

**From:** Brownlowod  
**Sent:** Friday, April 02, 2004 8:33 AM  
**To:** CONTACTLENSRULE  
**Subject:** Contact Lens Rule

Good day.

As Executive Director of the Wisconsin Optometric Association since 1990, I have received many reports from our member doctors of optometry regarding contact lenses being supplied to consumers without legal prescriptions. In many cases, doctors have been contacted by a contact lens supplier, with the supplier using one way communication, such as fax, asking confirmation of a prescription for a patient who had never even been in the doctor's office. In other cases, the patient had been seen by the doctor months or even years earlier, had never been fit for contact lenses and yet the supplier was seeking confirmation of a prescription. In other cases, the patient had been fit for contact lenses by the doctor years earlier, the prescription had expired and the patient had not returned for follow-up or refitting.

In many of these cases, the doctor is left with no means to stop the supply of the contact lenses. In other words, the options provided via the fax do not include an option that fits the situation. For example, an option might be that the doctor refuses to verify the prescription, when in reality the option should be 'I am not aware of the existence of a valid contact lens prescription for this patient.'

Other reports I have received probably are similar to those you have already received, such as patients receiving several years' supply of contact lenses from a prescription that clearly lists an expiration date or a limit on refills. That practice puts the patient in danger, of course, as the patient is likely to avoid eye health check ups as long as he/she has lenses to wear.

The contact lens is a medical device, of course, but what is often lost in the discussion is that the human eye is very vulnerable to damage, with damage often occurring without the patient being aware. Improperly supplied contact lenses, whether from a doctor's error or from a supplier who never completed a proper fitting, can and do cause damage to a person's eye health and vision.

It is critical that the rules that are created to provide the working details for the contact lens law are written to place major emphasis upon protecting eye health in all contact lens consumers. The argument can be cloaked in side issues such as consumerism and free enterprise, but concern for the patients' /consumers' eye health must be paramount.

Eye doctors have been dedicated to such protection for well over one hundred years. It is very depressing for us to see those efforts degraded in the name of lower prices and consumer access. The vast majority of doctors willingly and quickly provide contact lens prescriptions to their patients when it is proper to do so. The doctors were following the law long before it was enacted, in most cases. It's time now for all involved, doctors, consumers and suppliers, to dedicate themselves to following the rules, especially written and unwritten rules for protecting every American's eye health.

Thank you.

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