

# Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists

## Privacy Policy

The privacy of personal information is an important principle to *insert your practice name*. We take care in how we collect, store and use your personal information that is collected to be able to meet your visual health needs as your optometrist. This document describes our privacy policies.

### Your Personal Information

Your personal information describes you as an individual. Information that we gather relates to identification (age, gender, home address, phone number, family status, health services identification numbers), health (medical, ocular and family histories including present and past medications and allergies), activities (visual demands, hobbies and recreation) as well as other information that is unique to you that may influence both your visual performance as well as our ability to care for you.

### Our Professional Team

Our team that cares for you begins with our Optometrists and staff. We honor your privacy and will take care of your personal information. Occasionally, there may be other individuals that have access to limited portions of your personal information – this may include computer technicians and consultants, accountants, office security personnel, maintenance trades, building cleaning personnel and lawyers. We restrict access to personal information as best we can, and have assurances from these individuals that they will follow privacy principles.

### Our Reasons for Collecting Personal Information

Our primary purpose for collecting personal information is to provide you with optometric services and care. We gather only the information that is necessary to perform these services in a responsible and professional manner. We may pass on information to other regulated health professionals as is necessary, such as in the case of a referral to an ophthalmologist or family physician – we do so with your consent. The only situation where we may share information without your consent would be in an emergency situation where as a patient, you may not be able to communicate.

There are other situations where we may collect, use and disclose information from your personal file. These include:

- Billing third party payment providers where coverage exists (Blue Cross, Saskatchewan Health, Health Canada, Private Plans)
- Sending practice correspondence to patients such as reminders regarding their next examination.
- Advising patients of upcoming seminars, public health concerns regarding treatments or eye care products, office promotions and changes to office personnel and optometrists.
- As a regulated health profession, evaluation teams from our provincial association may review office records and patient files to ensure a high standard of care and assist in improving practice performance.
- Information may be passed on to agencies to assist in collection of funds related to unpaid bills for optometric services and treatments.

## **Protecting Your Personal Information**

We have taken the following steps to protect your personal information:

- Our employees are trained to collect, use, disclose and destroy personal information in such a manner to fulfill their duties and protect your privacy.
- Paper information is under supervision or stored in a locked or restricted area. There may be information that is transferred within departments in our practice, but we ensure that your information is handled discretely and privately.
- Electronic information is either under supervision or secured in a locked or restricted area. Passwords and appropriate software safeguards are in place to restrict access to information.
- Paper information is transferred through sealed, addressed envelopes or boxes distributed by registered and reputable companies.
- Care is taken to ensure information sent by fax is being sent to the appropriate destination by direct lines.
- Care is taken to ensure verbal communication between you and our staff is in private and in confidence.
- Your personal information is stored in our possession for a minimum of 6 (six) years – by law. Once your information is no longer necessary to our practice, or by law, we dispose of your information through shredding, in the case of paper files, or use a professionally trained source to eliminate any electronic records and information.

## **Access to Your Information**

You are fully entitled to your personal information. If you need a copy of your file or information from your file, please ask. You can expect that within a reasonable time, we will be able to respond to your request. We may ask for this request in writing, and there may be a charge for doing so, depending on how much information is required and how much preparation it may take.

## **Questions?**

In addition to our privacy officer in our practice, you can contact the Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists at the following address:

Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists  
102 -202 Wellman Cres.  
Saskatoon, SK S7T0J1

Toll – free: 1-877-660-3937 Local Dial: (306) 652-2069  
Fax: (306) 652-2642 E-mail: [admin@saosk.ca](mailto:admin@saosk.ca)

Or visit us at our web site at: [www.optometrists.sk.ca](http://www.optometrists.sk.ca)

*The Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists would like to thank the College of Optometrists of Ontario for the use of information, format and text from their Privacy Policy document.*