

Maryland

Allowable and Prohibited Duties for Dental Assistants

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

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



INSIDE:

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



State Job Titles

State Career Ladder

There are three recognized levels of general dental assistants in Maryland. 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 Expanded Function Dental Assistant (see Note on page 76)

2 Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties

1 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 page 77

State Radiography Requirements

State Radiography Requirements

A dental assistant in Maryland must be state certified as a Dental Radiation Technologist in order to operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist. To obtain this state certification, one must:

- I. Be at least 18 years of age
AND
- II. Be of good moral character
AND
- III. Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent
AND
- IV. Successfully complete a Board-approved course of at least 24 hours related to Maryland dental radiology
AND
- V. Pass the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam or Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam
AND
- VI. Apply for state certification to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

Note: An individual holding an active radiology license or certification in another state may apply for Maryland Dental Radiation Technologist Certification by Waiver of Examination if he or she has engaged in practicing dental radiation technology for at least 150 hours in the three years preceding application and meets any ADA or federal requirements. In addition, beginning in 2011, all Dental Radiation Technologists seeking to renew or reinstate their certificates shall have completed a two-hour, Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners-approved course in infection control.

Prohibited

Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in Maryland

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** and a **Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties**:

- 9, 20. Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing and polishing teeth (see Note on page 76)
- 15. Placing or removing an arch wire
- 15. Placing elastics or ligatures
- 29. Preparing or fitting orthodontic bands
- 33, 51. Condensing, carving or finishing any restoration
- 35. Placing an initial surgical dressing
- 40. Apply pit and fissure sealants (see Note on page 76)
- 59. Monitoring nitrous oxide (see Note on page 76)
 - Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning
 - Surgery on hard or soft tissues
 - Administering injectable local anesthesia

Prohibited Functions list continued on next page.



Prohibited Duties

Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in Maryland, continued

- Initiation of treatment at any time for the correction of malocclusions and malformations of the teeth or jaws
- Adjusting occlusion of natural teeth, restorations or appliances
- Registration of jaw relations
- Perform manual curettage
- Selecting headgear
- Adjusting prosthetic appliances
- Cementing of orthodontic bands, placement of bonded attachments or the removal of cement or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
- Cementing permanent crowns or restorations
- Administering nitrous oxide
- Apply silver diamine fluoride (see Note on page 76)
- Glucose monitoring
- Arch wire adjustment
- Bleaching (internal, laser or high-intensity light)
- Use a high speed handpiece intraorally
- Oral cancer screenings
- Oral cancer tissue biopsy
- Placing initial periodontal dressing
- Placement of liquid dam
- Apply and remove socket dressing
- Placement of subgingival medicaments
- Remove intracoronal temporary restoration
- Polish restorations
- Place sutures
- Any other duty prohibited by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (for additional prohibited duties, see the "Dental Auxiliaries Procedures Chart" on the Maryland Board's website at <https://health.maryland.gov/dental>)

1 Dental Assistant

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A dental assistant in the state of Maryland 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.

A dental assistant working under general supervision for a sealant program must do all of the following:

- Maintain American Heart Association Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS) or American Red Cross CPR for Professional Rescuers
- Have at least 400 hours of dental assisting clinical practice in dental patient care
- Successfully complete a Board-approved course of at least two hours in infection control with OSHA protocol, or be Qualified in General Duties (see requirements above) or Orthodontic Duties (see requirements on p. 77), or hold current DANB CDA or COA certification
- Enter into a written agreement with the supervising dentist setting forth the terms and conditions of practice under general supervision

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*

- 12. Delivering restorative material with dentist at chairside
- 18. Applying topical fluoride rinse or foam tray; apply fluoride varnish
- 24. Instructing on oral hygiene
- 27, 25, 48. Placement and removal of materials for the isolation of the dentition, provided that the material is not retained by the dentition
- 37. Take and record vital signs
- 44. Taking impressions for study models or diagnostic casts
- 48 Rinsing and aspiration of the oral cavity
- 48. Retraction of the lips, cheek, tongue and flaps
- 48. Place and remove cotton rolls
- 56. Applying topical anesthesia
- 64. Constructing athletic mouth guards on models
 - Performing intraoral photography
 - Curing by the use of halogen light
 - Checking for loose bands
 - Any other duty approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (see the "Dental Auxiliaries Procedures Chart" on the Maryland Board of Dental Examiners' website at <https://health.maryland.gov/dental> for additional duties)

Under General Supervision*

- Assist in performing intraoral photography, other than conventional or digital x-ray; supervising dentist must review the photography and authorize the treatment plan (under new law effective 10/1/2022; see Note on page 76)

Under General Supervision* for a dental sealant program**

- 24. Instructing on oral hygiene
- 25. Cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces and equipment
- 25. Sterilizing instruments
- 27, 45, 48. Placing and removing materials for the isolation of the dentition, if the material is not retained by the dentition
- 30. Transferring instruments and sealants to a dentist or dental hygienist
- 41. Preparing materials for the application of sealants
- 48. Retracting lips, cheek, and tongue
- 48. Rinsing and aspirating the oral cavity

** A dental assistant may only perform these duties under general supervision of a dentist for a facility that has been granted a waiver of onsite supervision for a dental hygienist or while assisting a dental hygienist who has received a waiver of onsite supervision, pursuant to applicable Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners regulations.

*Direct Supervision: The supervising dentist is in the dental office; personally diagnoses the condition to be treated; personally authorizes the procedure; and, before dismissal of the patient, personally evaluates the performance of the dental assistant.

General Supervision: The supervision of a dental assistant by a dentist where the dentist may or may not be present when the dental assistant performs the dental assisting procedures.



2 Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties (see Note on next page**)

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform expanded functions in Maryland (see listing below), a dental assistant must register as a Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties.

To qualify, one must:

- I. Complete a Board-approved course of at least 35 hours related to Maryland general duties dental assisting

AND

- II. a. Pass the Maryland General Dental Assisting Expanded Functions (MDG) exam administered by DANB **OR**
 b. Hold the national DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification

AND

- III. Apply to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners for state recognition as a Maryland Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties

Note: While not required by law, it is recommended that a Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties also earn status as a Dental Radiation Technologist (see requirements on the first page of this section).

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 or removing retraction cord
- 13. Removing sutures
- 14. Drying a root canal
- 18. Applying topical fluoride; applying fluoride varnish
- 27. Placing or removing a rubber dam
- 35, 62. 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. Preparing temporary crowns
- 47. Cementing temporary crowns or restorations
- 49. Performing vitality tests
- 50. Placement of temporary restorations
- 54. Removing temporary crowns
- 54. Removing excess cement
- 64. Fabricating athletic mouthguards, bleaching trays, fluoride trays, impression trays, nightguards on models
 - Performing bite registration
 - Bleaching (using bleaching tray)
- Applying bonding agents
- Etching teeth
- Fabricating indirect restorations in a dental office
- Applying desensitizing agents
- Placing and removing wedges
- All duties designated to Dental Assistants, under the same level of required supervision
- Any other duty approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (see the "Dental Auxiliaries Procedures Chart" on the Maryland Board of Dental Examiners' website at <https://health.maryland.gov/dental> for additional duties)

Note: This state allows dental assistants qualified in orthodontics to perform a separate set of orthodontic functions. Please see the separate chart for Maryland orthodontic functions on the pages that follow.

*Direct Supervision: The supervising dentist is in the dental office; personally diagnoses the condition to be treated; personally authorizes the procedure; and, before dismissal of the patient, personally evaluates the performance of the dental assistant.

General Supervision: The supervision of a dental assistant by a dentist where the dentist may or may not be present when the dental assistant performs the dental assisting procedures.



3 Expanded Function Dental Assistant (see Note below**)

Requirements

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform specified intraoral procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist, a dental assistant must obtain a state Expanded Function Dental Assistant certificate.

To qualify, one must:

- I. Be at least 18 years old and of good moral character
AND
- II. Be a high school graduate or have attained a high school equivalency
AND
- III. Successfully complete a course of study approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners and meeting the requirements of Maryland law related to the intraoral procedure for which the applicant has applied for a certificate
AND
- IV. Hold the appropriate certification from DANB
AND
- V. Pass an examination provided by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners
AND
- VI. Submit to a criminal background check, apply to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners, and pay applicable fee

Allowable

Allowable Functions (see Note below**)

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 only to remove stain or biofilm in connection with a dental prophylaxis and before a dentist performs an esthetic or cementation procedure
- 40. Placing dental sealants
- 59. Monitoring nitrous oxide by observing a patient
 - Applying silver diamine fluoride
 - Assisting in orthodontic procedures authorized by the Board
 - Additional intraoral procedures authorized by the Board

**Note: The Maryland Legislature passed a law in 2022 (HB 968) authorizing the creation of a new expanded function dental assistant (EFDA) level who may perform specified expanded functions. The new EFDA categories will replace the Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties or Orthodontics titles detailed in this document. Although the effective date of the law is 10/1/2022 and the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners has drafted rules to implement this new law, the new rules are not yet finalized and effective. Until the effectiveness of the new rules, the current requirements for the Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties or Orthodontics titles remain in effect.



Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics (see Note on previous page **)

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

Requirements

To perform orthodontic functions in Maryland, a dental assistant must register as a Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics.

To qualify, one must:

- I. Complete a Board-approved course of at least 35 hours related to Maryland orthodontic dental assisting
AND
- II. a. Pass the Maryland Orthodontic Assisting Expanded Functions (MDO) exam administered by DANB **OR**
b. Hold the national DANB Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA) certification
AND
- III. Apply to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners for state recognition as a Maryland Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics

Allowable Functions

Allowable

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. Placing and removing arch wires
- 15. Placing elastics and ligatures
- 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
- 44. Taking alginate impressions for intraoral appliances
- 54, 61. Removing excess cement from around orthodontic bands
- 64. Fabricating athletic mouthguards, bleaching trays, fluoride trays, impression trays, nightguards on models
 - Performing bite registration
 - Bleaching (using bleaching tray)
 - Applying bonding agents
- Etching teeth
- Cementing of orthodontic bands, placement of bonded attachments, or the removal of cemented or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
- Selecting headgear
- Applying desensitizing agents
- All duties designated to Dental Assistants, under the same level of required supervision
- Any other duty approved by the Board (see the “Dental Auxiliaries Procedures Chart” on the Maryland Board of Dental Examiners’ website at <https://health.maryland.gov/dental> for additional duties)

Functions NOT Permitted by a Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics in Maryland

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 Qualified in Orthodontics**:

Prohibited Duties

- 6. Placing or removing retraction cord
- 9, 20. Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing and polishing teeth (see Note on page 76)
- 13. Removing sutures
- 14. Drying a root canal
- 27. Placing or removing a rubber dam
- 33, 51. Condensing, carving or finishing any restoration
- 35, 62. Removing or placing a periodontal dressing
- 40. Applying pit and fissure sealants (see Note on page 76)
- 43. Preparing and fitting stainless steel crowns
- 45. Placing or removing a matrix band
- 47. Preparing temporary crowns
- 47. Cementing temporary crowns or restorations
- 49. Performing vitality tests
- 50. Placement of temporary restorations
- 54. Removing temporary crowns
- 59. Monitoring nitrous oxide (see Note on page 76)
- 63. Placing an initial surgical dressing
 - Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning
 - Surgery on hard or soft tissues
 - Initiation of treatment at any time for the correction of malocclusions and malformations of the teeth or jaws
 - Administering injectable local anesthesia
- Adjusting occlusion of natural teeth, restorations or appliances
- Adjusting prosthetic appliances
- Cementing permanent crowns or restorations
- Administering nitrous oxide
- Applying silver diamine fluoride (see Note on page 76)
- Glucose monitoring
- Arch wire adjustment
- Bleaching (internal, laser or high-intensity light)
- Use a high speed handpiece intraorally
- Oral cancer screenings
- Oral cancer tissue biopsy
- Placement of liquid dam
- Applying and removing socket dressing
- Placement of subgingival medicaments
- Remove intracoronal temporary restoration
- Polish restorations
- Place sutures
- Place and remove wedges
- Perform manual curettage
- Any other duty prohibited by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (for additional prohibited duties, see the “Dental Auxiliaries Procedures Chart” on the Maryland Board of Dental Examiners’ website at <https://health.maryland.gov/dental>)

*Direct Supervision: The supervising dentist is in the dental office; personally diagnoses the condition to be treated; personally authorizes the procedure; and, before dismissal of the patient, personally evaluates the performance 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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