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The Vision Council Provides Latest Updates on Tariffs Impacting the Optical Industry

Most Countries Receive 90-Day Reprieve, Chinese Imports Face 145% Reciprocal Duty Rate

Alexandria, VA – April 10, 2025 – The Vision Council continues to provide its members with timely information and critical resources regarding tariffs and their potential impact on the vision and optical industry. As global trade policies evolve, changes in tariff regulations will significantly affect the cost and availability of optical products, including frames, lenses, and equipment used throughout the supply chain.

To keep its members informed and supported during this period of change, The Vision Council will continue to offer timely updates and educational resources. A webinar providing the latest tariff developments and best practices for future business planning and compliance will be held on **Wednesday, April 16 at 2:00 p.m. ET**. Members can [register here](#).

Latest Updates Impacting the Optical Industry

On April 9, 2025, President Trump announced a 90-day pause on the newly implemented country-specific "reciprocal" tariff increases for countries that have not retaliated, offering temporary relief and stability for many in the industry. All non-retaliating countries were returned to 10%, except for China. Instead, China's reciprocal duty rate was raised sharply to 145%, first reported as a 125% tariff, but clarified on April 10 to include the additional 20% already imposed on China for its role in supplying fentanyl to the United States (referred to below as the IEEPA duty). This move may heavily impact optical companies relying on Chinese manufacturing or imports.

The Vision Council remains committed to monitoring these developments and supporting members as they navigate the potential challenges and opportunities arising from these policy shifts.

"The 90-day pause offers temporary relief for importers working with countries on the Annex 1 list who were expected to see duty rates jump as high as 49%, but the increase to a 145% reciprocal duty rate for China will undoubtedly hurt the optical industry," **said Michael Vitale, Vice President of Membership, Government Relations and Technical Standards at The Vision Council**. "Many of our members source frames, lenses, and components from Chinese manufacturers, and this change could lead to higher costs and disruptions in the supply chain. As trade negotiations continue, we are actively working to provide guidance and advocate for policies that support the continued growth and stability of the optical industry."

Updated Duty Rates on Optical Products Imported from China

Optical products imported from China are now facing significantly elevated tariffs, creating substantial cost implications for importers. Plastic eyeglass frames are among the most heavily

impacted, now subject to a combined tariff rate of approximately **155%**. This figure includes the base duty (2.5%), the China Section 301 tariff (7.5%), and the combined 145% reciprocal duty which includes the IEEPA, or China 2025 duty (20%), and the latest enacted 125% reciprocal duty. Other essential items such as over-the-counter reading glasses, complete eyeglasses, safety glasses, and goggles imported from China are also now taxed at a combined rate of **155%**, while sunglasses carry a slightly lower rate of **154.5%**. In addition, a broad range of optical accessories and equipment, including eyeglass cases, lens processing systems, and optical manufacturing machinery, will now be subject to combined tariff rates estimated between **170% and 190%**. These increases present serious challenges for U.S. companies that depend on Chinese suppliers for both finished goods and components.

China Duties Breakdown						
Product	Tariff Classification	“Regular” Customs Duty	China 301 Duty, if Chinese Origin	IEEPA/China 2025 Tariff, if Chinese Origin	Reciprocal Duty Rate	Total Duty
Contact Lenses	9001.30.00	2%	7.50%	20%	125%	154.5%
Plastic frames or mountings	9003.11.00	2.50%	7.50%	20%	125%	155%
Non-plastic frames or mountings	9003.19.00	free	7.50%	20%	125%	152.5%
Plastic lenses, optically worked and unmounted	9001.50.00	2%	7.50%	20%	125%	154.5%
Sunglasses	9004.10.00	2%	7.50%	20%	125%	154.5%
OTC reading glasses	9004.90.00	2.50%	7.50%	20%	125%	155%
Eyeglass case with an outer surface of leather or composition leather, other than reptile leather	4202.31.60	8%	25%	20%	125%	178%

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

Next Steps for the Industry

In response to these rising tariffs, The Vision Council is actively advocating for relief on behalf of the optical industry. The organization’s Government Relations team is engaging with congressional leaders and key stakeholders who influence trade policy and the Office of the United States Trade Representative. One of the association’s key objectives is to push for the development of an exemption process that would allow U.S.-based optical companies to petition for relief from tariffs on eyewear and related products.

Additional Resources

Earlier this week, The Vision Council hosted an informational webinar to help members better understand the recent tariff developments and their implications for the optical industry. The session was led by Rick Van Arnam, Regulatory Affairs Counsel, and Omar Elkhatab, Senior Manager of Government Relations. A recording of the webinar is available upon request by emailing media@thevisioncouncil.org.

Members also now have access to The Vision Council's [Tariff Dashboard](#), which aggregates import data from the United States International Trade Commission and features a tariff simulator to help companies assess potential financial impacts. Ongoing updates and resources will continue to be made available to members through [The Vision Council's website](#) as new information emerges.

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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.