

Adopted 20 October 2011

Scope of policy

This document conveys the Optometry Board of Australia's (the Board) expectations of optometrists undertaking clinical care regarding infection control practices, including hand hygiene.

Background

The Board's main purpose in regulating optometrists practising in Australia is to protect the public. The Board has published a number of registration standards, codes and guidelines to provide guidance to the profession on the requirements and the expected standards of conduct by optometrists.

The Board's *Code of Conduct* for optometrists specifies that optometrists have a duty to make the care of patients their first concern and to practise safely and effectively.

Effective infection prevention and control is central to providing high-quality healthcare for patients and a safe working environment for all those who work in healthcare settings. All healthcare providers and government have an interest in minimising the risks to patients and associated costs to the healthcare system from poor infection control practices.

Optometrists have an obligation to take reasonable precautions to ensure their patients and staff are not exposed to infection while attending or working at their practice.

Policy

In releasing this policy, the Board intends to raise the awareness of the best practice standards in the prevention and control of infections in healthcare.

The Board expects all optometrists to adhere to the *Infection control guidelines for optometrists*¹.

Additional resources

Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare. 2010, National Health and Medical Research Council. Available at: www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/cd33

Optometrists are encouraged to use the resources and training packages available to health professionals at Hand Hygiene Australia. Available at: www.hha.org.au/home.aspx

¹ 'Infection control guidelines for optometrists' *Clin Exp Optom* 2007;90(6):434-444. Available at: www.optometry.org.au/media/275210/guideline_-_infection_control.pdf