

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.



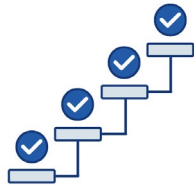
INSIDE:

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



State Career Ladder

There are three 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.



1 Unlicensed Dental Assistant

2 Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)

3 Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF)

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 page 29

Dental Sedation Assistant

See pages 30-31

State Radiography Requirements

Any person working in a dentist's office who operates dental radiographic equipment must:

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

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
- Surgery 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
- Administration of local or general anesthesia or sedation
- 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
- Starting the flow of nitrous oxide and oxygen gases
- 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

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 in continuous or intermittent employment for one year have proof of completing all of the following within one year from date of employment:

1. A California Board-approved 2-hour course in the California Dental Practice Act, **AND**
2. Current BLS certification issued by ARC, ASHI, AHA, ADA-CERP, or AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education **AND**
3. A Board-approved 8-hour course in infection control prior to performing any basic supportive dental procedures involving potential exposure to blood, saliva, or other potentially infectious materials

To perform radiographic procedures, an unlicensed dental assistant must complete a board-approved course in radiation safety and a copy of the certificate of completion issued by the course provider must be displayed publicly in the treatment facility. (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)

To perform coronal polishing prior to licensure as an RDA, an unlicensed dental assistant must complete a board-approved coronal polishing course. Prior to taking the coronal polishing course, the dental assistant must complete a board-approved 8-hour course in infection control and a current, valid certification in basic life support. A copy of the certificate of completion issued by the coronal polishing course provider must be displayed publicly in the treatment facility.

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. 56. Apply non-aerosol and non-caustic topical agents, including all forms of 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
62. Remove periodontal dressings
69. Remove post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist
 - Adjust the flow of nitrous oxide and oxygen gases if deemed necessary and directed by the supervising dentist who shall be present in the operatory directly supervising the adjustment
 - Administer or assist in the administration of oxygen in response to a medical emergency
 - Remove orthodontic separators
 - Remove arch wires
 - Remove ligature ties
 - Cure dental materials with a light curing device
 - Examine orthodontic appliances
 - Take facebow transfers and bite registrations.
 - Perform measurements for the purposes of orthodontic treatment.
 - Place patient monitoring sensors
 - Extraoral functions specified by the supervising dentist that meet the definition of basic supportive dental procedures specified in Dental Practice Act.

Such duties may include patient monitoring, placing monitoring sensors, taking of vital signs, or other extraoral procedures related to the scope of their practice.

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 requirements above)
 - Perform intraoral and extraoral photography
 - Extraoral duties specified by the supervising licensee that meet the definition of a basic supportive dental procedures specified in the Dental Practice Act. These duties may include a procedure that requires the use of personal protective equipment, laboratory functions, and sterilization and disinfection procedures.

***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 become a Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) in California, one must have successfully completed one of the following pathways to licensure:

1. Board–Approved Education

- Complete a Board–approved registered dental assisting educational program, which includes the following courses: Radiation Safety, Coronal Polishing, Pit and Fissure Sealants, Infection Control, California Dental Practice Act, and Basic Life Support.
- Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE, with a copy of the certificate of completion issued by the Board-approved program.
- Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

2. Work Experience

- Complete satisfactory work experience performing the duties of a dental assistant, which includes at least 15 months and a minimum of 1,280 hours of work experience.
- Complete the following Board–approved courses: Radiation Safety, Coronal Polishing, Pit and Fissure Sealants, Infection Control, California Dental Practice Act, and Basic Life Support.
- Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE, with a copy of a completed Work Experience Certification Form (RDA1) and documentation of completing all required courses.
- Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

3. Dental Assisting Education (Nonboard–Approved) with Work Experience

- Complete a dental assisting education program with work experience. The Dental Assisting education program and work experience must total at least 15 months and 1280 hours. The Dental Assisting education program must be approved by the Department of Education or in a secondary institution, regional occupational center, or regional occupational program. Credit for the Dental Assisting education program shall equal the total weeks spent in classroom training and internship on a week–for–week basis.
- Complete the following Board–approved courses: Radiation Safety, Coronal Polishing, Pit and Fissure Sealants, Infection Control, California Dental Practice Act, and Basic Life Support.
- Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE with a copy of a completed Work Experience Certification Form (RDA1), Non–Board Approved Dental Assisting Program Certification Form (RDA4) and documentation of completing all required courses.
- Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

4. Certified Dental Assistant

- Complete the general chairside assisting, Radiation Health and Safety, and Infection Control examinations administered by the Dental Assisting National Board with an active certification satisfactory to the terms and conditions of the Dental Assisting National Board.
- Complete the following Board–approved courses: Radiation Safety, Coronal Polishing, Pit and Fissure Sealants, Infection Control, California Dental Practice Act, and Basic Life Support.
- Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE, with a copy of the current, valid certification as a certified dental assistant, as issued by the Dental Assisting National Board and documentation of completing all required courses.
- Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

5. Alternative Dental Assisting Program

- Complete an Alternative Dental Assisting Program that includes at least 500 hours of didactic and laboratory coursework in dental assisting–related topics and at least 300 hours of clinical chairside work experience, directly supervised, evaluated, and documented by a supervising licensed dentist.
- Complete the following Board–approved courses: Radiation Safety, Coronal Polishing, Pit and Fissure Sealants, Infection Control, California Dental Practice Act, and Basic Life Support.
- Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE, with a copy of the completed Alternative Dental Assisting Program Certification Form (RDA2) and documentation of completing all required courses.
- Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

6. Preceptorship in Dental Assisting

- Complete a preceptorship in dental assisting that includes at least 500 hours of clinical chairside work experience documented on a form furnished by the board, directly supervised, evaluated, and documented by a preceptor and at least 300 hours documented on a form furnished by the board of coursework in dental assisting–related topics, which may be obtained concurrent to the work experience.
- Complete the following Board–approved courses: Radiation Safety, Coronal Polishing, Pit and Fissure Sealants, Infection Control, California Dental Practice Act, and Basic Life Support.
- Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE, with a copy of the completed Preceptorship in Dental Assisting Certification Form (RDA3) and documentation of completing all required courses.
- Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

Requirements for this level continued on next page



2 Registered Dental Assistant (RDA), continued

Requirements

7. Registered Dental Hygienist

- a. Current and active licensure as a Registered Dental Hygienist, Registered Dental Hygienist in Alternative Practice, or Registered Dental Hygienist in Extended Functions with licensure issued on or after January 1, 2006, by the California Dental Hygiene Board.
- b. Submit a completed application for Registered Dental Assistant Examination and Licensure online through BreZE, with a license certification showing proof of a current and active license as a Registered Dental Hygienist, Registered Dental Hygienist in Alternative Practice, or Registered Dental Hygienist in Extended Functions, that was issued on or after January 1, 2006, by the California Dental Hygiene Board.
- c. Pass the Registered Dental Assistant Combined Written and Law and Ethics Examination.

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 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, etch and bonding agents for restorative procedures
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 (board-approved course required)
63. Place post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist
 - Apply bleaching agents and activate with non-laser light-curing device
 - Use of automated caries detection devices and materials and recording of such findings before placement of pit and fissure sealants

- Obtain intraoral images for computer-aided design (CAD), milled restorations
- Chemically prepare teeth for bonding for restorative procedures
- Perform sore-spot adjustment only of dentures extraorally
- Perform tissue conditioning and soft relining of dentures
- 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 page 29 for requirements and duties)
- The allowable duties of a dental sedation assistant permit holder, if additional requirements have been met (see page 30 for requirements and duties)

Under Direct Supervision

29. Size, fit, secure, and remove orthodontic bands using appropriate dental materials
- Isolate, etch, bond, and attach composite buttons for orthodontic procedures
- Perform a duty specified in the RDA scope of practice using contemporary techniques and materials designed for the performance of that duty if the RDA has completed the appropriate education and training, and whose skill and knowledge in the use of such technique or material has been determined clinically competent by the supervising licensed dentist

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)

***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)

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:

1. Hold a valid license as an RDA (see previous page for requirements) **AND**
2. Successfully complete a California Board-approved course in the application of pit and fissure sealants **AND**
3. Successfully complete a California Board-approved RDAEF program **AND**
4. Submit evidence of current BLS certification issued by ARC, ASHI, AHA, ADA-CEPRP, or AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education **AND**
5. Apply to the Dental Board of California for examination and licensure as a Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions **AND**
6. 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:

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

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. Perform oral health assessments, including intraoral and extraoral soft tissue evaluations to identify oral lesions, classifying occlusion, performing myofunctional evaluations, and oral cancer screenings as authorized by the supervising dentist.
6. Gingival retraction for impression and restorative procedures 12, 33, 51. Place, contour, finish, and adjust all direct restorations
46. Take final impression for permanent direct and indirect restorations
46. Take final impressions for tooth-borne removable prosthesis
 - Perform post, core, and build-up procedures in conjunction with direct and indirect restorations
 - Fit trial endodontic filling points
 - Formulate indirect patterns for 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 adhere all permanent indirect restorations
 - Perform a duty specified in the RDAEF scope of practice using contemporary techniques and materials designed for the performance of that duty if the RDAEF has been licensed on or since January 1, 2010 and has completed the appropriate education and training, and whose skill and knowledge in the use of such technique or material has been determined clinically competent by the supervising licensed dentist

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/RDHP supervision

Functions Requiring Additional Training

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.

***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.



Orthodontic Assistant

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

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

Requirements

1. Complete an Orthodontic Assistant Course; the course hours for a student who is not an RDA and is qualifying under work experience pathway must be no less than 84 hours.
2. Complete a 4-hour course in Ultrasonic Scaling within 5 years before the date the application is received by the Board
3. Complete a 2-hour course in the California Dental Practice Act within 2 years before the date the application is received by the Board
4. Complete an 8-hour course in Infection Control within 2 years before the date the application is received by the Board
5. Hold current BLS certification issued by ARC, ASHI, AHA, ADA-CEPRP, or AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education.
6. Submit application for Orthodontic Assistant Examination and Permit online
7. Pass the Orthodontic Assistant Written Examination

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.

Allowable

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 secure orthodontic bands using appropriate materials
 61. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment
- Isolate, condition, etch, and prepare teeth for provisional attachments, bonded attachments, aligner buttons, aligner connections, orthodontic brackets, and appliances.

- Remove orthodontic bands, brackets, and attachments and remove excess cement with a hand instrument, with the removal of any material by the supervising licensed dentist or registered dental assistant in extended functions licensed on or after January 1, 2010
- All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform under direct supervision

Under General Supervision

- All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform under general supervision

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:

Requirements

1. Complete an Orthodontic Assistant Course
 - a. The course hours for a student who holds a valid and current RDA license must be no less than 55 hours.
 - b. The course hours for a student who holds a valid and current RDA license and who has completed a course in Ultrasonic Scaling must be no less than 51 hours.
2. Complete a 4-hour course in Ultrasonic Scaling within 5 years before the date the application is received by the Board
3. Complete a 2-hour course in the California Dental Practice Act within 2 years before the date the application is received by the Board
4. Complete an 8-hour course in Infection Control within 2 years before the date the application is received by the Board
5. Current BLS certification issued by ARC, ASHI, AHA, ADA-CEPRP, or AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education
6. Submit application for Orthodontic Assistant Examination and Permit online through BReEZe
7. Pass the Orthodontic Assistant Written Examination

Allowable Functions

Allowable

Under Direct Supervision*

- All allowable duties of an RDA (see page 26)

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

***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.*



Dental Sedation Assistant

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

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

1. Be an RDA, RDAEF, or complete at least 12 months of work experience as a dental assistant
AND
2. Successfully complete a 2-hour Board-approved course in the California Dental Practice Act and an 8-hour course in infection control within two years prior to application
AND
3. Submit evidence of current BLS certification issued by ARC, ASHI, AHA, ADA-CERP, or AGD's Program Approval for Continuing Education
AND
4. Successfully complete a Board-approved dental sedation assistant course (may begin after six months of work experience as a dental assistant)
AND
5. Apply to the Dental Board of California for Dental Sedation Assistant examination and permit
AND
6. Pass the California Dental Sedation Assistant Written Exam and obtain background clearance by the board

A copy of the current, valid dental sedation assistant permit issued by the Board must be displayed publicly in the treatment facility where the permit holder performs dental services

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform under direct supervision
- 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 supervising dentist or the licensed health-care 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, or the licensed health care professional authorized to administer moderate sedation, deep sedation, or general anesthesia
- 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 or the licensed health care professional authorized to administer moderate sedation, deep sedation, or general anesthesia)
- Removal of intravenous lines

The above duties may only be performed in a dental office or dental clinic.

Under General Supervision

- All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform under general supervision

Requirements

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.

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.*



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:

1. First be an RDA (see California RDA requirements on page 26)

AND

2. Successfully complete a California Board-approved dental sedation assistant course

AND

3. Apply to the Dental Board of California for a dental sedation assistant permit

AND

4. 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.

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

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

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

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.