BEST-PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Spectacle Prescription (Rx)

Specification for Spectacles

European Council of Optometry and Optics

A CLEAR, COMPLETE AND UNAMBIGUOUS PRESCRIPTION PROTECTS THE PATIENT AND THE PRESCRIBER

Spectacles (glasses) are classified as a **medical device** in the **EU MDR (Medical Device Regulations)** under **Annex VIII**. It is important that a spectacle prescription (Rx) or specification can easily be interpreted by all relevant Eye Care Professionals.



Identify clearly

- Patient full name & date of birth
- Date of examination/issue/expiry
- Prescriber name, qualification, registration & signature
- Practice details



Record both eyes

- Label R (OD) and L (OS) explicitly
- Sphere, Cylinder, Axis for each eye
- State "Plano" / "0.00" rather than leaving blank
- Addition for intermediate / near (where required)



Be precise & standardised

- Power in 0.25 D steps; sign (+/–) always shown
- Axis in whole degrees, 1–180
- State cyl convention if not minus-cyl
- Prism with power and direction (each eye)



Communicate & safeguard

- Note intended use (distance / near / VDU / driving)
- State expiry / recommended recall
- Avoid abbreviations open to misreading
- Retain a record per data-protection duties

A COMPLETE PRESCRIPTION SHOULD INCLUDE

- Sph
- Cylinder
- Axis
- Inter/Near Add
- Prism (power & direction)
- Intended use
- Issue / expiry date
- Prescriber & Px details

CYLINDER AXIS – TABO SCALE

Axis measured anticlockwise from horizontal (0°–180°), examiner's view.
Scale: 0/180 = horizontal; 90 = vertical

WHY STANDARDISATION MATTERS

A prescription is frequently dispensed by a different professional, in a different practice, sometimes in a different country. Unambiguous notation – consistent signs, units and conventions – removes the need for interpretation and is an effective safeguard against transcription and dispensing errors.

DISPENSING – PD (INTERPUPILLARY DISTANCE) / LENS DETAILS

The PD is used to determine the optical centration (OC) of the lenses in a pair of spectacles. The PD is not part of a spectacle prescription, but in some countries it is included – depending on national regulation / legislation. It may also be useful (but not required) to include details of the design / type of lens advised.

CYL AXIS NOTATION

Rider: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the **TABO convention** (per the applicable ISO ophthalmic-optics standards) is to be assumed for cylinder axis notation – the axis recorded on a 0°–180° scale, measured anticlockwise from the horizontal as viewed by the examiner facing the patient. Any departure from this convention **must** be clearly indicated on the prescription.