



NEWS RELEASE

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COSTUME CONTACT LENSES CAN BE A NIGHTMARE FOR EYES

The California State Board of Optometry warns consumers to only buy cosplay contact lenses with a prescription and from a licensed dealer

SACRAMENTO – Costume contact lenses are a fun way to temporarily change your eye color, change your mood for the day, or add that final touch to make your Halloween costume more frightening.

If not fitted correctly, costume contacts can be far from a “treat.” They can damage eyes, potentially causing you to end up with an unexpected “trick,” such as an eye infection, scratched cornea, impaired vision, or—even worse—loss of eyesight.

Cosmetic contact lenses are easy to find and are often sold illegally without a prescription online or at flea markets, novelty shops, barbershops, beauty salons, Halloween costume stores, mall kiosks, and even gas stations. Online retailers that sell contacts to California residents must also be licensed and verify the prescription with your eye doctor.

In California, you can only obtain cosplay and corrective contact lenses through a prescription from a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. In addition, to ensure the integrity of the lenses, they should only be purchased from a licensed optometrist, ophthalmologist, or contact lens dispenser, licensed with the California Department of Consumer Affairs’ California State Board of Optometry, Medical Board of California, or the Osteopathic Medical Board of California.

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If you have purchased costume contact lenses without a prescription, the California State Board of Optometry wants to hear from you: Email the board to report illegal cosmetic contact lenses at optometry@dca.ca.gov.

To verify the license of an optometrist, ophthalmologist, or contact lens dispenser, use the license search tool available through the California Department of Consumer Affairs: <https://search.dca.ca.gov>.

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY: *The California State Board of Optometry licenses and regulates more than 12,000 optometrists and dispensing opticians and retail optical sellers. The board's mission is to protect the health and safety of California consumers through licensing, registration, education, and regulation of the practice of optometry and opticianry. For more information visit optometry.ca.gov.*

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS: *The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) promotes and protects the interests of California consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace. DCA helps consumers learn how to protect themselves from unscrupulous and unqualified individuals. The department also protects professionals (licensees) from unfair competition by unlicensed practitioners. Consumers can file complaints against licensees by contacting DCA at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at dca.ca.gov.*

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