

SPOTLIGHT ON STANDARD 11 – DELEGATION AND SUPERVISION

Standard 11 describes how an optician must take responsibility and accountability for opticianry services provided by personnel who are working under their supervision or to whom they have delegated tasks.

Case Study #1

An unregulated staff member at your store dispensed eyeglasses to a child.

When the parents and child first came in for service, you—the optician on staff—delegated the eyeglass dispensing to a sales associate who is an unregulated staff member. A few months after receiving the eyeglasses, the family has now returned to the optical store to complain.

The parents indicate that their child has refused to wear the eyeglasses. They tell you that they booked a follow-up exam with a paediatric ophthalmologist, who discovered that the axis of the right lens was off by 90 degrees. The parents are upset about the error made by your optical store. They request that new lenses be made, free of charge. They also want a refund for the eyeglasses that were dispensed.

You review the client record and find that the unregulated staff member entered the prescription into the system incorrectly. You take new measurements for the child and note this in the client record. You take accountability for the dispensing and offer to remake the eyeglasses. You explain your store's refund policy to the parents.

After the family leaves, you communicate the issues to the unregulated staff member who completed the dispensing. You review the process for dispensing, including verification. Specifically, you remind the unregulated staff member that verification must include an inspection and confirmation that the specifications in the prescription have been met, and that this must occur before the product is supplied to the client.

Case Study #2

A returning customer has come back to refill his contact lens order 6 months after his last contact lens exam and purchase.

The client requests a refill of 6 months' worth of contact lenses from a sales associate, who is an unregulated staff member and student. The student reviews the client record and finds that they conducted the original contact lens fit under your supervision.

The student asks the client how he is doing with the contact lenses and whether he has noticed any changes. The client says that his eyes feel uncomfortable after a few hours of wear, and they sting at times. The student then asks more in-depth questions, like how often the client changes his contact lenses and what his contact lens cleaning routine looks like. They learn that the client sometimes wears his contact lenses for over a month at a time, and that his eyes are stinging more than usual lately.

The student requests your input. As the contact lens fitter, you determine that the client is due for a 6-month contact lens check to ensure that his eyes are still healthy. You are confident that the student can complete the check under your supervision, so you observe. The student finds Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis (GPC) under the client's lids. The student explains the findings to the client and advises him that he needs to stop wearing his contact lenses for a month and then return for another follow-up before the refill contact lenses can be ordered. You listen carefully to the student's explanation to ensure it is accurate and not missing important information. In the client record, the student documents the client's request for a refill, the contact lens check, and the results of the check, as well as the refusal to refill and the reasons for the refusal. You review the record for accuracy.

What criteria from Standard 11: Delegation and Supervision were considered in the above case studies?

11.1 Delegate unrestricted activities to unregulated staff and provide direction as necessary.

11.2 Communicate with the client about the roles, responsibilities, and reserved titles of the different personnel in the practice environment.

11.4 When supervising or delegating tasks to a student or unregulated staff member, maintain responsibility for that individual's professional actions and the consequences of those actions.

11.6 Adhere to all signed supervision agreements.

11.8 Regularly monitor the delivery and documentation of services by students and unregulated staff to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

11.9 As a contact lens fitter, supervise contact lens fittings conducted by personnel who are not contact lens fitters, as required by the Opticians Regulation.

For more information on the standards, please review our new Standards of Practice page on our website.