the following:

1. glaucoma
2. retinal detachment
3. macular degeneration
4. diplopia (double vision)
5. a prescription for corrective lenses containing prism
6. refractive error exceeding plus or minus 6.00 dioptres in either eye
7. diabetes
8. hypertension
9. recent head trauma
10. injury or pain occurring to or in either eye within the previous 3 months

For more information on sight testing eligibility, ask your optician.

What can I expect after a sight test?

After the service is complete, your optician will prepare an assessment record that details your sight-test results and your pupillary distance (PD) at the time of the refraction. This assessment record can be used by any optician to make eyeglasses or to dispense contact lenses after a contact lens fitting. An optician may use their discretion or follow their business's policies when determining whether they can use another optician's assessment record to make your eyewear. Some optical locations may require you to have had an eye examination.

An assessment record is not the same as a prescription. A prescription for eyewear is a record created by an optometrist or other medical professional after completion of an eye health examination.

There are some exceptions. Depending on the results of your assessment, you may not be eligible to have an assessment record generated, and you may need to see an optometrist for an eye health examination before new eyeglasses can be dispensed to you. These exceptions are outlined in the Opticians Regulation—a provincial law that opticians must adhere to. Ask your optician for more information.

The fee for sight-testing varies by business, but the assessment record that your optician produces is free (for the first copy). The assessment record must be provided whether or not you request it.

If you are not eligible to receive your assessment record, the optician cannot charge you for the sight testing service.

How often should I get an eye health examination?

The ideal frequency of eye health examinations varies from person to person; your family doctor, optometrist, or ophthalmologist can advise you on how often is right for you. Your optician can arrange for you to have an eye health examination with an optometrist, or, if you require specialist care, your family doctor can refer you to a medical doctor specializing in eye health (an ophthalmologist).

Looking out for you

The College of Opticians of British Columbia (COBC) is the regulatory college for all opticians in BC. COBC establishes qualifications for opticians and works to ensure that opticians are providing competent and effective care. If you have questions or comments about the sight testing procedure, please contact us at 604-742-6472 or reception@cobc.ca.