

## Freedom of Information

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) is committed to transparency and upholding your rights to access information. Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*, members of the public may request access to documents held by the ACO, including medical records, administrative documents, and other official records.

ACO keeps medical records for at least 7 years.

It is possible to obtain copies of information, view information or request an amendment to information that is incomplete, incorrect, out of date or misleading.

### Making a FOI request

To make an FOI request, please submit your application in writing, specifying the documents or information you are seeking. A \$32.70 application fee may apply, along with possible additional charges for processing, in line with Victorian FOI legislation.

Applications must be received in writing using the Freedom of Information application form, available on ACO's website. A copy of valid photo ID and payment of the application fee must accompany the completed application form.

If the application is on behalf of someone else, please ensure written consent is submitted at the time of the application. If the request relates to a minor, written consent from both parents/legal guardians must be obtained.

### Contact information

For FOI inquiries or to submit a request, please contact us at:

**Email:** [aco@aco.org.au](mailto:aco@aco.org.au)

**Phone:** 03 9349 7400

**Postal address:** Freedom of Information Office, Australian College of Optometry,  
374 Cardigan St, Carlton VIC 3053

We aim to respond to all requests in a timely manner, generally within 30 days of receiving a valid application.

### Fees and charges

Fees and charges are set by the Freedom of Information Act, 1982.

The applicant will be advised of any additional charges when the request has been approved. These charges must be paid before the information is released. In some cases, these charges may be waived.

**Application fee:** \$32.70\* as of July 1 2024

The application fee is a fixed cost that is non-refundable. The only exception is for people suffering financial hardship who may ask the ACO to waive the application fee. All other charges are payable.

**Search and retrieval fee:** \$5.00

**Photocopying/printing (black & white):** 20 cents per page

**Photocopying/printing (colour):** \$1.00 per page

**Photographs:** \$5.00 per photo

\*Pricing as of July 2024.

## HEALTH RECORDS ACT 2001

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) is committed to safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of all health information in accordance with the *Health Records Act 2001 (Victoria)*. We recognise the importance of responsible handling of personal and sensitive health information, and we follow best practices to ensure your information is secure and used appropriately.

### Collection and Use of Health Information

ACO collects only the information necessary to provide high-quality eye care and related services. Health information is collected fairly, lawfully, and directly from patients, wherever possible. ACO will only use or disclose your information for the primary purpose for which it was collected, or for directly related purposes you would reasonably expect. Any other use or disclosure requires your consent unless permitted by law.

### Data Security and Quality

ACO takes all reasonable steps to protect health information from unauthorised access, alteration, or disclosure. We maintain strict data security practices and ensure that your information is accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

### Access and Correction

You have the right to access your health records and request corrections if any information is inaccurate or incomplete. Requests for access or corrections can be made through ACO's [Freedom of Information Office](#), and we will assist you in accordance with the *Health Records Act 2001*.

### Your Rights and Choices

In line with the Health Privacy Principles (HPPs), we uphold your rights to privacy and informed choices regarding your health information. Patients may choose to remain anonymous in certain interactions where practicable and lawful.

### Further Information

For more information on how we handle health information or to make an access request, please contact us directly. Your privacy and trust are paramount to ACO's commitment to excellent, patient-centred care.

