

Health Regulation Department



Regulation for  
Optical Center and Optometry Services

- 2016 -

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## Acknowledgment

Dubai Health Authority (DHA) is pleased to present the Regulation for Optical Center and Optometry Services, which represents a milestone towards fulfilling the DHA strategic objective to improve quality standards in health facilities.

This regulation emphasis on the responsibilities of health facilities and healthcare professional providing optometry services in the Emirate of Dubai. It also provides information and requirements to maintain the highest degree of professionalism, adhere to ethical codes governing the profession and focus on competent delivery of safe quality provision of optometry services based on United Arab Emirates (UAE) federal laws and the best international practices. This document provides a base for the Health Regulation Department (HRD) to assess the optometry services provided in the Emirate of Dubai.

HRD developed this document in collaboration with Subject Matter Experts (SME) whose contributions have been invaluable. HRD would like to gratefully acknowledge these professionals and thank them for their dedication to quality in health and their commitment in undertaking such a complex task in short time.

**The Health Regulation Department  
Dubai Health Authority**

## I. Scope

This document applies to any health facility and healthcare professionals subject to licensure under the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) establishment law providing optometry services, which include governmental and semi-governmental, private and health facilities operating in free zone areas.

DHA reserves the right to amend the Regulation for Optical Center and Optometry Services stipulated herein without prior notice. The latest version of this document shall be published on the DHA website [www.dha.gov.ae](http://www.dha.gov.ae).

## II. Purpose

DHA is the sole responsible entity for regulating, licensing and monitoring all health facilities and healthcare professionals in the Emirate of Dubai. The development of this document aims to establish the minimum requirements for optical centers and optometry services in the Emirate of Dubai and to ensure the provision of the highest level of safety and quality care for patients at all times.

## III. Definitions

**Dispensing optician** is an allied healthcare professional who adapts and fits corrective eyewear, as prescribed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

**Disabled people** shall mean people with personal condition(s) or situation(s) that could make it difficult for them to participate fully in their health care. It includes individuals with disabilities such as (physical, intellectual or sensory), age affected (either elderly or very young), affected by trauma or affected by medications/ drugs.

**Eye examination** shall be defined as tests performed by an ophthalmologist (medical doctor), optometrist or orthoptist that measures an individual's eye health and vision to detect any abnormalities and determine the visual status of the person.

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**Healthcare professional** shall mean healthcare personal working in healthcare facilities and required to be licensed as per the applicable laws in United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**Licensure** shall be defined as the process of issuing a license to operate a health facility by an individual, government, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or other forms of business operations that are legally responsible for the facility's operation.

**Optometrist** is a primary healthcare professional for the eye concerned especially with examining the eye for refractive error problems and prescribing spectacle lenses, contact lenses and low vision rehabilitation to correct these related problems.

**Orthoptist** is an allied health care professional uniquely trained to evaluate and manage childhood and adult eye movement abnormalities.

**Optometry** is the health-care profession concerned especially with examining the eye for defects and faults of refraction, with prescribing correctional lenses or eye exercises, with diagnosing diseases of the eye, and with treating such diseases or referring them for treatment.

#### IV. Acronyms

|             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>ARTG</b> | : | Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods |
| <b>CE</b>   | : | Conformité Européenne                    |
| <b>DCD</b>  | : | Dubai Civil Defence                      |
| <b>DED</b>  | : | Dubai Economic Department                |
| <b>DHA</b>  | : | Dubai Health Authority                   |
| <b>DM</b>   | : | Dubai Municipality                       |
| <b>FDA</b>  | : | Food and Drug Administration             |
| <b>HRD</b>  | : | Health Regulation Department             |
| <b>PQR</b>  | : | Professionals Qualification Requirements |
| <b>PM</b>   | : | Preventive Maintenance                   |
| <b>MOH</b>  | : | Ministry of Health                       |
| <b>UAE</b>  | : | United Arab Emirates                     |

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Optometry services can be provided in an independent health facility (Optical Center) or can be part of a licensed health facility having an ophthalmology service.

## 2. Independent optic center licensure procedures

- 2.1. A person or entity intending to establish independent “Optical Center” shall obtain a license from Dubai Health Authority (DHA) to operate and provide optometry services.
- 2.2. The applicant must submit an application through the online licensing system to the Health Regulation Department (HRD) along with all necessary documents, which are as follows:
  - 2.2.1. Copy of Land Registration Certificate issued by Dubai Municipality (DM) showing the land plot number, and permission of using the land for the commercial activity either DM or the free-zone licensing authority (when applicable)
  - 2.2.2. Schematic design drawings in AutoCAD format showing the proposed floor layout with measurement and label for each area
  - 2.2.3. Passport photocopy of the owner with residency visa for non-locals (when applicable)
  - 2.2.4. United Arab Emirate (UAE) identity card (when applicable).
- 2.3. On approval of the application, an Initial Approval letter with defined activities will be issued by the HRD. This letter will be required to obtain licensing by the Dubai Economic Department (DED) or equivalent licensing bodies.
- 2.4. Final inspection (Pre-operation assessment)
  - 2.4.1. The applicant shall submit an online request for final inspection, upon which the HRD shall conduct an onsite pre-operational assessment.
  - 2.4.2. To obtain the DHA license, the applicant must meet the following:
    - 2.4.2.1. Appoint a DHA licensed dispensing optician or an optometrist holding a valid eligibility letter issued by DHA
    - 2.4.2.2. Employ and license qualified optometry staff as per the functional program of the facility

- 2.4.2.3. The walls floors and doors shall have contrast colours to reduce the risks of falls by patients with blurred vision
- 2.4.2.4. Selected flooring surfaces shall be easy to maintain, readily cleanable, slip-resistant and appropriately wear-resistant for the location
- 2.4.2.5. Based on the anticipated special needs patients the health facility should provide access to optometry services.
- 2.4.2.6. Keep floors, work surfaces and other areas clean and neat
- 2.4.2.7. Maintain adequate lighting and utilities
- 2.4.2.8. Designate specific areas for general storage of supplies and equipment
- 2.4.2.9. A “No Smoking” sign must be visibly displayed in the facility
- 2.4.2.10. First aid kit shall be labelled and provided in the optical center
- 2.4.2.11. The applicant should develop standard operating procedures to govern all administrative functions and optometry services including, but not limited to:
  - a. Patient assessment and care planning
  - b. Health record documentation methodology
  - c. Access and transfer of patient data and/or health records including use of electronic health records
  - d. Training program for optometry staff.
- 2.4.2.12. The applicant should display the facility safety plan and install fire safety equipment to comply with the fire safety requirements by the Dubai Civil Defence (DCD) Department.
- 2.4.3. Based on the result of the onsite pre-operational assessment and after meeting the DHA requirements, the health facility management shall add the required healthcare professionals to the Optical Center upon which DHA license will be issued by the HRD.
- 2.4.4. However, in case of non-compliance or any modification recommendations an online report will be issued within five (5) working days. The health facility



management is required to act accordingly and schedule another pre-operational assessment visit.

- 2.4.5. HRD shall issue the facility license, the DHA license shall state the name and address of the health facility, the DED license number, the period of licensure validity and the service licensed to provide in the health facility.

For DHA licensing services, refer to DHA website [www.dha.gov.ae](http://www.dha.gov.ae).

### **3. Requirements to add optometric services to existing health facilities**

- 3.1. Existing health facilities providing ophthalmology services shall submit an application to HRD for permission to provide the optometry services. The application shall consist of:
  - 3.1.1. Proposal letter on the facility letter head signed by the owner
  - 3.1.2. Undertaking letter signed by the owner to add the service
  - 3.1.3. Schematic design drawings in AutoCAD format showing the proposed floor layout of the health facility and the optometry area.
- 3.2. Upon receipt of a complete application, the HRD shall verify accuracy and completeness of the information provided and review the application to ensure compliance with the DHA requirements.
- 3.3. The HRD shall decide the need for an onsite inspection based on the submitted documents and functional program of the optometry services, accordingly HRD shall issue an approval for adding the service.
- 3.4. In case of application rejection, a detailed list of issues will be provided for corrective action.

### **4. Management responsibilities**

- 4.1. Ensure DHA license is visibly displayed in the health facility.
- 4.2. Ensure that all healthcare professionals maintain an active DHA license with malpractice insurance.
- 4.3. Ensure that enough optometry staff is available to provide the service during the facility working hours.
- 4.4. Ensure that the facility environment is clean and safe.

4.5. Ensure non-availability of expired lenses and solutions.

## 5. Optical center space requirement

5.1. The facility shall have the following:

5.1.1. Display area shall have shelves or cupboards to display optical frames, glasses and lenses.

5.1.2. Eye examination room shall:

5.1.2.1. Have a minimum floor area of 7.5 square meters. Smaller floor areas shall be approved upon submitting appropriate justification

5.1.2.2. Have an examination chair, which shall be placed not less than three (3) meters away from the sight chart or according to the manufacture's recommendation

5.1.2.3. Have a counter or table for writing

5.1.2.4. Have a hand-washing station with a hands free operating tap, liquid or foam soap dispensers, a hand sanitizer dispenser and provisions for hand drying at the hand-washing station(s)

5.1.2.5. Not permit entry of light during eye examination

5.1.2.6. Be oriented to provide patient privacy.

5.1.3. Storage for all the optical devices.

## 6. Healthcare professional requirements

6.1. The optical center shall employ sufficient number of dispensing opticians or optometrists to meet the functional requirement of the optometry services.

6.2. Optometry services in ophthalmology clinics shall employ sufficient number of optometry staff to meet the functional requirement of the services.

6.3. All healthcare professionals shall hold an active DHA license as per the Professionals Qualification Requirements (PQR) and work within their scope of practice.

6.4. All healthcare professionals shall wear clean uniforms, display name badges or DHA license during working hours.

- 6.5. Healthcare professionals working in optical centers should be aware of their ethical responsibilities and comply with the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, which is governed by the principle of patient centeredness.

For further information regarding the DHA licensing procedures and requirements, visit Health Regulation in DHA website [www.dha.gov.ae](http://www.dha.gov.ae).

## 7. Prescribing and dispensing of optical devices

- 7.1. An ophthalmologist or optometrist shall prescribe the optical devices and lenses. A dispensing optician dispenses the optical devices prescribed.
- 7.2. All prescriptions should have the following details but not limited to:
- 7.2.1. Facility name, address and DHA licence number at which examination has been conducted
- 7.2.2. Patient identification including but not limited to; name, record number or emirates identity card number
- 7.2.3. Prescriber name, DHA license number and signature
- 7.2.4. Date of test
- 7.2.5. Main reason for the visit
- 7.2.6. Ocular history
- 7.2.7. Family ocular history.
- 7.3. Validity of prescription
- 7.3.1. Prescriptions are valid for one (1) year.
- 7.3.2. Prescriptions shall be saved as either a hard copy or soft copy in the database for future reference.
- 7.3.3. The patient shall produce a valid prescription in order to be dispensed optical devices.
- 7.3.4. Optical devices could be dispensed without prescription in exceptional circumstances, such as when duplicating a recent and existing pair of spectacles.

## 8. Equipment management

- 8.1. Functional, accurate and safe equipment is an essential requirement in the provision of optometry services and the type of equipment shall meet functional program of the health facility. Some of the equipment that could be found at an optical center are listed below:
  - 8.1.1. Retinoscope
  - 8.1.2. Direct Ophthalmoscope
  - 8.1.3. Slitlamp
  - 8.1.4. Keratometers/Autorefractometers
  - 8.1.5. Trails lenses with Trail Frame or Phoroptors
  - 8.1.6. Testing charts.
- 8.2. The Ministry of Health (MOH) in the UAE shall register the equipment used for optometry services.
- 8.3. Equipment used should be approved by the following or equivalent bodies:
  - 8.3.1. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - 8.3.2. Conformité Européene (CE)
  - 8.3.3. Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG).
- 8.4. Equipment shall be installed and operated in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- 8.5. Instructions of the equipment manufacturer must be followed in performing the cleansing or priming procedure prior to commencing any examination. The manufacturer should recommend cleansing solution used.
- 8.6. The facility shall maintain the following:
  - 8.6.1. Operating and safety manuals for equipment
  - 8.6.2. Maintenance log books for equipment.
- 8.7. Preventive maintenance (PM) of equipment shall be maintained, documented and signed.
- 8.8. All necessary parts should be changed as per manufacturer's instructions, documented and signed.
- 8.9. Eye lenses set shall be kept clean and in good condition.

- 8.10. Computer used for eye measures should be calibrated according to manufacturers' requirements.
- 8.11. Out of service equipment shall be clearly marked.
- 8.12. Healthcare professionals providing optometry services shall be trained to operate the equipment assigned to them. Training should include the following aspects but not limited to :
  - 8.12.1. Fundamentals of ophthalmic lenses dispensing
  - 8.12.2. Entrance tests
  - 8.12.3. Objective & subjective refraction
  - 8.12.4. Binocular vision assessments & functional tests
  - 8.12.5. Bio-microscopy slit-lamp
  - 8.12.6. Keratometry & contact lens fitting for soft/hard, toric & multifocal.
- 8.13. Operating new equipment
  - 8.13.1. Orientation programs for new recruited staff
  - 8.13.2. Equipment management and failure.

## **9. Fire safety and security management**

- 9.1. The health facility shall ensure all signs for fire routes are clearly noticeable and marked.
- 9.2. There should be evacuation maps posted in the facility to indicate current locations marked with "You are here".
- 9.3. The health facility shall maintain fire extinguishers, fire protection equipment as per the DCD requirements and ensure equipment are working properly.
- 9.4. The health facility shall abide with the fire prevention and safety measures required by DCD.

## **10. Infection prevention**

- 10.1. Hygiene procedures and precautions shall be in place, up-to-date and accessible to prevent exposure and reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases within the eye examination area.

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- 10.2. Chinrests and headrests on slit lamps, field screeners, keratometers, auto refractors, or any other equipment should be cleaned with a sterile wipe before use by each patient.
  - 10.3. The bridge and sides of trial frames and forehead and cheek rests of auto refractor and slit-lamp heads are cleaned anew for each patient.
  - 10.4. Items coming into contact with a patient's eye shall not be reused.
  - 10.5. Diagnostic solutions such as sterile saline or contact lens soaking solutions shall be clearly marked with the date first used and stored with caps on and not used beyond the recommended dates.

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