

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

MEDIATION AND INVESTIGATION

As the Saskatchewan licensing and governing body for optometrists, the Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists (SAO) takes all complaints seriously. Optometric patients have the right to expect professional care from their optometrist. If you have concerns with the professional care you received and are dissatisfied, we recommend you first discuss your concerns with your optometrist. If you are still unsatisfied you are welcome to contact the Executive Director of the SAO at ed@saosk.ca or by calling 306.652.2069 or 1.877.660.3937.

The Executive Director will discuss your complaint with you and will provide you with an overview of the complaint process. If you wish to continue with a formal complaint you must provide the SAO with written authorization to investigate on your behalf. [Click here](#) for the "Report a Complaint" form.

Your written complaint will be referred to the Deputy Registrar who will appoint a Mediator/Investigator within five business days of receiving your complaint. The time to process a complaint varies and all parties are asked to prioritize and conduct the investigation as expediently as possible.

The optometrist involved will be contacted by the Mediator/Investigator and will be provided with a copy of your written complaint. The Deputy Registrar has the authority to withhold the origin of the complaint if it is deemed unnecessary or could cause potential harm to the complainant.

There are times when a complaint can be mediated by mutual agreement by the parties. A written agreement will be prepared for each party's signature and the terms of agreement will be fulfilled. Mutual agreements could include, and not limited to:

- An exchange or financial reimbursement
- A verbal or written apology
- Withdrawal of the complaint providing no other concessions are made

The Mediator/Investigator will prepare and provide to the Deputy Registrar a written account of the investigation or mediation agreement. If there are concerns of the quality of care provided, unprofessional conduct or suspected criminal actions, the Deputy Registrar will recommend the complaint proceed to a judicial hearing. Alternatively, the Mediator/Investigator may determine the optometrists did nothing improper or that the complaint is frivolous and notify the Deputy Registrar. The Mediator/Investigator nor the Deputy Registrar can impose restrictions or disciplinary actions. Only the Discipline Committee following a judicial hearing can impose restitution.

The complainant and the optometrist will be informed of the recommendations and outcome as soon as possible. Either party may request an appeal of the decision. In these cases, the Registrar will be asked to make a ruling or the parties may seek other legal proceedings.