



Notice of Proposed Changes in the Regulations of the Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry

Proposed Regulations - FAQ

August 2026

1. What is the purpose of the proposed regulations? What will these regulations do?

12 AAC 48.315. Standards for delegation of routine duties These new regulations are proposed to be added due to the passage of HB 309, which enables optometrists in Alaska to delegate certain duties, within their scope of practice, to their staff, and will establish a level of supervision required when delegating duties. These changes should not change how an optometrist is practicing, but will provide a formal framework for delegations.

12 AAC 48.330. Unprofessional conduct The changes to this section are proposed to add clarification for when the delegation of services to an agent will be considered unprofessional conduct.

2. Does this bill change the way optometrists practice?

No. HB 309 does not expand the scope of practice for optometrists, nor does it authorize staff to act as optometrists. Instead, it formally clarifies which tasks optometrists are permitted to delegate to qualified support staff. This has been a common practice in clinical settings.

**3. Will this require more time spent on staff training, documentation, and compliance?
What if I do not have a formal training process in place?**

HB 309 adds structure to what has historically been an informal process. This clarification is designed to protect optometrists. Delegation and basic documentation are already best practices in healthcare fields. This bill does not require a complex training program, and optometrists are not expected to develop one. These changes provide flexibility to the optometrist to decide how to train and supervise based on the optometrist's and practice's needs.

4. What are the costs to comply with the proposed regulations?

There are no known costs to comply with the proposed actions.

5. What are the positive and negative consequences of the regulations?

The positive impacts will improve staff engagement with work, trust in optometrists, and a positive impact in public perception and workforce empowerment. There will be better consistency between practices helping to maintain standards of care.

The possible negative impacts would include optometrists having more time away from patients, and more documentation required to remain in compliance with regulations. The public need outweighs any potential negative consequences. By clearly outlining which tasks can be delegated, these changes protect optometrists from liability and ensures patient safety and consistent standards of care.

6. When will the regulations be effective?

After the public comment deadline, comments received are compiled and given to the Board for consideration. The Board may adopt the regulation as written/publicly noticed, may amend and adopt them, choose to take no action, or may withdraw the proposed regulations in part or in its whole. After Board action, the adopted regulations go to Department of Law (DOL) for final review/approval. DOL either approves or disapproves regulations. Once approved by DOL, it goes to the Lt. Governor for filing. Regulation takes effect on the 30th day after they have been filed by the Lt. Governor.

Do you have a question that is not answered here? Please email RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov so it can be added.