



CAREER OPPORTUNITY

- Job Title:** Paraoptometric Technician (Comparable to Medical Assistant)
- Hours/Week:** 24 to 40 (At the original time of this job posting, there is flexibility)
- Other Information:** Week days
Approx. 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Sometimes 1 evening /month)
Work hours are conveniently arranged around Link Transit bus schedule to and from Wenatchee.
Several employees ride Link Transit or carpool from the Wenatchee region.
- Starting Wage:** Competitive, hourly wage that depends on experience and qualifications.
- How to apply:** Mail resume with personal and professional references to:
Spectrum Eye Care, PO Box 3100, Chelan, WA 98816.

Job Description

Scheduling appointments, recalling patients, handling insurance forms, accepting payments, screening telephone calls, eyewear selection and fitting, ordering prescription eyewear, frame repair and adjusting, taking detailed patient histories, measuring visual acuity, measuring the curvature of the cornea (keratometry), glaucoma screening, blood pressure testing, measuring the distance between the pupils of the eye, obtaining other patient exam information, modifying contact lenses, explaining contact lens care regimens, imaging of the exterior and interior of the eye, performing diagnostic testing associated with eye care, and any other relevant duties that the eye care provider may delegate.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Must I already be a paraoptometric to apply?

No. While it is preferred, it is not required that an applicant be a paraoptometric. Experience in the healthcare field would certainly be beneficial for any applicant, but it is not necessary. An applicant that is already a Medical Assistant could easily learn and be trained in those skills necessary for paraoptometry. Any applicant with a personable, service-focused demeanor and strong work ethic can be trained on the job to become a paraoptometric whether or not they currently possess paraoptometric experience or skills.

2. What is a paraoptometric?

Paraoptometrics are allied health professionals who assist optometrists in providing vision care to patients. Paraoptometrics are allied health personnel who extend the optometrist's capabilities by assuming routine and technical aspects of vision care services. Paraoptometrics are to optometrists what paralegals are to lawyers.

3. What tasks does a paraoptometric perform?

Depending upon experience, training and delegated responsibilities, paraoptometrics perform a variety of duties such as front desk procedures, billing and coding of insurance claims, and patient scheduling. Under the supervision of an optometrist, paraoptometrics may also perform more clinical duties such as pre-testing patients, contact lens procedures, and ophthalmic optics and dispensing of eyewear. Front office procedures, chair-side assisting, pre-testing, contact lens instruction, frame styling and fitting, and vision therapy are just a few more of the many duties paraoptometrics perform for both patients and staff.

As a part of the vision care team, paraoptometrics help build patient confidence while working directly with an optometrist. A majority of optometrists utilize three or more paraoptometrics in the office. Well-trained personnel build an office-patient relationship that is not only invaluable to the optometrist, but also ensures patient satisfaction and quality of services.

4. What are the levels of certified paraoptometrics?

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) offers a career-ladder certification consisting of three levels of expertise and a separate coding and billing certification for paraoptometrics. The certifications available are Certified Paraoptometric Coder, (CPOC), Certified Paraoptometric (CPO), Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA), and Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT).

- The CPO typically carries out a wide variety of front desk procedures such as scheduling appointments, recalling patients, handling insurance forms, accepting payments, and screening telephone calls. They may also be trained in the different styles of eyewear, frame repair and adjusting, office materials purchasing and other duties of a non-technical nature.
- Under the supervision of an optometrist, a CPOA may perform technical duties such as taking detailed patient histories, measuring visual acuity, measuring the curvature of the cornea (keratometry), glaucoma screening, blood pressure testing, and measuring the distance between the pupils of the eye.
- A CPOT may be responsible for all of the above as well as ordering prescription eyewear, modifying contact lenses, explaining contact lens care regimens, photographing the interior of the eye, supervising vision therapy and low-vision training and any other duties that the optometrist may delegate.
- A CPOC may be responsible for coding and billing in the optometric practice. Coders are responsible for ensuring that all of the information about diagnoses and procedures for patients is accurate and complete. A certified paraoptometric coder can be the first line of defense against non-compliance and improper coding for the provider.

5. Education and Training

Paraoptometric training is available through formal education programs or training on the job. Some formal programs offer a two-year program providing education for students to earn an Associate of Science degree (AS), while other programs offer a one-year technical diploma course that can be completed in nine months of full-time study.

The AOA Paraoptometric Section offers many education materials to assist the practice with training and development, as well as, certification examination preparation. The Paraoptometric Section also offers the self-directed Paraoptometric Skill Builder Online Training Program for Beginner and Intermediate levels of learning.

In addition to having a minimum of a high school diploma, individuals considering a career as a paraoptometric should consider taking high school/college courses such as algebra, biology, anatomy, English, communication, and psychology. Computer literacy is recommended as well. In addition, applicants should have interest in health care, maturity, good interpersonal skills, and the ability to follow procedures.

6. Personal Advancement, Recognition and Affiliation

Many paraoptometrics, regardless of their level of training, often attend continuing education seminars to keep their skills current and to maintain a certification designation. Paraoptometrics interested in career advancement and affiliation can join the Paraoptometric Section of the AOA. This national association is organized to promote, advance and enhance the identity of both paraoptometrics and their optometrists. The group also encourages and provides quality continuing education for paraoptometric personnel.

The AOA Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) offers paraoptometrics the opportunity to be recognized for their level of career knowledge and skill by way of voluntary certification. Nationally accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the CPC offers three progressive levels of testing that enhances career growth opportunities and future advancements.

7. What is the AOA Paraoptometric Section?

The AOA Paraoptometric Section is the nation's largest organization serving the needs of optometric assistants and technicians. Its purpose is to offer continuing education opportunities, service recognition, professional development and promotion, and opportunities for its members to be involved with a national professional association. The Paraoptometric Section promotes a health-team concept in the delivery of optometric care and enhances the identity of both the optometrist and the paraoptometric. Any ancillary, allied health professional sponsored by an AOA member optometrist is eligible for membership in the AOA Paraoptometric Section.