

OPHTHALMOLOGIST, OPTOMETRIST OR OPTICIAN?

AB 432 relates to Optometrists only.

A great deal of confusion exists regarding eye care professionals.

An OPHTHALMOLOGIST is a medical doctor (MD) or osteopath (DO) who specializes in eye and vision care. Ophthalmologists perform eye exams, diagnose and treat disease, prescribe medication and perform eye surgery. They also write prescriptions for eyeglasses and contact lenses. An ophthalmologist, in addition to gaining a bachelors degree, must complete four years of medical school, one year of internship, and at least three years of residency (hospital-based training) in the diagnosis and medical and surgical treatment of eye disorders.

An OPTOMETRIST (OD) is an eye doctor who performs comprehensive eye exams, prescribes eyeglasses and contact lenses for vision correction, and provides pre- and post-operative care for patients undergoing LASIK and other eye surgery performed by an ophthalmologist. Optometrists also are trained to diagnose and treat eye infections and other eye problems and diseases, including glaucoma. Some ODs also provide low vision services, vision therapy, and other eye care services. In addition to gaining a bachelor's degree, an optometrist must complete a four-year doctorate program in optometry and many ODs complete a postgraduate residency with advanced study in a specific area of eye care. Optometry is regulated in NRS Ch. 636.

An OPTICIAN is not an eye doctor and therefore cannot perform eye exams; diagnose or treat eye and vision problems; or write prescriptions for eyeglasses, contact lenses, or medications. Opticians fit and sell corrective lenses & eyeglasses prescribed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist; they also fit and sell sunglasses and other non-prescription eyewear. There is no education standard for opticians, but Nevada has specific training and licensure requirements. Opticianry is regulated in NRS Ch. 637.

Resource offered by the Nevada State Board of Optometry. (775) 883-8367 or www.nvoptometry.org