

FAXED OPHTHALMIC PRESCRIPTIONS NOW AUTHORIZED

Board Rules 279.2 and 279.4 have been amended to allow an optometrist to fax (to a dispenser or optician) a prescription for contact lenses or glasses. This amendment was made possible by new legislation regarding faxed documents which became effective on January 1, 2002. Prior to faxing an original signed prescription, words to the effect of "by fax" need to be written on the prescription.

Regarding a prescription for contact lenses, the amended section of Rule 279.2 reads:

- (e) An optometrist or therapeutic optometrist may issue a prescription in the following manner:
- (1) giving or delivering an original signed copy of the prescription to the patient or to another person when requested by the patient,
 - (2) faxing an original signed prescription to a person authorized to fill the prescription. When faxing a prescription, the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist shall write "by fax" or similar wording on the original prescription prior to faxing;
 - (3) transmitting a complete prescription as defined in this section, to a person authorized to fill the prescription, by email or other computerized electronic means. When transmitting a prescription by computerized electronic means, including e-mail, the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist shall attach a digital signature in a commonly recognized format*. The computerized electronic transmission shall also include the office address and license number of the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist; or
 - (4) under the Contact Lens Prescription Act, if the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist determines that the patient needs an emergency refill of the contact lens prescription, the prescription may be telephoned to a person authorized to fill the prescription.

Regarding a prescription for spectacles, the amended section of Rule 279.4 reads:

- (b) An optometrist or therapeutic optometrist may issue a duplicate prescription in the following manner:
- (1) giving or delivering an original signed copy of the prescription to the patient or to another person when requested by the patient,
 - (2) faxing an original signed prescription to a person authorized to fill the prescription. When faxing a prescription, the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist shall write "by fax" or similar wording on the original prescription prior to faxing;
 - (3) transmitting a complete prescription as defined in this section, to a person authorized to fill the prescription, by email or other computerized electronic means. When transmitting a prescription by computerized electronic means, including e-mail, the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist shall attach a digital signature in a commonly recognized format*. The computerized electronic transmission shall also include the office address and license number of the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist; or
 - (4) if the optometrist or therapeutic optometrist determines that the patient needs an emergency refill of the spectacle prescription, the prescription may be telephoned to a person authorized to fill the prescription.

*language from the new legislation. The optometrist and dispenser would both need computer programs that create and attach digital signatures

Important References

- Text of Rules 279.2 and 279.4 (does not include the amendments above): **August 2001 Newsletter**
- Responding to requests from contact lens dispensers (the provisions regarding faxing of prescriptions have been superceded by the amendments above): **December 2000 Newsletter**

If you no longer have these items, they are available on the Board's Website or by calling the Board at 512/305-8500. The current text of any of the Board rules is always available at www.tob.state.tx.us.

This is an important document and should be retained in your permanent files



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING THE FAXING OF PRESCRIPTIONS

The Board Rules have been amended to allow faxing of contact lens and glasses prescriptions. *Please see reverse side*

BOARD WEBSITE

The Board Website, www.tob.state.tx.us, is your source for current information from the Board. Approved continuing education, information on optometric glaucoma specialist application, current rules and proposed amendments, the Texas Optometry Act, past newsletters, and future meeting and exam dates are all available on the Website. Of course this information is also available by telephoning the Board if you do not have access to the Internet.

The Board welcomes your suggestions on additional information to include on the Website. In the future, the Website will include profile information for every licensee, as required by recent legislation. The Board is working with Texas Online to allow license renewals over the Internet. Unfortunately, it appears that this complicated process may take some time to implement.

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