



The Vision Council Addresses New Reciprocal Tariffs and Their Impact on the Optical Industry

An informational webinar and resources are available for members to stay informed and navigate the new tariff landscape

Alexandria, VA – April 4, 2025 – The Vision Council is closely monitoring the newly imposed reciprocal tariffs and their potential impact on the vision and optical industry. These tariffs increase import duties on goods from nearly all countries by at least 10%, significantly affecting companies that import eyewear and optical products, especially from countries like China and others for whom higher rates will be set.

The Vision Council hosted an informational webinar for its members earlier today and has a variety of resources available on its [website here](#) for members to stay informed as the situation evolves. A recording of the webinar, hosted by Rick Van Arnam, Regulatory Affairs Counsel for The Vision Council, and Omar Elkhatab, Senior Manager of Government Relations, is available upon request by emailing media@thevisioncouncil.org.

What the New Tariffs Mean for the Industry

The reciprocal tariffs will increase costs for importers bringing goods into the United States from nearly any country. This includes optical products such as eyeglass frames, cases, and manufacturing equipment.

In the short term, increased import costs are likely to be passed along to consumers. However, there is potential for diplomatic negotiations to reduce or exempt certain tariffs, and other countries are expected to issue retaliatory tariffs, like China announced today, with a matching 34% tariff on imports from the United States. Industry efforts to diversify production across various countries in light of previous country-specific tariffs may need to be re-evaluated considering this new trade environment.

“As the optical industry navigates these uncertain economic times, The Vision Council remains committed to supporting our members and advocating for fair, balanced trade policies that result in affordable eyecare products and services,” **said Michael Vitale, Vice President of Membership, Government Relations and Technical Standards at The Vision Council.** “We are actively engaging with policymakers to voice the concerns of our industry, while equipping our members with the tools, information, and resources they need to adapt in a rapidly changing global market.”

Sectors Most Affected

Plastic eyeglass frames imported from China are among the most affected products, now subject to a combined tariff rate of approximately 64%. This includes standard duties (2.5%), the China 301 duty (7.5%), IEEPA duty (20%), and the newly proposed reciprocal duty (34%). Over-the-counter reading glasses, complete eyeglasses, safety glasses and goggles imported from China will also now be taxed at a combined rate of 64%, and sunglasses will be taxed at 63.5%. A variety of eyeglass cases, lens processing equipment, and other optical machinery originating from China are expected to face combined duty rates between 80–90%.

China Duties Breakdown						
Product	Tariff Classification	“Regular” Customs Duty	China 301 Duty, if Chinese Origin	China 2025 Tariff, if Chinese Origin	Reciprocal Duty Rate	Total Duty
Contact Lenses	9001.30.00	2%	7.50%	20%	34%	63.5%
Plastic frames or mountings	9003.11.00	2.50%	7.50%	20%	34%	64%
Non-plastic frames or mountings	9003.19.00	free	7.50%	20%	34%	61.5%
Plastic lenses, optically worked and unmounted	9001.50.00	2%	7.50%	20%	34%	63.5%
Sunglasses	9004.10.00	2%	7.50%	20%	34%	63.5%
OTC reading glasses	9004.90.00	2.50%	7.50%	20%	34%	64%
Eyeglass case with an outer surface of leather or composition leather, other than reptile leather	4202.31.60	8%	25%	20%	34%	87%

Example of total duty rates for a variety of imported optical products and equipment.

The Vision Council’s Guidance

The Vision Council urges industry members to stay informed as trade dynamics evolve. Importers should remain vigilant regarding transshipping practices to ensure compliance, and expect freight costs to go up as companies try to beat imposition of new tariffs, which will begin as early as April 5.

As part of its ongoing efforts, The Vision Council is advocating for relief from tariffs that affect eyewear and related optical products. The Vision Council’s Government Relations team is in discussions with congressional leaders and key committees that influence the United States Trade Representative to push for the creation of an exemption process that would allow affected U.S. companies to formally petition for relief.

Additional Resources

Tariff rates are expected to remain fluid as trade negotiations continue. The Vision Council encourages members to take advantage of available resources to stay ahead of changes.

To support its members, The Vision Council will continue to host informational webinars with the latest developments as the situation evolves.

Members of The Vision Council have access to the newly launched [Tariff Dashboard](#) which aggregates import data from the United States International Trade Commission and includes a tariff simulator. The Vision Council will also be providing updates for members as more information becomes available on its website [here](#).

About The Vision Council

The Vision Council brings the power of sight to all through education, government relations, research, and technical standards. A leading advocate for the optical industry, the association positions its members to deliver the eyewear and eyecare people need to look and feel their best. Vital to health, independence and safety, better vision leads to better lives.