



Dear Surgeon and Team,

We are grateful to have you as our partners working towards the same goal of saving vision. LWVI would like to share an update regarding our tissue return policy and, more importantly, to reaffirm our shared commitment to honoring every precious gift of donated tissue entrusted to us.

Effective July 1, 2026, LWVI has implemented a \$1,500 return fee for all returned corneas. While this decision was not made lightly, it reflects the significant resources, specialized preparation, and handling required once tissue has been processed and shipped for surgery.

Even more significantly, returned tissue likely cannot be reassigned and may ultimately need to be discarded due to the limited preservation window, customized surgeon-specific preparation requirements, and time lost in transit. In most cases, tissue returned from one surgery is no longer suitable for another patient. When this happens, a generous donor's final gift intended to restore sight and transform a life may never fulfill its purpose.

At LWVI, our mission is twofold: to provide the Gift of Sight and to honor the extraordinary generosity of donors and their families. Every donated cornea represents hope, trust, and the possibility of restored vision for someone suffering from cornea blindness. This policy is intended to reinforce the shared responsibility we all carry in maximizing the use of these life-changing gifts.

Our greatest priority is to help your team avoid returns whenever possible. If a scheduled surgery is at risk of cancellation or delay, we strongly encourage your staff to contact us immediately. In many situations, we can work together to identify solutions that preserve tissue viability and prevent unnecessary waste.

Important considerations include:

- Corneal tissue has a limited 14-day preservation window, making timely transplantation critical
- Rescheduling the original patient within that timeframe is often the best option
- In some cases, tissue may be reassigned to another appropriate patient who can undergo surgery within the viable window

We also recognize the operational and financial challenges these situations can create. In certain circumstances, your facility may be eligible to utilize insurance modifier codes for partial or full reimbursement, and our team is happy to assist you through that process.

To further support your staff, we encourage you to visit our website and review our [Honoring the Gift of Sight - Lions World Vision Institute](#) resources, which outline best practices for tissue utilization and stewardship.

Our goal is not simply to enforce a policy, but to partner with you in reducing waste, supporting patient care, and ensuring that every donated cornea has the greatest possible opportunity to restore sight and change a life.

If you have any questions or would like assistance with a pending case, please contact our team at cornea@LWVI.org.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for helping us honor the Gift of Sight... So The World Can See.

Lions World Vision Institute