

## THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

### Department of Health Mission

The Department of Health works to protect and improve the health of people in Washington State. In carrying out its mission, the Department of Health oversees the licensing, and to some extent the conduct, of health care providers with the goal of ensuring only qualified people provide health care services.

### Orthotics and Prosthetics Advisory Committee

The Orthotics and Prosthetics Advisory Committee is appointed by the secretary of health to advise and make recommendations on administrative rules, scope of practice issues, and applications for licensure. The committee has five members: two are licensed orthotists, prosthetists, or both; one is a licensed physician, and two are members of the public who are consumers of orthotic or prosthetic services.

### PATIENT INFORMATION AND RECORDS

Under Washington State law, patients may request in writing and receive a copy of their own health care information. The information must be provided within 15 days. A reasonable fee may be charged and certain restrictions may apply.

### RESOURCES

- The laws and rules governing the licensure of orthotists and prosthetists are chapter 18.200 RCW and chapter 246-850 WAC.
- Disciplinary and licensure procedures for health care providers are governed by The Uniform Disciplinary Act, chapter 18.130 RCW. See RCW 18.130.180 for a list of what is considered unprofessional conduct.

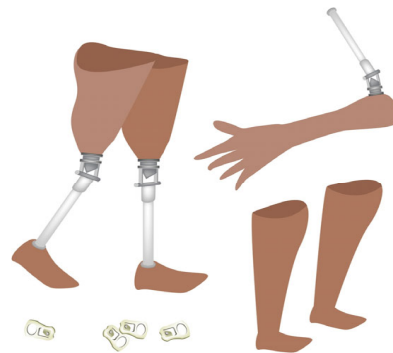
- Health Care Information Access and Disclosure is covered in chapter 70.02 RCW.

These laws and rules can be found on the Orthotist and Prosthetist webpage at [doh.wa.gov](http://doh.wa.gov) or on the state government website at [leg.wa.gov](http://leg.wa.gov).

### Professional Organizations

More information on the practice of orthotics and prosthetics is available at:

- American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists: [www.oandp.org](http://www.oandp.org)
- American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics: [www.abcop.org](http://www.abcop.org)
- Board for Orthotic/Prosthetic Certification: [www.bocusa.org](http://www.bocusa.org)



### Provider Credential Search

You may check the status of a practitioner's license and disciplinary history through the Department of Health Provider Credential Search at [doh.wa.gov/pcs](http://doh.wa.gov/pcs) or <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/providercredentialsearch/>

# Orthotics and Prosthetics Consumer Information



Customer Service Center  
Phone: (360) 236-4700  
Fax: (360) 236-4818  
Website: [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)  
Email: [hsqa.csc@doh.wa.gov](mailto:hsqa.csc@doh.wa.gov)  
Address: 111 Israel Road SE

## WHAT DO ORTHOTISTS OR PROSTHETISTS DO?

Orthotists and prosthetists are health professionals trained to make and fit custom orthoses or prostheses, and to manage comprehensive orthotic or prosthetic patient care. They are licensed to independently provide or supervise patient care in their respective fields. Their professional responsibilities include patient assessment, formulating and implementing a treatment plan, follow-up care, and practice management. They often work with physicians, physical therapists, and other health care professionals to coordinate orthotic and prosthetic care in both inpatient and outpatient settings. They support and conform to a code of professional responsibility that promotes and assures the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. While most health insurance carriers will provide some coverage for these services, patients should check with their insurance companies.

### What is an orthosis?

An orthosis is a device that stabilizes and supports an injured or weakened body part. It can be a pre-manufactured item or a custom-fabricated device that is fitted directly to the patient.

### What is a prosthesis?

A prosthesis is an artificial device that replaces a body part missing from traumatic injury, disease, or congenital conditions. These devices are usually custom-fabricated from a mold or model of the patient and fitted with components intended to restore the missing limb's function.

### What a patient can expect when visiting an orthotist or prosthetist:

If you need an orthotist or prosthetist, your physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or other prescribing authority will give you a prescription. When you meet with an orthotist or prosthetist, he or she will take a medical history, perform an evaluation, and formulate a treatment plan based on

the prescription. It may be necessary to take a mold of the patient's limb to fabricate a custom device. The orthotist or prosthetist will check to ensure the device is fitted properly to the patient and functioning correctly, and make any needed modifications or adjustments. Throughout the lifetime of the device, an orthotist or prosthetist may provide any needed maintenance, repairs, or adjustments to ensure the device continues to fit and function properly.

## AN ORTHOTIST OR PROSTHETIST MUST BE LICENSED

To practice in the state of Washington, an orthotist or prosthetist must be licensed by the State Department of Health.

### Initial Requirements

The license applicant must have either a bachelor's or master's degree in orthotics, prosthetics, or both from an accredited school, or have completed an approved certificate program in orthotics, prosthetics, or both. To ensure the applicant has acquired the needed knowledge and practice skills, the applicant must also complete an approved residency or internship for the applicable discipline, as well as successfully complete a series of required examinations.

### Continuing Requirements

To keep an active license, maintain competency, stay up-to-date, and provide safe, quality care to patients, the orthotist or prosthetist must continue to take state-approved educational programs focusing on all aspects of the practice.

## THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

### Discipline of Practitioner

Anyone may file a complaint with the Department of Health alleging unprofessional conduct by a practitioner, in addition to the right to sue in court. The Department may pursue disciplinary sanctions

against practitioners who have committed unprofessional conduct or who are unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety because of a physical or mental condition. Unprofessional conduct includes, among other things, incompetence, negligence, or malpractice; breach of confidentiality; violation of practice rules; fraud; current misuse of alcohol or drugs; abuse of a patient; criminal conduct; or sexual misconduct.

The department cannot pursue problems outside its jurisdiction such as billing disputes, personality conflicts, or impoliteness. The department also cannot help bring a lawsuit against a provider. You should consider filing a complaint if you believe that the actions of a health care provider may have caused mental or physical harm.

### How to Submit a Complaint

Call the Department of Health Customer Service Center at 360-236-4700, to report a practitioner's conduct that merits investigation. The department can supply the needed forms. Forms are also available through the department's website, [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov).

### The Complaint Process

When a complaint is received, staff members review the information to determine if action is warranted and whether the department has the authority to take action. Investigators, staff attorneys, and the Office of the Attorney General work to identify violations and to evaluate the evidence. This review may result in closing the case or presenting it to a panel of members from the Department of Health for approval to take action for unprofessional conduct. The practitioner is entitled to a hearing. Disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed include, among other things, reprimand, probation with practice conditions, suspension of the license for a period of time, or loss (revocation or surrender) of the practitioner's license.