

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 at least annually regarding the accuracy and currency of this information. To verify, or if you have any questions, please contact your state's dental board.



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 form 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.

Education/Training/ Credential Required	Job Title According to State of CA	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in CA
<p>To perform expanded functions under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in the state of California, a dental assistant must be licensed as a Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF). To register as an RDAEF, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hold a valid license as an RDA (see below) OR Successfully complete the requirements for licensure as an RDA AND ■ Successfully complete a California Board-approved course for application of pit and fissure sealants AND ■ Successfully complete a California Board-approved extended functions educational program AND ■ Pass a California Board-approved written exam, and a state clinical or practical exam AND ■ Apply to the Dental Board of California for licensure as a Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions 	Registered Dental Assistant in Extended Functions (RDAEF)	Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)	<p>A dental assistant in the state of California must be state certified in radiography to legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures.</p> <p>To apply for state certification, a dental assistant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successfully complete a California Board of Dental Examiners-approved radiation safety course which includes theory and clinical application in radiographic technique OR Pass a Board-approved radiation safety exam (prior to January 1, 1985) AND ■ Submit a copy of the certificate of completion to the Dental Board of California 	<p>The following functions are not permitted by a dental assistant, an orthodontic assistant or a dental sedation assistant:</p> <p>33, 70. Placing, finishing, or removing permanent restorations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosis and comprehensive treatment planning • Surgical or cutting procedures on hard or soft tissue including, but not limited to, the removal of teeth and the cutting and suturing of soft tissue • Prescribing medication • Starting or adjusting local or general anesthesia or oral or parenteral conscious sedation; except for the administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen, whether administered alone or in combination with each other and except as otherwise provided by law • Supragingival and subgingival scaling
<p>To be licensed as a Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) in the state of California, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Graduate from a California Board-approved RDA educational program OR Complete 15 months of work experience as a dental assistant AND ■ Successfully complete California Board-approved courses in radiation safety and coronal polishing AND ■ Successfully complete California Board-approved courses in the California Dental Practice Act and infection control within 5 years prior to application for licensure AND ■ Successfully complete an AHA or ARC-approved course in Basic Life Support AND ■ Pass a state written and practical exam AND ■ Pass a state written exam in law and ethics AND ■ Apply for licensure as a Registered Dental Assistant to the Dental Board of California 	Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)	DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) or Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)	<p>← The ADAA/DANB Alliance developed a listing of standardized job titles (left) based on its national Core Competency Study conducted from 2002-05.</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 Competency 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>Note: The Dental Board of California has not drafted 2010 regulations for functions not permitted by dental assistants as of the date of publication. The functions listed above are only from section 1750.1(e) of the California Business and Professions Code, and may not be a comprehensive list of all functions not permitted beginning January 1, 2010 by dental assistants in California.</p>
<p>An unlicensed dental assistant in the state of California may perform basic supportive dental procedures under the supervision of a licensed dentist specified by the state dental practice act (see opposite page).</p> <p>A dentist must ensure that all unlicensed dentists maintain BLS certification, and that all unlicensed dental assistants in continuous employment for 120 days or more have proof of completing all of the following within a year from date of employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A California Dental Board-approved course in the California Dental Practice Act AND ■ A California Dental Board-approved course in infection control AND ■ An AHA or ARC-approved course in Basic Life Support which includes hands-on simulated clinical scenarios 	Unlicensed Dental Assistant	Dental Assistant	<p>Functions listed with bullets are part of this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB/ADAA research.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <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> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>†DANB has not received confirmation that the most recent version of the Career Ladder Template has been reviewed and approved by the Dental Board of California. All of the templates in this volume reflect DANB's interpretation of state or Washington, D.C. dental practice acts. For authoritative information regarding requirements for dental assistants in each state or Washington, D.C., please contact the relevant dental board.</p> </div>

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Job Title
According to
State of CA

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)

Registered
Dental
Assistant in
Extended
Functions
(RDAEF)

Under Direct Supervision*

- 1, 2. Conduct preliminary evaluation of the patient's oral health, including, but not limited to, charting, intraoral and extra-oral evaluation of soft tissue, classifying occlusion, and myofunctional evaluation
 6. Cord retraction of gingivae for impression procedures
 46. Take final impressions for permanent indirect restorations
 46. Take final impressions for tooth-borne removable prosthesis
 - 47, 50. Place, contour, finish, and adjust all direct restorations
- Perform oral health assessments in school-based, community health project settings
 - Size and fit endodontic master points and accessory points.
 - Cement endodontic master points and accessory points
 - Polish and contour existing amalgam restorations
 - Adjust and cement permanent indirect restorations
 - All duties a registered dental assistant is allowed to perform

Under Direct Supervision of a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) or RDH in Alternative Practice*

- Perform oral health assessments in school-based, community health project settings

Note: This state allows dental assistants to perform a separate set of orthodontic and sedation functions, which are specified by state in a section at the end of this booklet. Any functions specific to orthodontic or sedation assisting included on this page will also be reflected in the orthodontic and dental sedation assisting duties section of this booklet.

Registered
Dental
Assistant
(RDA)

Under Direct or General Supervision*

The supervising licensed dentist is responsible for determining level of supervision.

- 1, 2. Mouth-mirror inspection of oral cavity, including charting of obvious lesions, existing restorations, and missing teeth
 9. Coronal polishing
 14. Dry endodontically treated canals with paper absorbent points
 15. Place ligature ties and archwires
 34. Place bases, liners, and bonding agents
 35. Place periodontal dressings
 40. Apply pit and fissure sealants (board-approved course required)
 - 47, 54, 55. Fabricate, adjust, cement, and remove indirect provisional restorations, including stainless steel crowns when used as a provisional restoration
 49. Test pulp vitality and record findings
 50. Place, adjust and finish direct provisional restorations
 61. Remove excess cement from surfaces of teeth with a hand instrument
 61. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment (board-approved course required)
 63. Place post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist
 - Remove orthodontic bands
 - Apply bleaching agents and activate with non-laser light-curing device
 - Use of automated caries detection devices and materials to gather information for diagnosis by the dentist
 - Obtain intraoral images for computer-aided design (CAD), milled restorations
 - Chemically prepare teeth for bonding
 - Adjust dentures extra-orally
- All duties a dental assistant is allowed to perform
 - The allowable duties of an orthodontic assistant permit holder (see page 108 for requirements)
 - The allowable duties of a dental sedation assistant permit holder (see page 110 for requirements)

Under Direct Supervision of a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) or RDH in Alternative Practice*

9. Coronal Polishing
18. Application of topical fluoride
40. Application of sealants (board-approved course required)

Unlicensed
Dental
Assistant

Under Direct Supervision*

13. Remove sutures after inspection of the site by the dentist
18. Apply topical fluoride
27. Place and remove rubber dams or other isolation devices
42. Place orthodontic separators
44. Take intraoral impressions for all nonprosthodontic appliances
45. Place, wedge and remove matrices for restorative procedures
56. Apply non-aerosol and non-caustic topical agents
59. Assist in the administration of nitrous oxide when used for analgesia or sedation. A dental assistant shall not start the administration of the gases and shall not adjust the flow of the gases unless instructed to do so by the supervising licensed dentist who shall be present at the patient's chairside during the implementation of these instructions. This paragraph shall not be construed to prevent any person from taking appropriate action in the event of a medical emergency.
62. Remove periodontal dressings
69. Remove post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist
 - Remove orthodontic separators
 - Remove arch wires
 - Remove ligature ties
 - Cure restorative or orthodontic materials in operative site with light-curing device
 - Examine orthodontic appliances
 - Take facebow transfers and bite registrations.
 - Perform measurements for the purposes of orthodontic treatment.
 - After adjustment by the dentist, examine and seat removable orthodontic appliances and deliver care instructions to the patient
 - Place patient monitoring sensors
 - Monitor patient sedation, limited to reading and transmitting information from the monitor display during the intraoperative phase of surgery for electrocardiogram waveform, carbon dioxide and end tidal carbon dioxide concentrations, respiratory cycle data, continuous noninvasive blood pressure data, or pulse arterial oxygen saturation measurements, for the purpose of interpretation and evaluation by a supervising licensed dentist who shall be at the patient's chairside during this procedure.

Under Direct Supervision of a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) in Alternative Practice*

48. Intraoral retraction
48. Suctioning
 - Any extraoral duty

Under General Supervision*

22. Operation of radiographic equipment (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)
 - Perform intraoral and extraoral photography
 - Extra-oral duties or functions specified by the supervising dentist, provided that these duties are basic supportive procedures (technically elementary

characteristics, completely reversible, and are unlikely to cause potentially hazardous conditions for the patient)

***Direct Supervision:** Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, who must be physically present in the treatment facility during the performance of those procedures.
General Supervision: Supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures. All procedures shall be checked and approved by the supervising dentist prior to dismissal of the patient from the office of said dentist.
Direct Supervision by RDH or RDH in Alternative Practice: Dental assistants may perform these duties while employed by or practicing in a licensed primary care clinic or specialty clinic, a primary care clinic exempt from licensure, or a contracted clinic owned and operated by a hospital.

Dental Assisting Functions List

The following is a list of 70 dental assisting tasks developed by the ADA/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 Competency 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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