

Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin



Clarifying Requirements Applicable to Prescription Safety Eyewear

The requirements of the
Occupational Health and Safety
(OHS) Code cannot be met

If eye protection is required at a work site and a worker wishes to use prescription eyewear, subsection 229(2) of the *OHS Code* requires that the eyewear be approved to

- (a) CSA Standard Z94.3-99, *Industrial Eye and Face Protectors*, or
- (b) CSA Standard Z94.3-02, *Eye and Face Protectors*.

The word “approved” has a special significance in the *OHS Code*. It means that the prescription eyewear must be approved or certified as prescription safety eyewear by a nationally accredited independent third-party organization. Examples of such organizations include the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Underwriters’ Laboratories (UL), Safety Equipment Institute (SEI), etc.

Neither CSA Standard provides testing and certification requirements due to the one-off custom nature of the product.

In the case of prescription safety eyewear, neither CSA Standard provides testing and certification requirements due to the one-off custom nature of the product. While the CSA is planning to eventually offer a



certification program to Standard Z94.3-02 based on the standard's manufacturing quality assurance requirements, the program is not available at this time. In effect, it is impossible for an employer to comply with subsection 229(2) as written.

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Present practices

Virtually every set of prescription safety eyewear dispensed in Alberta bears the marking "Z87", "Z87+", or "Z87.1", indicating that the manufacturer or an approval agency has verified that the frame complies with an edition of ANSI Standard Z87.1, *Occupational and Educational Personal Eye Protective Devices*. The dispenser of the eyewear will have, or be able to get, a statement from the frame manufacturer that the frame meets the requirements of one of the CSA Standards listed in subsection 229(2).

To the best of our knowledge, dispensers of prescription safety eyewear only use lenses that meet the impact requirements of one of the listed CSA standards i.e. minimum thickness of not less than 3.0 mm (2.5 mm minimum edge thickness for specific prescriptions), as well as the visual quality characteristics described in the standards.

Acceptable prescription safety eyewear

Eventually the *OHS Code* will be amended and subsection 229(2) corrected to state that prescription safety eyewear "meeting the requirements" of one of the listed standards is acceptable i.e. a manufacturer's self-declaration of compliance will be sufficient. Until that happens, Alberta Employment and Immigration, Workplace Health and Safety will accept prescription safety eyewear that

- (a) bears a "Z87", "Z87+", or "Z87.1" marking on the frame, or
- (b) is supported by a statement, certificate, etc. from the product manufacturer or dispenser indicating that the eyewear meets the requirements of at least one of the listed CSA standards.


Prescription safety eyewear that has been in service since 1992 continues to be acceptable for use if the eyewear is free of damage.


Following this practice means that prescription safety eyewear that has been in service since 1992 (the year date of a previous edition of CSA's Z94.3 standard) continues to be acceptable for use if the eyewear is free of damage.

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Web Site

 www.worksafely.org

Getting copies of OHS Act, Regulation & Code:

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Workplace Health and Safety

 <http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-ohs>

Call any Government of Alberta office toll-free
Dial 310-0000, then the area code and telephone number you want to reach

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