



## District of Columbia Career Ladder

There are two recognized levels of dental assistants in the District of Columbia. 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 Level 3 Dental Assistant

2 Level 2 Dental Assistant

1 Level 1 Dental Assistant

## Radiography Requirements

In order to legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures in the District of Columbia, a dental assistant must:

- I.
    - a. Pass DANB's Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam or DANB's Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam **OR**
    - b. Successfully complete a dental radiography training program consisting of at least twenty-four (24) hours of coursework in radiology, radiation safety, biology, and physics, and has successfully passed the examination(s) required for successful completion of the program.
- AND**
- II. Register as a Level II or Level III Dental Assistant with the D.C. Board of Dentistry (see additional requirements in "Requirements" sections on the pages that follow)

## Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in District of Columbia

*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 shall not be delegated to dental auxiliaries:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The charting of cavities during preliminary examination, prophylaxis, or polishing</li> <li>12, 51. Placing, carving, or finishing of amalgam restorations</li> <li>15. Temporary wire ligation</li> <li>24. The instruction of individuals or groups of individuals in oral health care, unless it is in the dental office and done as instructed by the dentist</li> <li>29. Final positioning of orthodontic bonds and bands</li> <li>33. Condensing, contouring or adjusting any final, fixed or removable prosthodontic appliance or restoration in the mouth</li> <li>33. Placing and finishing of composite resin/silicate restorations</li> <li>34. Application of cavity liners and bases</li> <li>35. Placing initial periodontal dressing</li> <li>46. Taking final impressions</li> <li>47, 50. Placement of temporary restorations</li> <li>59. Administering or monitoring nitrous oxide</li> <li>63, 69. Applying and removing a socket dressing           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The restoration of a tooth</li> <li>• Performing final diagnosis and treatment planning</li> <li>• Performing surgical or cutting procedures on hard or soft tissue</li> <li>• Prescribing or parenterally administering drugs or medications</li> <li>• Administering inhalants or inhalation conscious sedation agents</li> <li>• Authorizing work orders for any appliance or prosthetic device or restoration to be inserted into a patient's mouth</li> <li>• Operating high speed rotary instruments in the mouth</li> <li>• Performing pulp capping procedures</li> <li>• Orthodontic arch wire activation with the exception of minor adjustments to eliminate pain or discomfort</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking impressions for master casts to be used for prosthetic restoration of teeth or oral structures</li> <li>• Final cementation of crowns, bridges, inlays, onlays, posts and cores, and insertion of final prosthesis</li> <li>• Placing sutures</li> <li>• Flushing root canals</li> <li>• The performing of a diagnostic screening to identify indications of oral abnormalities</li> <li>• A preliminary dental examination</li> <li>• A complete prophylaxis, including the removal of any deposits, diseased crevicular tissue, accretion, or stain from the surface of a tooth or a restoration</li> <li>• Administering or monitoring general anesthetics and conscious sedation</li> <li>• Administering or monitoring local anesthesia</li> <li>• Adjusting occlusion of natural teeth, restorations, or appliances</li> <li>• Registration of jaw relations</li> <li>• Cementing permanent crowns or restorations</li> <li>• Applying silver diamine fluoride</li> <li>• Glucose monitoring</li> <li>• Whitening or bleaching (internal, laser, or high-intensity light)</li> <li>• Using a high speed handpiece intraorally</li> <li>• Oral cancer screenings</li> <li>• Oral cancer tissue biopsy</li> <li>• Placement of subgingival medicaments</li> <li>• Placing intracoronal temporary restorations</li> <li>• Placement of liquid dam</li> </ul> |
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## 1 Level 1 Dental Assistant

Requirements

### Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To be registered as a Level I Dental Assistant in the District of Columbia, one must:

- I. Have graduated from high school or hold a general equivalency diploma  
**AND**
- II. Pass the District of Columbia Dental Assistant Law Examination  
**AND**
- III. Apply to the D.C. Board of Dentistry for registration

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\*

- 6. Placing retraction cord
- 13. Removing sutures
- 18. Applying fluoride (rinse, foam tray, and fluoride varnish)
- 27, 45, 48. Placing or removing materials for the isolation of the dentition, provided that the material is not retained by the dentition
- 35. Placing periodontal dressings
- 37. Take and record vital signs
- 44. Taking impression for study models or diagnostic casts
- 45. Placing matrices
- 48. Rinsing and aspirating the oral cavity
- 48. Retracting the lips, cheek, tongue, and flaps
- 54, 55. Removing temporary restorations without the use of a rotary instrument
- 56. Applying topical anesthesia
- 64. Constructing athletic mouth guards and night guards on models
  - Performing intraoral photography
  - Curing by the use of halogen light
  - Checking for loose bands
  - Whitening or bleaching using trays
  - Other functions as approved by the Board

#### Under Direct Supervision\* of an Orthodontist

- 15. Placing and removing arch wires
- 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
  - Removing excess cement from around orthodontic bands
  - Cementing orthodontic bands, placing bonded attachments, or removing cemented or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
  - Placing elastics and ligatures
  - Selecting headgear

\*Direct supervision: The dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures, remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the dental assistant, and personally evaluates the performance of the dental assistant before dismissal of the patient.



## 2 Level 2 Dental Assistant

Requirements

### Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To be registered as a Level II Dental Assistant in the District of Columbia, one must:

- I. Have graduated from high school or hold a general equivalency diploma

**AND**

- II. a. Successfully complete a dental assisting education program approved by the D.C. Board of Dentistry or accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) **OR**
  - b. Hold a current and valid certification as a Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) in general duties from the DANB or another dental assisting certification approved by the Board

**AND**

- III. Complete a course in dental radiography training consisting of at least twenty-four (24) hours of coursework in radiology, radiation safety, biology, and physics, and has successfully passed the examination(s) required for successful completion of the program

**AND**

- IV. Pass the District of Columbia Dental Assistant Law Examination

**AND**

- V. Apply for registration as a Level II Dental Assistant to the D.C. Board of Dentistry

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\*

- 14. Drying a root canal
- 27. Placing or removing a rubber dam
- 35. Removing or placing a periodontal dressing (except placing the original periodontal dressing)
- 43. Preparing and fitting stainless steel crowns
- 44. Taking alginate impressions for intraoral appliances
- 45. Placing or removing a matrix band
- 47. Fabricating indirect restorations in a dental office
- 47. Preparing temporary crowns
- 49. Performing vitality tests
- 54, 61. Removing excess cement
- 55. Removal of temporary restorations without the use of a rotary instrument
  - Applying desensitizing agents;
  - Etching
  - All functions permitted to Level I Dental Assistant

#### Under Direct Supervision\* of an Orthodontist

- 15. Placing and removing arch wires
- 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
  - Removing excess cement from around orthodontic bands
  - Cementing orthodontic bands, placing bonded attachments, or removing cemented or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
  - Placing elastics and ligatures
  - Selecting headgear

\*Direct supervision: The dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures, remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the dental assistant, and personally evaluates the performance of the dental assistant before dismissal of the patient.



3 Level 3 Dental Assistant

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To be registered as a Level III Dental Assistant in the District of Columbia, one must:

- I. Have graduated from high school or hold a general equivalency diploma  
**AND**
- II. Successfully complete a dental assisting education program approved by the D.C. Board of Dentistry or accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)  
**AND**
- III. Complete a course in dental radiography training consisting of at least twenty-four (24) hours of coursework in radiology, radiation safety, biology, and physics, and has successfully passed the examination(s) required for successful completion of the program  
**AND**
- IV. Hold a current and valid certification as a Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) in general duties from the DANB or another dental assisting certification approved by the Board  
**AND**
- V. Obtain DANB Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA) Certification  
**AND**
- VI. Pass a Board-approved, hands-on course in the functions and duties permitted to be performed by a Level III Dental Assistant  
**AND**
- VII. Pass the District of Columbia Dental Assistant Law Examination  
**AND**
- VIII. Apply for registration as a Level III Dental Assistant to the D.C. Board of Dentistry

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\*

- 9. Coronal polishing to remove stain and biofilm
- 40. The application of pit and fissure sealants
  - Glucose testing
  - All functions permitted to Level I and Level II Dental Assistants

Under Direct Supervision\* of an Orthodontist

- 15. Placing and removing arch wires
- 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
  - Removing excess cement from around orthodontic bands
  - Cementing orthodontic bands, placing bonded attachments, or removing cemented or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
  - Placing elastics and ligatures
  - Selecting headgear