

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.



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- 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 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.



1 Level One Dental Assistant

2 General Duties Expanded Functions Dental Assistant

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 EFDA

See page 78

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 qualify to be certified as a dental radiation technologist, an applicant shall:

1. Be 18 years of age or older **AND**
2. Be of good moral character **AND**
3. Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent **AND**
4. Successfully complete a Board-approved course of at least 24 hours related to Maryland dental radiology **AND**
5. Pass the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam or Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam for qualifying to place and expose radiographs **AND**
6. Meet any requirements established by the American Dental Association or any applicable federal standards for training and certification as a dental radiation technologist. **AND**
7. Submit a Dental Radiation Technologist Certification by Examination application with required documentation to the MSBDE.

An individual holding an active license or certification to practice dental radiation technology in another state may be granted certification in Maryland if the individual:

1. Has engaged in practicing dental radiation technology for at least 150 hours in the 3 years preceding application for certification in Maryland; **AND**
2. Meets any requirements established by the American Dental Association or any applicable federal standards for training and certification as a dental radiation technologist **AND**
3. Submit a Dental Radiation Technologist Certification by Waiver of Examination application with required documentation with required documentation to the MSBDE.

Note: An individual may be simultaneously certified as an orthodontic EFDA, a general duties EFDA, a dental radiation technologist, or any combination thereof.



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 **Level One Dental Assistant**:

- 9, 20. Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing and polishing teeth
- 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, 63 Placing surgical dressing
- 40. Apply pit and fissure sealants
- 59. Monitoring nitrous oxide
 - Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning
 - Surgery on hard or soft tissues
 - Administering injectable local anesthesia
 - 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
 - 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
 - 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

Prohibited Duties

Functions NOT Permitted by General Duties Expanded Function Dental Assistant 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 **General Duties Expanded Function Dental Assistant**:

- 15. Placing or removing an arch wire
- 15. Placing elastics or ligatures
- 20. Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing
- 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
- 33, 51. Condensing, carving or finishing any restoration
- 35, 63 Placing surgical dressing
- Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning
- Surgery on hard or soft tissues
- Administering injectable local anesthesia
- 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
- 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
- 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
- Place sutures
- Polish restorations
- Any other duty prohibited by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

Prohibited

***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.



1 Level One Dental Assistant

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

A dental assistant in the state of Maryland may perform basic supportive dental procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist. To qualify, one must:

1. Be at least 18 years old **AND**
2. The supervising dentist shall ensure that the level one dental assistant is properly trained in Infection control **AND**
3. The supervising dentist shall ensure that the level one dental assistant is properly trained in Cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

A Level One Dental Assistant working under general supervision for a dental 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 or other program approved by the Board **AND**
- Have at least 400 hours of dental assisting clinical practice in dental patient care **AND**
- Successfully complete a Board-approved course of at least 3 hours in infection control with OSHA protocol **AND**
- Enter into a written agreement with the supervising dentist setting forth the terms and conditions of practice under general supervision

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
- 12. Delivering restorative material with dentist at chairside
- 13. Removing sutures
- 14. Drying a root canal
- 18. Applying topical fluoride rinse or foam tray or fluoride varnish
- 24. Instructing on oral hygiene
- 25, 48. Placement and removal of materials for the isolation of the dentition, provided that the material is not retained by the dentition
- 27. Placing or removing a rubber dam
- 35, 62. Removing or placing a periodontal dressing (except placing the original periodontal dressing)
- 37. Take and record vital signs, including blood pressure and pulse readings
- 43. Preparing and fitting stainless steel crowns
- 44. Taking alginate or digital impressions for study models or diagnostic casts
- 44. Taking alginate impressions for intraoral appliances
- 44. Taking digital and electronic impressions
- 45. Placing or removing a matrix band
- 47. Fabricating temporary crowns
- 47. Cementing temporary crowns or restorations
- 48. Rinsing and aspiration of the oral cavity
- 48. Retraction of the lips, cheek, tongue and flaps
- 48. Place and remove cotton rolls
- 49. Performing vitality tests
- 50. Placement of temporary restorations
- 54. Removing temporary crowns
- 54. Removing excess cement
- 56. Applying topical anesthetic
- 64. Fabricating athletic mouthguards, bleaching trays, fluoride trays, impression trays, nightguards on models

Under Direct Supervision* (con't)

- Performing intraoral photography
- Light curing
- Checking for loose bands
- Applying desensitizing agents
- Fabricating indirect restorations in a dental office
- Performing bite registration
- Placing and removing wedges

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 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 General Duties Expanded Function Dental Assistant

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform specified intraoral procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist, a dental assistant must be certified as a **General Duties Expanded Function Dental Assistant**. To qualify, an applicant shall:

1. Be of good moral character **AND**
2. Be at least 18 years old **AND**
3. Be a high school graduate or have attained a high school equivalency **AND**
4. Submit to a State criminal history records check **AND**
5. Have successfully completed a 60-hour Board-approved course related to Maryland general duties EFDA **AND**
6. Successfully complete DANB's Maryland General Duties Expanded Functions Dental Assisting Exam **AND**
7. Pass the Maryland Jurisprudence Examination on Dental Assisting with a score of 75 or greater in each required section **AND**
8. Maintain cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification from either the American Heart Association's Basic Life Support for Healthcare-Providers or the American Red Cross's Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation for Professional Rescuers or other program approved by the Board. **AND**
9. Submit application with required documentation to the MSBDE for certification as an General Duties EFDA.

Note: Effective August 31, 2026, the Board no longer recognizes the classification "dental assistant recognized as qualified in general duties." A dental assistant previously recognized by the Board as a "dental assistant recognized as qualified in general duties" may, under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist, perform the duties of a level one dental assistant. An individual may be simultaneously certified as an orthodontic EFDA, a general duties EFDA, a dental radiation technologist, or any combination thereof.

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 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 patient during flow, the reduction of flow, the shutting of equipment controlling the flow of nitrous oxide and at all times in between the start of the flow of nitrous oxide until the nitrous oxide has been terminated and the patient has fully awoken and is coherent
 - Applying silver diamine fluoride
 - Acid etching
 - Applying bonding agents
 - All duties designated to Level One Dental Assistants, under the same level of required supervision
 - Any other duties approved by the Board

Monitoring Nitrous Oxide: Standards of Practice:

A general duties EFDA who monitors a patient to whom nitrous oxide has been administered may not:

- 1 Increase the nitrous oxide levels;
- 2 Monitor more than one patient at a time;
- 3 Treat any other patient during the course of the monitoring; or
- 4 Leave the operatory during the monitoring except in emergency circumstances.

A dentist who orders a general duties EFDA to monitor a patient to whom nitrous oxide has been administered shall:

- 1 Have a written emergency plan;
- 2 Remain in the dental office and in close proximity to be summoned in the event of an emergency; and
- 3 Discharge the patient.

*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.



MARYLAND (ORTHODONTIC)

Updated by DANB 8/31/2026

Orthodontic Expanded Function Dental Assistant

Education, Training and Credential Requirements

To perform orthodontic functions in Maryland, a dental assistant must be certified as an **Orthodontic Expanded Function Dental Assistant**. To qualify, an applicant shall:

1. Be of good moral character **AND**
2. Be at least 18 years old **AND**
3. Be a high school graduate or have attained a high school equivalency **AND**
4. Submit to a State criminal history records check **AND**
5. Have successfully completed a 35-hour Board-approved course related to Maryland orthodontic EFDA **AND**
6. Successfully complete DANB's Maryland Orthodontic Assisting Expanded Functions Exam **AND**
7. Pass the Maryland Jurisprudence Examination on Dental Assisting with a score of 75 or greater in each required section **AND**
8. Maintain cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification from either the American Heart Association's Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers or the American Red Cross's Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation for Professional Rescuers or other program approved by the Board. **AND**
9. Submit application with required documentation to the MSBDE for certification as an Orthodontic EFDA.

Note: A dental assistant previously recognized by the Board as a "dental assistant recognized as qualified in orthodontics" shall obtain certification from the Board as an orthodontic EFDA before the dental assistant may perform any of the duties of an orthodontic EFDA. (1) A dental assistant recognized by the Board as qualified in orthodontics prior to August 31, 2026 may lawfully perform the duties of an orthodontic EFDA until February 28, 2027. (2) A dental assistant recognized by the Board as qualified in orthodontics prior to August 31, 2026 who has not become an orthodontic EFDA by February 28, 2027 may not perform the duties of either a dental assistant recognized as qualified in orthodontics or an orthodontic EFDA.

Allowable Functions

Functions with numbers correspond to functions included in a 2002-2005 study of dental assisting core competencies. See page 11 for more information.

Under Direct Supervision*

- 15. Placing and removing arch wires
- 15. Placing elastics and ligatures
- 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
- 54, 61. Removing excess cement from around orthodontic bands
- 64. Fabricating athletic mouthguards, bleaching trays, fluoride trays, impression trays, nightguards on models
- Cementing of orthodontic bands, placement of bonded attachments, or the removal of cemented or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
- Selecting headgear
- Acid etching
- Applying bonding agents
- All duties designated to Level One Dental Assistants, under the same level of required supervision
- Any other duties approved by the Board

Functions NOT Permitted by an Orthodontic Expanded Function Dental Assistant 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 **Orthodontic Expanded Function Dental Assistant**:

- 9, 20. Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing and polishing teeth
- 33, 51. Condensing, carving or finishing any restoration
- 35. Placing a periodontal dressing
- 40. Applying pit and fissure sealants
- 43. Preparing and fitting stainless steel crowns
- 45. Placing or removing a matrix band
- 59. Monitoring nitrous oxide
- 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
- 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
- Place sutures
- Polish restorations
- Any other duty prohibited by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

***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 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.

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