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Measuring Dental Assisting Excellence®

How To Use The Following Charts

Chart 1

View which job designations are used in your state.



Be sure to follow the legal requirements to perform dental radiographic procedures.



See which tasks are not permitted by state law.



View the education/training/credential required for each level of dental assisting.




Compare your state's job designations to those used as standardized job titles in the DANB/ADAA Core Competency Study.

Chart 2

Review all the allowable tasks for each level of dental assisting as published in the state practice act.



The numbers next to each task correspond to the 70 numbered tasks that were identified and used in the DANB/ADAA Core Competency Study. Tasks that are not numbered do not directly match one of the 70 tasks, yet are identified by the state in the practice act. A full list of those tasks follow your state's chart.



If your state's dental practice act specifically defines levels of supervision, the state-specific definition is noted in the template.

Dental Assisting Functions List

The following is a list of 70 dental assisting tasks developed by the ADAA/DANB Alliance in the course of its research. These selected tasks were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.

Functions in each state that correspond to the national Core Competencies Study functions are **numbered** in the Career Ladder Template, using language directly from the state's dental practice act. Functions listed with **bullets** in the *Career Ladder Template* are part of the state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB research.

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 archwires
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 set-ups
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



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 four levels of supervision for dental auxiliaries, including dental assistants, which it defines in its “Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel,” (2006: 307) which is part of its *Current Policies*, last updated in 2007. Note that “allied dental personnel” refers to dental assistants, dental hygienists and dental laboratory technicians.

The four levels of supervision defined by the ADA are as follows:

Personal supervision: A 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 dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses 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, before dismissal of the patient, evaluates the performance of the allied dental personnel.

Indirect supervision: A dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, has personally diagnosed 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 dentist is not required to be in the dental office or treatment facility when procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, but has personally diagnosed the condition to be treated, has personally authorized the procedures and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

Furthermore, the ADA’s Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel stipulates that intraoral expanded functions should be performed by allied dental personnel “only under the direct 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 does not make 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 this volume, 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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Education/Training/ Credential Required	Job Title According to State of TX	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in TX
<p>To perform expanded functions under the direct or general supervision of a licensed dentist in the state of Texas, a dental assistant must complete the following:</p> <p><u>Pit and fissure sealant certificate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work at least two years as a dental assistant AND Complete a current course in basic life support AND Complete a minimum of eight hours of Texas Board-approved clinical and didactic education in pit and fissure sealants AND Register with the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) <p><u>Coronal polishing certificate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work at least two years as a dental assistant AND Complete a minimum of eight hours of TSBDE-approved clinical and didactic education in coronal polishing OR Earn the national DANB CDA Certification and successfully complete the TSBDE jurisprudence assessment OR Graduate from a CODA-accredited dental assisting program that includes clinical and didactic education in coronal polishing and complete the TSBDE jurisprudence assessment AND Register with the TSBDE <p><u>Monitor the administration of nitrous oxide:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass a TSBDE-approved nitrous oxide monitoring course AND Register with the TSBDE 	<p>Note: To renew a certificate in an expanded function, a dental assistant must complete six hours of continuing education each year in areas covering dental assistant duties. A dental assistant holding two or more certificates must complete 12 hours of continuing education each year to renew all of the certificates held by the assistant.</p>	<p>Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)</p>	<p>To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures in the state of Texas, one must be a Registered Dental Assistant (see requirements to the left).</p> <p>A dental assistant will not be considered to be positioning, exposing, or otherwise making dental x-rays if the dental assistant only performs radiological procedures in the course of training (or for other educational purposes) and is at all times under the direct supervision of the employer dentist. A dental assistant performing radiological procedures in the course of on-the-job training may only do so for a period of one year.</p>	<p>The following functions are not permitted by any level of dental assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. The removal of calculus, deposits or accretions from the natural and restored surfaces of exposed human teeth and restorations in the human mouth 33. The placement of any final restoration 46. The taking of an impression for a final restoration, appliance or prosthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root planing or the smoothing and polishing of roughened root surfaces or exposed human teeth Comprehensive examination or diagnosis and treatment planning Surgical or cutting procedure on hard or soft tissue The prescription of a drug, medication or work authorization The making of an intraoral occlusal adjustment Direct pulp capping, pulpotomy or any other endodontic procedure The final placement and intraoral adjustment of a fixed or removable appliance The authority to an individual to administer a local anesthetic agent, inhalation sedative agent, parenteral sedative agent or general anesthetic agent Diagnosis, treatment planning, prescription of therapeutic measures and reevaluation Placement of site-specific subgingival medicaments Any other act the delegation of which is prohibited by board rule
<p>A dental assistant in the state of Texas can earn status as a Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) by formally registering with the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE). To qualify, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete a current course in basic life support AND Successfully complete a mandatory course of training specified by the TSBDE that includes procedures for positioning and exposing dental x-rays, jurisprudence and infection control OR Earn the national DANB CDA Certification and successfully complete the TSBDE jurisprudence assessment. AND Apply to the TSBDE for registration 	<p>Dental Assistant qualified to perform expanded functions</p>	<p>DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) or Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)</p>	<p>The ADAA/DANB Alliance developed a listing of standardized job titles (left) based on its national Core Competencies Study conducted from 2002-2005.</p> <p>The same study utilized a list of 70 job functions which were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.</p> <p>Functions in this state that relate to the national DANB/ADAA Core Competencies Study are numbered to the right, using language directly from this state's dental practice act. (The numbers correspond to the study's task numbering system.)</p> <p>Functions listed with bullets are part of this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB/ADAA research.</p>	
<p>A dental assistant in the state of Texas may perform basic supportive dental procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist (see opposite page).</p> <p>There are no education or training requirements for this level of dental assisting.</p>	<p>Dental Assistant</p>	<p>Dental Assistant</p> <p>Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>	<p>These state templates reflect the work being done by the ADAA/DANB Alliance to support a uniform national model for one set of dental assisting tasks, levels and requirements, which will serve as a viable career ladder for dental assistants.</p>	

Job Title
According to
State of TX

Allowable Functions
(Functions with numbers relate specifically to Core Competency designations;
functions with bullets are in this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB research)

Dental
Assistant
*qualified
to perform
expanded
functions*

Under Direct Supervision*

- 9. Coronal polishing (*see requirements on previous page*)
- 18. Apply fluoride varnish
- 40. Apply pit and fissure sealants, to include the use of a rubber prophylaxis cup and appropriate polishing materials to cleanse the occlusal and smooth surfaces of teeth that will be sealed or to prepare teeth for application of orthodontic bonding resins (*see requirements on previous page*)
- 59. Monitor nitrous oxide (*see requirements on previous page*)

Under General Supervision*

- 22. Expose radiographs (*see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page*)
 - The provision of interim treatment of a minor emergency dental condition to an existing patient of the treating dentist; the treating dentist must delegate the procedure orally or in writing before the dental assistant performs the procedure, must retain responsibility for the procedure, and must schedule a follow-up appointment with the patient within a reasonable time

Registered
Dental
Assistant
(RDA)

Under Direct Supervision*

- Reversible acts and procedures

Dental
Assistant

DANB's Note on Allowable Dental Assisting Functions

In the state of Texas, all dental assistants may:

- Perform infection control and occupational safety procedures
- Perform other duties not specified by this state's dental practice act

At this time, DANB cannot list all allowable dental assisting functions for each state because some states' dental practice acts outline very specific allowable functions, while others outline only prohibited functions and some contain minimal or no regulation of dental assisting duties.

***Direct Supervision:** The dentist who employs the dental assistant or is in charge of the dental assistant must be physically present in the dental office when the dental assistant performs a delegated dental act.
General Supervision: The dentist who employs or is in charge of the dental assistant is responsible for supervising the services to be performed by the dental assistant. The dentist may or may not be present on the premises when the dental assistant performs the procedures.