

California

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 four recognized levels of dental assistants in California. 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.



3 Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF)

2 Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)

1 Unlicensed Dental Assistant

Other Levels

Other Specialized Dental Assistant Categories

This state allows dental assistants meeting requirements in the following specialized categories to perform sets of functions specific to those categories. See requirements and functions for these categories on the indicated pages.

Orthodontic

See pages 28-29

Dental Sedation Assistant

See pages 30-31

State Radiography Requirements

State Radiography Requirements

To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures in California, a dental assistant must be state certified in radiography.

To obtain state radiation safety certification, a dental assistant must:

- I. Successfully complete a California Board-approved radiation safety course which includes theory and clinical application in radiographic technique
OR
- II. Have passed a radiation exam conducted by the California Board prior to Jan. 1, 1985

Prohibited

Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in California

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 a **dental assistant**, an **orthodontic assistant** or a **dental sedation assistant**:

33, 70. Placing, finishing, or removing permanent restorations

- Diagnosis and comprehensive treatment planning
- Surgical or cutting procedures on hard or soft tissue including, but not limited to, the removal of teeth and the cutting and suturing of soft tissue
- Prescribing medication
- Starting or adjusting local or general anesthesia or oral or parenteral conscious sedation; except for the administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen, whether administered alone or in combination with each other and except as otherwise provided by law
- Supragingival and subgingival scaling
- Fitting and adjusting of correctional and prosthodontics appliances
- Irrigation and medication of canals, try-in cones, reaming, filing or filling of root canals
- Oral prophylaxis procedures
- Taking of impressions for prosthodontic appliances, bridges or any other structures which may be worn in the mouth, unless specifically permitted in law or regulation



1 Unlicensed Dental Assistant

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

An unlicensed dental assistant in California may perform basic supportive dental procedures under the supervision of a licensed dentist specified by the state dental practice act.

The employer dentist must ensure that all unlicensed dental assistants maintain BLS certification, and that all unlicensed dental assistants in continuous employment for 120 days or more have proof of completing all of the following within a year from date of employment:

- I. A California Board-approved 2-hour course in the California Dental Practice Act
AND
II. A California Board-approved 8-hour course in infection control
AND
III. An ASHI, AHA or ARC-approved course in Basic Life Support or any other course approved by the board as equivalent which includes hands-on simulated clinical scenarios

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*

- 13. Remove sutures after inspection of the site by the dentist
18. Apply topical fluoride
27. Place and remove rubber dams or other isolation devices
29. After adjustment by the dentist, examine and seat removable orthodontic appliances and deliver care instructions to the patient
42. Place orthodontic separators
44. Take intraoral impressions for all nonprosthodontic appliances
45. Place, wedge and remove matrices for restorative procedures
56. Apply non-aerosol and non-caustic topical agents
59. Assist in the administration of nitrous oxide when used for analgesia or sedation. A dental assistant shall not start the administration of the gases and shall not adjust the flow of the gases unless instructed to do so by the supervising licensed dentist who shall be present at the patient's chairside during the implementation of these instructions. This paragraph shall not be construed to prevent any person from taking appropriate action in the event of a medical emergency.
62. Remove periodontal dressings
69. Remove post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist
Remove orthodontic separators
Remove arch wires
Remove ligature ties
Cure restorative or orthodontic materials in operative site with light-curing device
Examine orthodontic appliances
Take facebow transfers and bite registrations.

- Perform measurements for the purposes of orthodontic treatment.
Place patient monitoring sensors
Monitor patient sedation, limited to reading and transmitting information from the monitor display during the intraoperative phase of surgery for electrocardiogram waveform, carbon dioxide and end tidal carbon dioxide concentrations, respiratory cycle data, continuous noninvasive blood pressure data, or pulse arterial oxygen saturation measurements, for the purpose of interpretation and evaluation by a supervising licensed dentist who shall be at the patient's chairside during this procedure.

Under General Supervision*

- 18. Apply topical fluoride, when operating in a school-based setting or government public health program
22. Operation of radiographic equipment (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)
Perform intraoral and extraoral photography
Extraoral duties or functions specified by the supervising dentist, provided that these duties are basic supportive procedures (technically elementary characteristics, completely reversible, and are unlikely to cause potentially hazardous conditions for the patient)

Under Direct Supervision of a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) in Alternative Practice*

- 48. Intraoral retraction
48. Suctioning
Any extraoral duty

*Direct Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.

General Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures. All procedures shall be checked and approved by the supervising dentist prior to dismissal of the patient from the office of said dentist.

Direct Supervision by RDH or RDH in Alternative Practice: Dental assistants may perform these duties while employed by or practicing in a licensed primary care clinic or specialty clinic, a primary care clinic exempt from licensure, or a contracted clinic owned and operated by a hospital.



2 Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To be licensed as a **Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)** in California, one must:

- I. a. Graduate from a California Board-approved RDA educational program OR
 - b. Complete 15 months of work experience as a dental assistant OR
 - c. Complete a combination of a non-approved educational program and work experience
- AND**
- II. Successfully complete California Board-approved courses in radiation safety and coronal polishing
- AND**
- III. Successfully complete a 2-hour Board-approved course in the California Dental Practice Act and an 8-hour course in infection control within 5 years prior to application for licensure
- AND**
- IV. Successfully complete an ASHI, AHA or ARC-approved course in Basic Life Support or a course taught by a provider approved by the ADA's Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) or the AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE)
- AND**
- V. Apply to the Dental Board of California for examination and licensure as an RDA
- AND**
- VI. Pass the state RDA Combined Written and Law and Ethics exam and obtain background clearance by the board
(Note: Prior to 2015, a practical exam was required for RDA licensure. The practical exam was suspended in 2015 and permanently discontinued in November 2017. Beginning in May 2018, the state written RDA exam and the state written exam in law and ethics, formerly separate exams, have been combined.)

Requirements

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 or General Supervision*

The supervising licensed dentist is responsible for determining level of supervision.

- 1, 2. Mouth-mirror inspection of oral cavity, including charting of obvious lesions, existing restorations, and missing teeth
- 9. Coronal polishing
- 14. Dry endodontically treated canals with paper absorbent points
- 15. Place ligature ties and archwires
- 18. Apply topical fluoride, when operating in a school-based setting or government run public health program
- 34. Place bases, liners, and bonding agents
- 35. Place periodontal dressings
- 40. Apply pit and fissure sealants (board-approved course required)
- 47, 54, 55. Fabricate, adjust, cement, and remove indirect provisional restorations, including stainless steel crowns when used as a provisional restoration
- 49. Test pulp vitality and record findings
- 50. Place, adjust and finish direct provisional restorations
- 61. Remove excess cement from surfaces of teeth with a hand instrument
- 61. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment (under direct supervision; board-approved course required)

63. Place post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist

- Remove orthodontic bands
- Apply bleaching agents and activate with non-laser light-curing device
- Use of automated caries detection devices and materials to gather information for diagnosis by the dentist
- Obtain intraoral images for computer-aided design (CAD), milled restorations
- Chemically prepare teeth for bonding
- Adjust dentures extraorally
- All duties a dental assistant is allowed to perform
- The allowable duties of an orthodontic assistant permit holder, if additional requirements have been met (see pages 28-29 for requirements and duties)
- The allowable duties of a dental sedation assistant permit holder, if additional requirements have been met (see pages 30-31 for requirements and duties)

Under Direct Supervision of a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) or RDH in Alternative Practice*

- 9. Coronal Polishing
- 18. Application of topical fluoride
- 40. Application of sealants (board-approved course required)

Allowable

***Direct Supervision:** Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.

General Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures. *All procedures shall be checked and approved by the supervising dentist prior to dismissal of the patient from the office of said dentist.*

Direct Supervision by RDH or RDH in Alternative Practice: Dental assistants may perform these duties while employed by or practicing in a licensed primary care clinic or specialty clinic, a primary care clinic exempt from licensure, or a contracted clinic owned and operated by a hospital.



3 Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF)

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform expanded functions under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in California, a dental assistant must be licensed as a Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF).

To register as an RDAEF, one must:

- I. Hold a valid license as an RDA or complete the requirements for RDA licensure (see previous page for requirements) AND
II. Successfully complete a California Board-approved course in the application of pit and fissure sealants AND
III. Successfully complete a California Board-approved RDAEF program AND
IV. Apply to the Dental Board of California for examination and licensure as a Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions AND
V. Pass the California RDAEF written exam and obtain background clearance by the board

To qualify to perform additional functions of a Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF), one must:

- I. Provide evidence, satisfactory to the Dental Board of California, of having completed a board-approved course in those functions

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*

- 1, 2. Conduct preliminary evaluation of the patient's oral health, including, but not limited to, charting, intraoral and extraoral evaluation of soft tissue, classifying occlusion, and myofunctional evaluation
6. Cord retraction of gingivae for impression procedures
12, 33, 51. Place, contour, finish, and adjust all direct restorations
46. Take final impressions for permanent indirect restorations
46. Take final impressions for tooth-borne removable prosthesis
• Fit trial endodontic filling points
• Formulate indirect patterns for endodontic post and core castings
• Remove excess cement from subgingival tooth surfaces with hand instruments
• Perform oral health assessments in school-based, community health project settings
• Size and fit endodontic master points and accessory points.
• Cement endodontic master points and accessory points
• Polish and contour existing amalgam restorations
• Adjust and cement permanent indirect restorations

Under Direct or General Supervision*

The supervising dentist is responsible for determining the level of supervision.

- All duties a registered dental assistant is allowed to perform

Under Direct Supervision of a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) or RDH in Alternative Practice*

- Perform oral health assessments in school-based, community health project settings
• All duties a registered dental assistant is allowed to perform under RDH/RDHAP supervision

Allowable functions for this level continued on next page

*Direct Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.

General Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures. All procedures shall be checked and approved by the supervising dentist prior to dismissal of the patient from the office of said dentist.

Direct Supervision by RDH or RDH in Alternative Practice: Dental assistants may perform these duties while employed by or practicing in a licensed primary care clinic or specialty clinic, a primary care clinic exempt from licensure, or a contracted clinic owned and operated by a hospital.



Allowable Functions (for Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions), continued

Functions Requiring Additional Training

(see "Education, Training and Credential Requirements on previous page for training requirements)

Under Supervision*

- Determine which radiographs to perform on a patient who has not received an initial examination by the supervising dentist for the specific purpose of the dentist making a diagnosis and treatment plan for the patient, following protocols established by the supervising dentist, in the following settings:
 - (A) In a dental office setting
 - (B) In public health settings, using telehealth for the purpose of communication with the supervising dentist, including, but not limited to, schools, head start and preschool programs, and community clinics, under the general supervision* of a dentist
- Place protective restorations, identified as interim therapeutic restorations, and defined as a direct provisional restoration placed to stabilize the tooth until a licensed dentist diagnoses the need for further definitive treatment. An interim therapeutic restoration consists of the removal of soft material from the tooth using only hand instrumentation, without the use of rotary instrumentation, and subsequent placement of an adhesive restorative material. Local anesthesia shall not be necessary for interim therapeutic restoration placement. Interim therapeutic restorations shall be placed only in accordance with both of the following:
 - (A) In either of the following settings:
 - (i) In a dental office setting, under the direct or general supervision* of a dentist as determined by the dentist.
 - (ii) In public health settings, using telehealth for the purpose of communication with the supervising dentist, including, but not limited to, schools, head start and preschool programs, and community clinics, under the general supervision* of a dentist.
 - (B) After the diagnosis, treatment plan, and instruction to perform the procedure provided by a dentist.

Allowable

*Direct Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.

General Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures. All procedures shall be checked and approved by the supervising dentist prior to dismissal of the patient from the office of said dentist.



Orthodontic Assistant

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To qualify for an **Orthodontic Assistant permit** by work experience in California, one must:

- I. Be an RDA, RDAEF, or complete at least 12 months of work experience as a dental assistant
AND
- II. Successfully complete a 2-hour Board-approved course in the California Dental Practice Act and an 8-hour course in infection control
AND
- III. Successfully complete an ASHI, AHA or ARC-approved course in Basic Life Support or a course taught by a provider approved by the ADA's Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) or the AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE)
AND
- IV. Successfully complete a California Board-approved orthodontic assistant course (may begin after six months of work experience as a dental assistant)
AND
- V. Apply to the Dental Board of California for an Orthodontic Assistant examination and permit
AND
- VI. Pass the California Orthodontic Assistant Written Exam and obtain background clearance by the board

Requirements

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*

- 15. Place and ligate archwires
 - 29. Prepare teeth for bonding, and select, preposition and cure orthodontic brackets after their position has been approved by the supervising licensed dentist
 - 29. Size, fit and cement orthodontic bands
 - 61. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supra-gingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment
- Remove only orthodontic brackets and attachments with removal of the bonding material by the supervising licensed dentist
 - Remove orthodontic bands
 - All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform

Allowable

Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) with Orthodontic Assistant Permit

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A **Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)** in California may apply for an orthodontic assistant permit by completing the following:

- I. First be an RDA (see California RDA requirements on page 25)
AND
- II. Successfully complete a California Board-approved orthodontic assistant course and demonstrate successful completion of a California Board-approved ultrasonic scaling course
AND
- III. Apply to the Dental Board of California for an orthodontic assistant permit
AND
- IV. Pass the California Orthodontic Assistant Written Exam

Note: A registered dental assistant with an orthodontic assistant permit shall be referred to as an "RDA with orthodontic assistant permit," for reference purposes only. This does not create an additional category of licensure.

Requirements

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- All allowable duties of an RDA (see page 25)
- All allowable duties of an Orthodontic Assistant permit holder (see above)

Allowable

***Direct Supervision:** Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.



Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF) with Orthodontic Assistant Permit

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A **Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF)** in California may apply for an orthodontic assistant permit by completing the following:

- I. First be an RDAEF (see California RDAEF requirements on page 26)
AND
- II. Successfully complete a California Board-approved orthodontic assistant course and demonstrate successful completion of a California Board-approved ultrasonic scaling course
AND
- III. Apply to the Dental Board of California for an orthodontic assistant permit
AND
- IV. Pass the California Orthodontic Assistant Written Exam

Note: A registered dental assistant in extended functions with an orthodontic assistant permit shall be referred to as an "RDAEF with orthodontic assistant permit," for reference purposes only. This does not create an additional category of licensure.

Requirements

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- All allowable duties of an RDAEF (see page 26)
- All allowable duties of an Orthodontic Assistant permit holder (see previous page)

Allowable

***Direct Supervision:** Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.



Dental Sedation Assistant

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To qualify for a **Dental Sedation Assistant permit** in California by work experience, one must:

- I. Be an RDA, RDAEF, or complete at least 12 months of work experience as a dental assistant
AND
- II. Successfully complete a 2-hour Board-approved course in the California Dental Practice Act and an 8-hour course in infection control
AND
- III. Successfully complete an ASHI, AHA or ARC-approved course in Basic Life Support or a course taught by a provider approved by the ADA's Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) or the AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE)
AND
- IV. Successfully complete a Board-approved dental sedation assistant course (may begin after six months of work experience as a dental assistant)
AND
- V. Apply to the Dental Board of California for Dental Sedation Assistant examination and permit
AND
- VI. Pass the California Dental Sedation Assistant Written Exam and obtain background clearance by the board

Allowable

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform
- Monitor patients undergoing moderate sedation or general anesthesia utilizing data from noninvasive instrumentation such as pulse oximeters, electrocardiograms, capnography, blood pressure, pulse and respiration rate monitoring devices. Evaluation of the condition of a sedated patient shall remain the responsibility of the dentist or other licensed healthcare professional authorized to administer moderate sedation or general anesthesia, who shall be at the patient's chairside while moderate sedation or general anesthesia is being administered.
- Drug identification and draw, limited to identification of appropriate medications, ampule and vial preparation, and withdrawing drugs of correct amount as verified by the supervising licensed dentist
- Add drugs, medications and fluids to intravenous lines using a syringe, provided that a supervising licensed dentist is present at the patient's chairside, limited to determining patency of intravenous line, selection of injection port, syringe insertion into injection port, occlusion of intravenous line and blood aspiration, line release and injection of drugs for appropriate time interval (except the initial dose of a drug or medication shall be administered by the supervising licensed dentist)
- Removal of intravenous lines

***Direct Supervision:** A licensed dentist is physically present in the office at all times during the performance of any act, and such acts are performed pursuant to the licensed dentist's order, control, and full professional responsibility.



Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) with Dental Sedation Assistant Permit

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) in California may apply for a dental sedation assistant permit by completing the following:

- I. First be an RDA (see California RDA requirements on page 25)
AND
- II. Successfully complete a California Board-approved dental sedation assistant course
AND
- III. Apply to the Dental Board of California for a dental sedation assistant permit
AND
- IV. Pass the California Dental Sedation Assistant Written Exam

Note: A registered dental assistant with a dental sedation assistant permit shall be referred to as an "RDA with dental sedation assistant permit," for reference purposes only. This does not create an additional category of licensure.

Requirements

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- All allowable duties of an RDA (see page 25)
- All allowable duties of a Dental Sedation Assistant permit holder (see previous page)

Allowable

Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF) with Dental Sedation Assistant Permit

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF) in California may apply for a dental sedation assistant permit by completing the following:

- I. First be an RDAEF (see California RDAEF requirements on page 26)
AND
- II. Successfully complete a California Board-approved dental sedation assistant course
AND
- III. Apply to the Dental Board of California for a dental sedation assistant permit
AND
- IV. Pass the California Dental Sedation Assistant Written Exam

Note: A registered dental assistant in extended functions with a dental sedation permit shall be referred to as an "RDAEF with dental sedation assistant permit," for reference purposes only. This does not create an additional category of licensure.

Requirements

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- All allowable duties of an RDAEF (see page 26)
- All allowable duties of a Dental Sedation Assistant permit holder (see previous page)

Allowable

***Direct Supervision:** A licensed dentist is physically present in the office at all times during the performance of any act, and such acts are performed pursuant to the licensed dentist's order, control, and full professional responsibility.

Appendix A: Numbering System for Dental Assisting Functions

The following list of 70 dental assisting tasks was developed by the ADAA/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.

NELDA®, CDA®, COA®, CRFDA®, CPFDA®, and COMSA®, are registered certification marks of the Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB). DANB®, Dental Assisting National Board®, RHS®, ICE®, and Measuring Dental Assisting Excellence® are registered service marks of DANB. CERTIFIED DENTAL ASSISTANT™ is a certification mark of DANB.