

**Alabama Board of Optometry
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**Responsibly resuming routine eye and vision care in your optometry practice:
Minimizing health risks for patients and staff.**

The state-wide order suspending routine/elective health care expires at 5:00 PM on April 30, 2020.

A careful, gradual approach to full operation is recommended so that physical distancing measures and limitations on gatherings may be maintained to thwart a repeat acceleration of disease transmission. Licensees are urged to review information at the governor's website (governor.alabama.gov) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) website (alabamapublichealth.gov) for up-to-date information.

Important Issues

Maintaining Patient and Staff Safety

Awareness of Clinic/Office Capacity

Respecting Social Distancing Guidelines

Maintaining Ambulatory Clinic Hygiene Practices

Licensees should review their methods of practice to insure patient and staff safety. As examples, consider these points:

Beginning of each day:

Screen staff for wellbeing, record temperature.

Staff with significant comorbidities should stay at home, consider telecommuting.

Patient scheduling:

Patients are specifically scheduled to avoid simultaneous arrivals.

Patients are advised to travel to the clinic/office with a minimum number of companions.

Appointment confirmation calls and, on day of service, screen patients for:

Fever, recent fever, cough, or flu-like symptoms? Postpone visit, advise to see PCP.

History of chronic respiratory disease or immunocompromised? If so, advise routine care to be postponed.

If available online, have patient print and complete “paperwork” before travelling to clinic/office.

At patient’s arrival:

Patient calls clinic/office, staff opens door for them (minimizing surface contacts).

Verify patient identity health status, check patient (and companion) temperature.

If any fever, advise them to contact their PCP, do not enter clinic/office.

Patient (and companion) are sent directly to exam room for the evaluation.

Patient (and companion) advised to wear mask in accordance with CDC/ADPH recommendations.

If there is need to utilize reception area, remove magazines, separate chairs.

Provide tissues and touch-free waste containers.

In the examination room:

Maintain proper clinical hygiene and infection control procedures per CDC guidelines.

Doctor wears mask, eye protection (and/or slit lamp face shield), hands washed, disposable gloves utilized, in accordance with CDC/ADPH recommendations.

After examination, instruments properly disinfected, disposables processed, hands washed.

In the dispensary:

Clinic staff wears mask and disposable gloves in accordance with CDC/ADPH recommendations.

Frames are handled minimally, those handled are separated for disinfection.

After frame selection, hands are washed, lab orders completed, accounting procedures performed, signatures obtained.

Patient departs, shared surfaces disinfected, all handled frames disinfected, and hands washed.

Attire considerations:

Clinic staff should wear clothing that launders well in a washing machine (e.g. scrubs are ideal). Items that are considered potential disease vectors, such as white coats, neck ties, and jewelry, should be avoided.

At end of day, personnel should change from clinic attire, separating it for cleaning.

It is recommended that licensees develop contingency plans in case they, or staff members, are exposed to COVID-19.

Alabama licensees are advised to monitor:

Alabama Department of Public Health (<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/index.html>),
Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/>),
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (<https://www.cms.gov/>), and
Alabama Board of Optometry (<http://optometry.alabama.gov/>)
American Optometric Association (<https://www.aoa.org/coronavirus>)

websites for up-to-date information.

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