

EYEWEAR POLICY FOR ANTARCTICA

Everyone in Antarctica is required to wear sunglasses! You are traveling to a part of the world where scientists have documented increased ultraviolet radiation due to depletion in the ozone layer. Snow and ice reflect 85% of Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) and can cause a serious, painful and disabling condition known as snow blindness. Sunglasses are especially important on windy days to protect against volcanic ash particles and blowing snow in the eyes.

The type of sunglasses you wear while you are in Antarctica is very important. Sunglasses must block 100% of the sun's Ultraviolet Rays. Some dark glasses do not block UVR and cause the iris to widen and admit more light that can cause damage to the eye. Frames must be non-metal to avoid injury to the skin from the cold. Retaining straps are mandatory. Side protectors are recommended, but not required.

Prescription Eyewear:

If you wear prescription eyewear and choose to wear prescription sunglasses during your deployment, the sunglasses must meet the above criteria. Please obtain a current prescription from your ophthalmologist/optometrist (including pupillary distance) and bring it with you when you deploy. Eyeglass prescriptions are good for two years.

Contact lenses can be worn in Antarctica. At the South Pole, however, the dry climate can cause difficulties. It is suggested that you carry your lenses on your person to avoid possible damage and/or freezing. Limited lens cleaning supplies are available at the McMurdo, Palmer, and South Pole stores (heat-type is NOT available.)

RPSC will reimburse deploying employees up to \$175.00 for one pair of prescription sunglasses (frames and lenses combined) every other year. RPSC will also reimburse employees up to \$175.00 for one pair of prescription safety glasses if required for your job. RPSC will NOT reimburse you for the eye exam. You must be both medically and dentally qualified before you are eligible to be reimbursed. Once you are notified by the Medical Department that you are Physically Qualified, please submit your expenses on the RPSC Medical/Dental Expense Reimbursement Form (ME-A-103). If you are within 30 days of deploying or are currently an active employee, you must submit your expense report online via WebTE.

Please bring two pair of glasses, prescription or non-prescription, in case of damage or loss.