

## **DENTAL ASSISTING CATEGORIES**

*EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2010*

Starting January 1, 2010, the dental assisting scope of practice will include new duties and two new specialty permits in orthodontics and dental sedation for which all categories of dental assistants are eligible to obtain after completing required instruction. Along with the new duties, licensure and license renewal requirements will change for Registered Dental Assistants and Registered Dental Assistants in Extended Functions. Dentist employers will also be responsible for ensuring that unlicensed dental assistants complete courses in the California Dental Practice Act (2-hour) and Infection Control (8-hour) within a specified time and that dental assistants maintain certification in basic life support.

### **AUTHORIZED DUTIES - DENTAL ASSISTANT**

*(Business & Professions Code §1750)*

A dental assistant is an individual who, without a license, may perform basic supportive dental procedures, as authorized by law and by regulations adopted by the Dental Board, under the supervision of a licensed dentist. "Basic supportive dental procedures" are those procedures that have technically elementary characteristics, are completely reversible, and are unlikely to precipitate potentially hazardous conditions for the patient being treated.

### **GENERAL SUPERVISION DUTIES (DA)**

1. Extra-oral duties or procedures specified by the supervising licensed dentist provided that these duties or procedures meet the definition of a basic supportive procedure.
2. Operate dental radiography equipment for the purpose of oral radiography if the dental assistant has completed an approved radiation safety course or passed a radiation safety exam.
3. Perform intraoral and extraoral photography.

### **DIRECT SUPERVISION DUTIES (DA)**

1. Apply nonaerosol and noncaustic topical agents.
2. Apply topical fluoride<sup>1</sup>
3. Take intraoral impressions for all non-prosthetic appliances.
4. Take facebow transfers and bite registrations.
5. Place and remove rubber dams or other isolation devices.
6. Place, wedge, and remove matrices for restorative procedures.
7. Remove post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist.
8. Perform measurements for the purposes of orthodontic treatment.

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<sup>1</sup> *Effective January 10, 2010, when operating in a school-based setting or a public health program created or administered by a federal, state, county, or local governmental entity pursuant to Sections 104762 and 104830 of the Health and Safety Code, a dental assistant may apply topical fluoride under the general direction of a licensed dentist or physician.*

9. Cure restorative or orthodontic materials in operative site with a light-curing device.
10. Examine orthodontic appliances.
11. Place and remove orthodontic separators.
12. Remove ligature ties and archwires.
13. After adjustment by the dentist, examine and seat removable orthodontic appliances and deliver care instructions to the patient.
14. Remove periodontal dressings.
15. Remove sutures after inspection of the site by the dentist.
16. Place patient monitoring sensors.
17. 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.
18. 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.

Under the supervision of a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice, a dental assistant may perform intraoral retraction and suctioning.

The board may specify additional allowable duties by regulation.

The duties of a dental assistant or a dental assistant holding a permit in orthodontic assisting or in dental sedation do not include any of the following procedures unless specifically allowed by law:

1. Diagnosis and comprehensive treatment planning.
2. Placing, finishing, or removing permanent restorations.
3. Surgery or cutting on hard and soft tissue including, but not limited to, the removal of teeth and the cutting and suturing of soft tissue.
4. Prescribing medication.
5. 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.

#### **REQUIREMENTS OF THE DENTIST SUPERVISING/EMPLOYING A DENTAL ASSISTANT**

The supervising licensed dentist is responsible for determining the competency of the dental assistant to perform basic supportive dental procedures. The employer of a dental assistant is responsible for ensuring that the dental assistant who has been in continuous employment for 120 days or more, has

already successfully completed, or successfully completes, all of the following within a year of the date of employment:

1. A board-approved course in the Dental Practice Act (2-hour).
2. A board-approved course in Infection Control (8-hour).
3. A course in basic life support offered by an instructor approved by the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association, or any other course approved by the board as equivalent and that provides the student the opportunity to engage in hands-on simulated clinical scenarios.

The employer must ensure the dental assistant maintains certification in basic life support.

### **AUTHORIZED DUTIES - REGISTERED DENTAL ASSISTANT**

*(Business & Professions Code §1752.4)*

1. A registered dental assistant may perform all of the following duties:
2. All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform.
3. Mouth-mirror inspections of the oral cavity, to include charting of obvious lesions, existing restorations, and missing teeth.
4. Apply and activate bleaching agents using a nonlaser light-curing device.
5. Use of automated caries detection devices and materials to gather information for diagnosis by the dentist.
6. Obtain intraoral images for computer-aided design (CAD), milled restorations.
7. Pulp vitality testing and recording of findings.
8. Place bases, liners, and bonding agents.
9. Chemically prepare teeth for bonding.
10. Place, adjust, and finish direct provisional restorations.
11. Fabricate, adjust, cement, and remove indirect provisional restorations, including stainless steel crowns when used as a provisional restoration.
12. Place post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist.
13. Place periodontal dressings.
14. Dry endodontically treated canals using absorbent paper points.
15. Adjust dentures extra-orally.
16. Remove excess cement from surfaces of teeth with a hand instrument.
17. Polish coronal surfaces of the teeth.
18. Place ligature ties and archwires.
19. Remove orthodontic bands.
20. All duties that the board may prescribe by regulation.

A registered dental assistant may only perform the following additional duties if he or she has completed a board-approved educational program in those duties:

1. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment.

2. The allowable duties of an orthodontic assistant permit-holder. A registered dental assistant shall not be required to complete further instruction in the duties of placing ligature ties and archwires, removing orthodontic bands, and removing excess cement from tooth surfaces with a hand instrument.
3. The allowable duties of a dental sedation assistant permit-holder.
4. The application of pit and fissure sealants.

Except as provided in Business & Professions Code §1777, the supervising dentist shall be responsible for determining whether each authorized procedure performed by a registered dental assistant should be performed under general or direct supervision.

#### **AUTHORIZED DUTIES - REGISTERED DENTAL ASSISTANT IN EXTENDED FUNCTIONS**

*(Business & Professions Code §1753.4)*

On and after January 1, 2010, each person who holds a current and active registered dental assistant in extended functions license issued prior to January 1, 2010, who wishes to perform the duties specified below (B&P Section 1753.5) in (1), (2), (5), and (7) to (11), inclusive, must successfully complete an examination described in the "Licensure Requirements" section of this document.

*(Business & Professions Code §1753.5)*

A registered dental assistant in extended functions licensed on or after January 1, 2010, is authorized to perform all duties and procedures that a registered dental assistant is authorized to perform. A registered dental assistant in extended functions licensed on or after January 1, 2010 may perform the following additional procedures under direct supervision and pursuant to the order, control, and full professional responsibility of a licensed dentist:

1. Conduct preliminary evaluation of the patient's oral health, including, but not limited to, charting, intraoral and extraoral evaluation of soft tissue, classifying occlusion, and myofunctional evaluation.
2. Perform oral health assessments in school-based, community health project settings under the direction of a dentist, registered dental hygienist, or registered dental hygienist in alternative practice.
3. Cord retraction of gingiva for impression procedures.
4. Size and fit endodontic master points and accessory points.
5. Cement endodontic master points and accessory points.
6. Take final impressions for permanent indirect restorations.
7. Take final impressions for tooth-borne removable prosthesis.
8. Polish and contour existing amalgam restorations.
9. Place, contour, finish, and adjust all direct restorations.
10. Adjust and cement permanent indirect restorations.
11. Other procedures authorized by regulations adopted by the board.

All procedures required to be performed under direct supervision shall be checked and approved by the supervising licensed dentist prior to the patient's dismissal from the office.

A licensed dentist may simultaneously utilize in his or her practice no more than three registered dental assistants in extended functions or registered dental hygienists in extended. (*Business & Professions Code §1753.7*)

### **EMPLOYMENT/PRACTICE AT PRIMARY CARE CLINICS**

(*Business & Professions Code §1777*)

While employed by or practicing in a primary care clinic or specialty clinic licensed pursuant to Section 1204 of the Health and Safety Code, in a primary care clinic exempt from licensure pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 1206 of the Health and Safety Code, or a clinic owned and operated by a hospital that maintains the primary contract with a county government to fill the county's role under Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the following shall apply:

(a) A dental assistant, registered dental assistant, or registered dental assistant in extended functions may perform any extra-oral duty under the direct supervision of a registered dental hygienist or registered dental hygienist in alternative practice.

(b) A registered dental assistant or a registered dental assistant in extended functions may perform the following procedures under the direct supervision of a registered dental hygienist or a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 1763:

1. Coronal polishing.
2. Application of topical fluoride.
3. Application of sealants, after providing evidence to the board of having completed a board-approved course in that procedure.

### **SPECIALTY ASSISTANT PERMITS**

The Orthodontic Assistant Permit and the Dental Sedation Assistant Permit shall require education, examination and license renewal requirements including continuing education requirement biennially to renew the permit.

#### **ORTHODONTIC ASSISTANT PERMIT (OAP)**

(*Business & Professions Code §1750.3*)

A dental assistant, RDA, or RDAEF holding an orthodontic assistant permit may perform the following duties under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist:

1. All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform.
2. Prepare teeth for bonding, and select, preposition, and cure orthodontic brackets after their position has been approved by the supervising licensed dentist.
3. Remove only orthodontic brackets and attachments with removal of the bonding material by the supervising licensed dentist.
4. Size, fit, and cement orthodontic bands.
5. Remove orthodontic bands and remove excess cement from supragingival surfaces of teeth with a hand instrument.
6. Place and ligate archwires.

7. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment.
8. Any additional duties that the board may prescribe by regulation.

### **DENTAL SEDATION ASSISTANT PERMIT (DSAP)**

*(Business & Professions Code §1750.5)*

A dental assistant, RDA, or RDAEF holding a dental sedation assistant permit may perform the following duties under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist or other licensed health care professional authorized to administer conscious sedation or general anesthesia in the dental office:

1. All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform.
2. Monitor patients undergoing conscious sedation or general anesthesia utilizing data from noninvasive instrumentation such as pulse oximeters, electrocardiograms, capnography, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration rate monitoring devices. Evaluation of the condition of a sedated patient shall remain the responsibility of the dentist or other licensed health care professional authorized to administer conscious sedation or general anesthesia, who shall be at the patient's chairside while conscious sedation or general anesthesia is being administered.
3. Drug identification and draw, limited to identification of appropriate medications, ampule and vial preparation, and withdrawing drugs of correct amount as verified by the supervising licensed dentist.
4. Add drugs, medications, and fluids to intravenous lines using a syringe, provided that a supervising licensed dentist is present at the patient's chairside, limited to determining patency of intravenous line, selection of injection port, syringe insertion into injection port, occlusion of intravenous line and blood aspiration, line release and injection of drugs for appropriate time interval. The exception to this duty is that the initial dose of a drug or medication shall be administered by the supervising licensed dentist.
5. Removal of intravenous lines.
6. Any additional duties that the board may prescribe by regulation.
7. The duties listed in numbers (2) to (5), inclusive, may not be performed in any setting other than a dental office or dental clinic.