



# Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

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## Division of Professional Regulation

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January 14, 2021

### Guidance for Optometrists Renewing March 2022

On March 9, 2020 Governor JB Pritzker first declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. Governor JB Pritzker again declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area on April 1, 2020; April 30, 2020; May 29, 2020; June 26, 2020; July 24, 2020; August 21, 2020; September 18, 2020; October 16, 2020; November 13, 2020, December 11, 2020 and again on January 8, 2021.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (“Department”), Division of Professional Regulation (the “Division”) is issuing the following Guidance for Optometrists in response to the Illinois Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamations. The Illinois Optometric Practice Act states that no person without a currently valid license issued by the Department shall in any manner hold themselves out to the public as an Optometrist, use the title “Optometrist,” “Doctor of Optometry,” or its equivalent, or offer to render optometry services. **The expiration date for Optometry licensure is March 31, 2022.** A licensee may renew their license during the 60-day period preceding the March 31, 2022 expiration date by paying the required fee and demonstrating compliance with the continuing education requirements as set by rule. Under current rules, 68 Illinois Administrative Code Section 1320.80, in the 24-month period prior to March 31, 2022, Optometrists shall complete 30 hours of approved continuing education (CE). A minimum of 26 hours of the total CE hours required must be obtained through face-to-face, in-person instruction or experience.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has become aware that opportunities for in-person CE courses have diminished and as a result, licensees may not be able to complete their in-person CE requirements. For this reason, the Department has drafted proposed Emergency Rules that will temporarily remove the in-person requirement. The Department intends to submit such rules to go into effect in November 2021, approximately 150 days prior to the March 31, 2022 licensure expiration date. The rules will not be made permanent and will expire by the license expiration date. Until such time, this Guidance should be referenced when determining Optometry CE requirements.

**The Department intends that all 30 CE hours required for the current licensing period beginning April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2022 may be completed online. Online CE hours can be obtained either by live, real-time presentations, or by prerecorded video provided by approved Illinois CE sponsors. All 30 hours may be general CE; no tested (TQ) hours are required for this renewal period.**

This Guidance is in no way intended to waive or modify any statute, rule, or regulation concerning the licensure of or practice of Optometry set forth in the Illinois Optometric Practice Act, 225 ILCS 80, or its Administrative Rules, 68 Ill. Admin. Code 1320.