

# Arizona

## Allowable and Prohibited Duties for Dental Assistants

At-a-glance information includes a dental assisting career ladder and job titles, radiography requirements, education and exam requirements, delegable functions and supervision levels, and prohibited functions.

These data are presented for informational purposes only and are not intended as a legal opinion regarding dental practice in any state. DANB confers with each state's dental board annually or when changes occur regarding the accuracy and currency of this information. To verify, or if you have any questions, please contact your state's dental board.



### INSIDE:

- State requirements and functions chart
- Appendix A: information about numbering system
- Appendix B: information about supervision levels for dental assistants



State Job Titles

## State Career Ladder

There are three recognized levels of dental assistants in Arizona. See the following pages for details about requirements and allowed functions for each level. Numbers for each level are provided for internal reference and do not correspond to specific state designations.



- 4 Oral Preventive Assistant
- 3 Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA)
- 2 Dental Assistant qualified in coronal polishing procedures
- 1 Dental Assistant

State Radiography Requirements

## State Radiography Requirements

In order to legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures under the general supervision of a licensed dentist in Arizona, a dental assistant must:

- I. Pass the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam  
**OR**
- II. Earn the Dental Assisting Radiography (DAR) certification from American Medical Technologists  
**OR**
- III. a. Be currently certified in another U.S. jurisdiction that requires successful completion of a written dental radiography exam **AND**  
b. Apply to the Arizona State Board of Dental Examiners (ASBDE) for Dental Assistant Radiography Certification by Credential and receive the Arizona Radiologic Proficiency Certificate, issued by the ASBDE

Prohibited

## Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in Arizona

*Functions with numbers correspond to functions included in a 2002-2005 study of dental assisting core competencies. See page 11 for more information.*

The following functions are not permitted by any level of dental assistant:

- 46. Taking final impressions, other than digital impressions, for any activating orthodontic appliance, fixed or removable prosthesis
- 51. Intraoral carvings of dental restorations or prostheses\*
  - A procedure which by law only licensed dentists, licensed dental therapists, licensed dental hygienists, or certified denturists can perform
  - Final jaw registrations
  - Activating orthodontic appliances
  - An irreversible procedure
  - An oral preventive assistant may not use any air polishing technology or device or practice on patients who have been treated for periodontal disease, have generalized recession, are medically compromised or are under sedation

*\* Under an Arizona law passed in the 2015 legislative session, a dental assistant who has met the requirements for an Expanded Function Dental Assistant may perform contouring and finishing of direct restorations (See EFDA Requirements on page 20).*



## 1 Dental Assistant

Requirements

### Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A dental assistant may perform basic supportive dental procedures specified by the state dental practice act (see below) under direct supervision of a licensed dentist or licensed dental therapist.

There are no education or training requirements for this level of dental assisting.

Allowable

### Allowable Functions

#### Under Direct Supervision\*

- 13. Remove sutures
- 18. Apply topical fluorides
- 27,45. Place and remove dental dams and matrix bands
- 40. Apply sealants
- 47, 50. Fabricate and place interim restorations with temporary cement
- 54, 55. Remove temporary cement and interim restorations with hand instruments
- 59. Observe a patient during nitrous oxide analgesia as instructed by the dentist or licensed dental therapist
- 61. Remove excess cement from inlays, crowns, bridges, and orthodontic appliances with hand instruments
- 62. Remove periodontal dressings with hand instruments
  - Prepare a patient for nitrous oxide analgesia administration upon the direct instruction and presence of a dentist or licensed dental therapist
  - Place dental material into a patient's mouth in response to a licensed dentist's or licensed dental therapist's instruction

- Cleanse the supragingival surface of the tooth in preparation for:
  - a. The placement of bands, crowns, and restorations
  - b. Dental dam application
  - c. Acid etch procedures
  - d. Removal of dressings and packs
- Take final digital impressions for any activating orthodontic appliance, fixed, or removable prosthesis

#### Under General Supervision\*

- 2. Collect and record information pertaining to extraoral conditions
- 2. Collect and record information pertaining to existing intraoral conditions
- 24, 26. Train or instruct patients in oral hygiene techniques, preventive procedures, dietary counseling for caries and plaque control, and provide pre- and post-operative instructions relative to specific office treatment

## 2 Dental Assistant *qualified in coronal polishing procedures*

Requirements

### Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform coronal polishing procedures in Arizona under the general supervision of a licensed dentist, a dental assistant must hold an AZ Coronal Polishing Certificate. To qualify, one must:

- I. Pass DANB's Coronal Polishing exam (administered by DANB)
 

**AND**
- II. Submit to DANB the Arizona Coronal Polishing Certificate (AZCP) application, including an Arizona Coronal Polishing Clinical Skills Affidavit (completed by a licensed dentist or a coronal polishing educator/course instructor\*
 

**AND**
- III. Receive the Arizona Coronal Polishing Certificate, sent by DANB upon completion of all requirements

*\*Note: Beginning 6/1/2023, any educator or course instructor signing the Clinical Skills Affidavit must be a dentist or licensed hygienist or must hold the AZCP certificate.*

Allowable

### Allowable Functions

*Functions with numbers correspond to functions included in a 2002-2005 study of dental assisting core competencies. See page 11 for more information.*

#### Under General Supervision\*

- 9. Perform coronal polishing procedures

**\*Direct supervision:** "Direct Supervision" means, for purposes of Article 7 only, that a licensed dentist is present in the office and available to provide immediate treatment or care to a patient and observe a dental assistant's work.

**General supervision:** "General Supervision" means, for purposes of Article 7 only, a licensed dentist is available for consultation, whether or not the dentist is in the office, regarding procedures or treatment that the dentist authorizes and for which the dentist remains responsible.



3 Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA)

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform specified restorative functions in Arizona under the supervision of a licensed dentist, a dental assistant\*\* must hold an Arizona Expanded Function – Restorative Certificate. To qualify, one must:

- I. a. Hold the AZ Coronal Polishing certificate (see requirements on prior page), **AND**
- b. Hold the AZ Radiologic Proficiency certificate or pass the DANB RHS exam (see requirements on p.18) **AND**
- c. Successfully complete an EFDA training course approved by the AZ State Board of Dental Examiners (ASBDE) at a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)-accredited program **AND**
- d. Pass DANB's AMP, TMP and RF exams **AND**
- e. Under the supervision of a licensed dentist, perform restorative procedures required by the ASBDE (place, contour and finish 20 direct restorations and place and cement five prefabricated crowns, following the preparation of the tooth by a licensed dentist) and document these procedures on a Licensed Dentist Endorsement form **AND**
- f. Apply to DANB for the Arizona Expanded Functions – Restorative Certificate by submitting a completed application, Licensed Dentist Endorsement form, required documentation and fee to DANB

**OR**

- II. a. Hold the AZ Coronal Polishing certificate (see requirements on prior page), **AND**
- b. Hold the AZ Radiologic Proficiency certificate or pass the DANB RHS exam (see requirements on p.18) **AND**
- c. Provide evidence of currently holding or having held within the previous 10 years a license, registration, permit or certificate in expanded functions in restorative procedures issued by another U.S. state or jurisdiction **AND**
- d. Document clinical experience in the specified expanded functions on a Licensed Dentist Endorsement form **AND**
- e. Apply to DANB for the Arizona Expanded Functions – Restorative Certificate

*\*\*A registered dental hygienist may qualify to perform expanded functions by meeting the same requirements, with the exception that the registered dental hygienist is not required to take the RHS, CP and AMP exams.*

Allowable

Allowable Functions

*Functions with numbers correspond to functions included in a 2002-2005 study of dental assisting core competencies. See page 11 for more information.*

**Under General Supervision\***

- 18. Apply fluoride varnish
- 40. Apply sealants
- Place interim therapeutic restorations under the direction of a licensed dentist following a consultation conducted through teledentistry

**Level of Supervision Not Specified**

- 12, 33, 51, 70. Perform placement, contouring and finishing of direct restorations or the placement and cementation of prefabricated crowns following the preparation of the tooth by a licensed dentist; the restorative materials used shall be determined by the dentist

**\*Direct supervision:** "Direct Supervision" means, for purposes of Article 7 only, that a licensed dentist is present in the office and available to provide immediate treatment or care to a patient and observe a dental assistant's work.

**General supervision:** "General Supervision" means, for purposes of Article 7 only, a licensed dentist is available for consultation, whether or not the dentist is in the office, regarding procedures or treatment that the dentist authorizes and for which the dentist remains responsible.



4 Oral Preventive Assistant

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

An oral preventive assistant may perform coronal calculus removal under the direct supervision of a dentist or dental hygienist\*. To qualify, one must:

Meet the pre-qualifications:

- 1. Hold a current certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for healthcare providers/Basic Life Support (BLS) **AND**
- 2. Hold a board-approved Arizona certification in both Coronal Polishing and Radiography **AND**
- 3. Meet one of the following requirements:
  - a. Hold a current national board certification in dental assisting (e.g., CDA) **OR**
  - b. Has successfully completed a dental assisting educational program accredited by a state or national organization that accredits dental programs, such as CODA **AND**

Complete an approved course:

After meeting the requirements outlined above, complete a board-approved OPA training course that must include at least one hundred twenty (120) hours of combined didactic, preclinical, and clinical instruction from a qualifying institution, defined as an institution of higher education, including a community college, that provides a dental or dental hygiene program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) or its successor.

An oral preventive assistant who provides coronal calculus removal services shall prominently post their certificate of completion of an approved course of instruction at the location where the coronal calculus removal services are performed.

Allowable

Allowable Functions

Functions with numbers correspond to functions included in a 2002-2005 study of dental assisting core competencies. See page 11 for more information.

Under Direct Supervision\*

20. Remove plaque, calculus and stains, with scalers or sonic or ultrasonic scaling devices on patients who have first received a periodontal evaluation by a dentist or dental hygienist.\*\*

\*\* An oral preventive assistant may practice only on periodontally healthy patients or patients with localized mild gingivitis and must inform each patient and document in the patient's clinical record that the patient's care was not provided by a licensed dental provider.

\* Direct supervision: A dentist may supervise not more than three oral preventive assistants at the same time. A dental hygienist may supervise not more than one oral preventive assistant at any time.

# Appendix A: Numbering System for Dental Assisting Functions

The following list of 70 dental assisting tasks was developed by the ADA/DANB Alliance as part of a study of dental assisting core competencies conducted between 2002 and 2005. These selected tasks were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.

The numbered functions listed in the preceding state charts correspond to functions that were included in the DANB/ADAA core competencies study and use language directly from the state's dental practice act. The numbers are provided to facilitate comparison between and among states. Functions listed with bullets in the preceding charts are part of the state's practice act but are not specific matches to the functions that were included in the 2002-2005 study.

1. Perform mouth mirror inspection of the oral cavity
2. Chart existing restorations or conditions
3. Phone in prescriptions at the direction of the dentist
4. Receive and prepare patients for treatment, including seating, positioning chair and placing napkin
5. Complete laboratory authorization forms
6. Place and remove retraction cord
7. Perform routine maintenance of dental equipment
8. Monitor and respond to post- surgical bleeding
9. Perform coronal polishing procedures
10. Apply effective communication techniques with a variety of patients
11. Transfer dental instruments
12. Place amalgam for condensation by the dentist
13. Remove sutures
14. Dry canals
15. Tie in arch wires
16. Demonstrate knowledge of ethics/ jurisprudence/patient confidentiality
17. Identify features of rotary instruments
18. Apply topical fluoride
19. Select and manipulate gypsums and waxes
20. Perform supragingival scaling
21. Mix dental materials
22. Expose radiographs
23. Evaluate radiographs for diagnostic quality
24. Provide patient preventive education and oral hygiene instruction
25. Perform sterilization and disinfection procedures
26. Provide pre- and post-operative instructions
27. Place and remove dental dam
28. Pour, trim and evaluate the quality of diagnostic casts
29. Size and place orthodontic bands and brackets
30. Using the concepts of four- handed dentistry, assist with basic restorative procedures, including prosthodontics and restorative dentistry
31. Identify intraoral anatomy
32. Demonstrate understanding of the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard
33. Place, cure and finish composite resin restorations
34. Place liners and bases
35. Place periodontal dressings
36. Demonstrate understanding of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard
37. Take and record vital signs
38. Monitor vital signs
39. Clean and polish removable appliances and prostheses
40. Apply pit and fissure sealants
41. Prepare procedural trays/ armamentaria setups
42. Place orthodontic separators
43. Size and fit stainless steel crowns
44. Take preliminary impressions
45. Place and remove matrix bands
46. Take final impressions
47. Fabricate and place temporary crowns
48. Maintain field of operation during dental procedures through the use of retraction, suction, irrigation, drying, placing and removing cotton rolls, etc.
49. Perform vitality tests
50. Place temporary fillings
51. Carve amalgams
52. Process dental radiographs
53. Mount and label dental radiographs
54. Remove temporary crowns and cements
55. Remove temporary fillings
56. Apply topical anesthetic to the injection site
57. Demonstrate understanding of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines
58. Using the concepts of four- handed dentistry, assist with basic intraoral surgical procedures, including extractions, periodontics, endodontics and implants
59. Monitor nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia
60. Maintain emergency kit
61. Remove permanent cement from supragingival surfaces
62. Remove periodontal dressings
63. Place post-extraction dressings
64. Fabricate custom trays, to include impression and bleaching trays, and athletic mouthguards
65. Recognize basic medical emergencies
66. Recognize basic dental emergencies
67. Respond to basic medical emergencies
68. Respond to basic dental emergencies
69. Remove post-extraction dressings
70. Place stainless steel crown

## Appendix B: Levels of Supervision

An important consideration in the discussion of the delegation of tasks to dental assistants is that of supervision of dental assistants by their dentist-employers. The American Dental Association (ADA) has identified five levels of supervision for allied dental personnel, including dental assistants, which it defines in its “Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel,” (2010: 505) which is part of its *Current Policies*, last updated in 2020. Note that “allied dental personnel” refers to dental assistants, dental hygienists and dental laboratory technicians.

The five levels of supervision defined by the ADA are as follows:

**Personal supervision.** A type of supervision in which the dentist is personally operating on a patient and authorizes the allied dental personnel to aid treatment by concurrently performing a supportive procedure.

**Direct supervision.** A type of supervision in which a dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses and treatment plans the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, and evaluates their performance before dismissal of the patient.

**Indirect supervision.** A type of supervision in which a dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, has personally diagnosed and treatment planned the condition to be treated, authorizes the procedures and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

**General supervision.** A type of supervision in which a dentist is not required to be in the dental office or treatment facility when procedures are provided, but has personally diagnosed and treatment planned the condition to be treated, has personally authorized the procedures, and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

**Public Health Supervision.** A type of supervision in which a licensed dental hygienist may provide dental hygiene services, as specified by state law or regulations, when such services are provided as part of an organized community program in various public health settings, as designated by state law, and with general oversight of such programs by a licensed dentist designated by the state.

Furthermore, the ADA’s “Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel” stipulates that intraoral expanded functions should be performed by allied dental personnel “under the supervision of a dentist.”

Because the study of dental assisting core competencies undertaken by the ADAA/DANB Alliance did not address the question of supervision, the ADAA/DANB Alliance has not made any recommendations as to the levels of supervision that should be necessary for the delegation of the tasks included in the study to dental assistants. However, the ADAA/DANB Alliance believes it is important to call attention to the fact that while the ADA has defined supervision levels in the aforementioned policy statement, which governs the ADA’s own activities and the activities of its members, these definitions have not been uniformly adopted by the dental boards of every U.S. state or district.

***For the purposes of the attached charts, if a state’s dental practice act specifically defines levels of supervision, the state-specific definition is noted in the template.***

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