

Kentucky

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 two recognized levels of dental assistants in Kentucky. 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.



2 Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)

1 Dental Auxiliary

State Radiography Requirements

To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures in Kentucky, a dental assistant must complete ten hours of training that includes a six-hour Kentucky Board-approved course in dental radiography safety* and one of the following:

- I. Four hours of instruction in dental radiography technique under the employment and supervision of the dentist in the office **OR**
- II. A four-hour course in radiography technique approved by the Kentucky Board of Dentistry

Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in Kentucky

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. Making of final impressions from which casts are made to construct any dental restoration
 - Diagnosis
 - Deliver teledentistry services
 - The practice of dental hygiene or the performance of the duties of a licensed dental hygienist that require the use of any instrumentation which may elicit the removal of calcareous deposits or accretions on the crowns and roots of teeth
 - Treatment planning, prescribing, or authorization for restorative, prosthodontic or orthodontic appliances
 - Surgical procedures on tissues of the oral cavity or any other intraoral procedure that contributes to or results in an irreversible alteration of the oral anatomy
 - Cutting of hard or soft tissues
 - Any intraoral procedure which will be used directly in the fabrication of an appliance which, when worn by the patient, would come into direct contact with hard or soft tissue



1 Dental Auxiliary

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

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

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

Allowable

Allowable Functions

Under Direct Supervision*

- Those procedures that do not require the professional competence of a licensed dentist or licensed dental hygienist

2 Registered Dental Assistant

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) simply refers to an assistant who has been registered by their employer dentist and is not a recognition of any special training or achievement. The responsibility to register assistants and document CPR training belongs to the employer dentist. To be recognized as a registered dental assistant in Kentucky, a dental assistant must have current certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) that meets or exceeds the guidelines of the American Heart Association (AHA). In addition, the dental assistant's employer dentist must do the following:

- I. Register the dental assistant on his or her Application for Renewal of Dental Licensure **AND**
- II. Maintain a personnel file for the registered dental assistant containing the following:
 - a. A copy of proof of having current CPR certification
 - b. A copy of the certificates of completion of the Coronal Polishing, Radiation Safety, Radiation Technique Course, and Starting IV Access Lines courses, if the dental assistant has completed these courses
 - c. The licensee's statement attesting to the competence of the dental assistant in the procedures delegated the assistant from the Delegated Duties List

To perform **coronal polishing procedures** under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in Kentucky, a registered dental assistant must:

- I. Successfully complete an eight-hour course at a CODA-accredited institution **AND**
- II. Obtain a certificate of completion from the authorized institution, which the employer dentist shall retain in the employee's personnel file

To perform **starting intravenous (IV) access lines** under the direct supervision of a dentist holding a sedation or anesthesia permit, a registered dental assistant must:

- I. Successfully complete a board-approved course in starting IV lines **AND**
- II. Submit documentation of course completion to the supervising dentist, who shall retain such documentation in the employee's personnel file

To perform **radiography procedures** under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in Kentucky, a registered dental assistant must complete the requirements listed under *State Radiography Requirements* on page 65.

Note: If the operating dentist authorizes a third-party qualified anesthesia provider to administer moderate sedation, deep sedation, or general anesthesia, the operating dentist shall confirm that at least two (2) members of the onsite care team, including RDAs, maintain current certifications in:

1. *BLS for Healthcare Providers; and*
2. *ACLS if sedation is administered to an adult patient; or*
3. *PALS if sedation is administered to a pediatric patient.*

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. Perform coronal polishing procedures (see requirements above)
22. Expose radiographs (see "Radiography Requirements" on pg. 65)
 - Establish and remove intravenous lines (see requirements above)

Allowable functions for this level continued on next page

***Direct Supervision:** The dentist is physically present in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, authorizes the procedures to be performed, remains in the office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed, and evaluates the performance of the individual supervised. The supervising dentist shall accept sole responsibility for the actions of the dental assistant.



Allowable Functions (for Registered Dental Assistant), continued

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* and Dentist's Direct Orders

- Initiate nitrous oxide sedation if given specific instructions regarding the mode of administration and the titration, rate, and dosage of the anesthetic agent

Under Direct Supervision* of a Sedation Permit Holder

- 37. Record vital sign measurements in the sedation record
- Apply noninvasive monitors on the patient
- Perform continuous observation of patients and noninvasive monitors appropriate to the level of sedation, during the pre-operative, intra-operative and post-operative (recovery) phases of treatment

- Report monitoring parameters at pre-determined intervals, and if changes in monitored parameters occur
- Assist in the management of a patient emergency
- Administer medications into an existing intravenous line upon the verbal order and direct supervision of a qualified dentist in accordance with this administrative regulation.

***Direct Supervision:** The dentist is physically present in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, authorizes the procedures to be performed, remains in the office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed, and evaluates the performance of the individual supervised. The supervising dentist shall accept sole responsibility for the actions of the dental assistant.

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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