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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.

See Appendix A for more information about the task numbering system.



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

See Appendix B for more information about supervision.

Education/Training/ Credential Required	Job Title According to State of TN	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions <u>NOT</u> Permitted by Dental Assistants in TN
<p>To perform expanded functions in the state of Tennessee, Registered Dental Assistants (RDAs) <i>must</i> earn state certification by completing the requirements for each of the desired expanded functions listed below:</p> <p><u>Perform coronal polishing procedures:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete a Board-approved coronal polishing course, including both a written and a clinical exam (to qualify, an individual must be an RDA in Tennessee) and Receive a certificate in coronal polishing from the Tennessee Board of Dentistry <p><u>Apply sealants:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete a Board-approved course in sealant application (to qualify, one must be a current RDA) or be enrolled in a CODA-accredited or TN Board-approved program which offers such a course and Receive a certificate in sealant application from the Board <p><u>Monitor nitrous oxide:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete a Board-approved nitrous oxide monitoring course (to qualify, one must be a current RDA) or be enrolled in a CODA-accredited or TN Board-approved program which offers such a course and Receive a certificate in monitoring nitrous oxide from the Board <p><u>Perform restorative and/or prosthetic functions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a minimum of two years of continuous, full-time registered dental assisting employment and Complete a Board-approved certification course and Receive a certificate in restorative and/or prosthetic functions from the Board <p>Note: RDAs who have successfully completed a comparable training program in expanded functions in another state may be eligible to apply directly to the Board for an expanded functions certificate without additional training. For details see <i>DANB's State Fact Booklet</i> or contact the Tennessee Board of Dentistry.</p>	<p>Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) <i>qualified to perform expanded functions</i></p>	<p>Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)</p>	<p>To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in the state of Tennessee, a dental assistant <i>must</i> hold a certificate in dental radiology from the Tennessee Board of Dentistry. To qualify, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a Registered Dental Assistant (<i>see requirements in column at left</i>) <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete a Tennessee Board-approved radiology certification course (to qualify, one must be a current Tennessee RDA) OR Successfully complete a comparable training program in dental radiology in another state OR Be enrolled in a CODA-accredited or Board-approved dental assisting program that offers a dental radiology course as part of its curriculum OR Hold current DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply to the Tennessee Board of Dentistry for state certification in dental radiology 	<p>The following functions are not permitted by any level of dental assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning Surgical or cutting procedures on hard or soft tissue, including laser, air abrasion or micro-abrasion procedures, including curettage or root planing Fitting, adjusting and placement of prosthodontic appliances Issuance of prescription medications, medications not authorized by Tennessee law or Board of Dentistry rules, or work authorizations Performance of direct pulp capping, pulpotomy and other endodontic procedures not authorized by Tennessee law or Board of Dentistry rules Approve the final occlusion Placement of sutures Administration of local anesthesia, nitrous oxide, conscious sedation, or general anesthesia Use of a high-speed handpiece intraorally Utilization of laser equipment and technology Diagnosing of the need for restorations Preparation/cutting of the tooth or soft tissue Modifying existing structure Removal of caries, bases and liners Diagnosing need for any prosthetic appliance Establishing vertical dimension of occlusion and interocclusal records Delivering and/or adjusting appliance Expose radiographs without certification (as indicated in the middle column shown above) Expanded restorative or prosthetic functions without certification (as indicated in the column to the far left)
<p>Registered Dental Assistants in the state of Tennessee may perform the procedures listed for this level on the opposite page. To register as an RDA, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be at least 18 years old and Have a high school diploma or GED certificate and Have a current CPR certificate and Apply for registration to the Tennessee Board of Dentistry 	<p>Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)</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 Practical Dental Assistant is an auxiliary employee of a licensed dentist(s) who is receiving practical chairside dental assisting training from a licensed dentist(s) or is a dental assistant student in an educational program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).</p>	<p>Practical Dental Assistant</p>	<p>Dental Assistant Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>	<p>These state templates reflect the work 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>	

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Job Title According to State of TN	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)
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Registered
Dental
Assistant
(RDA)
*qualified to
perform
expanded
functions*

Under Direct Supervision*

- 9. Coronal polishing
- 22. Exposure of dental radiographs
- 40. Application of sealants
- 59. Monitoring nitrous oxide
 - Restorative functions
 - Prosthetic functions

Registered
Dental
Assistant
(RDA)

Under Direct Supervision*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 37. The taking and recording of a patient's blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and medical history, and charting of oral conditions 3. Calling in prescriptions to the pharmacist as instructed by the employer/dentist 6. Packing and removing retraction cord, with or without vasoactive chemicals, for restorative dental procedures 12. The placement of amalgam in prepared cavities for condensation by the dentist 13. The removal of sutures and staples 14. Drying canals with absorbent paper points 15. Bending, selecting and pre-sizing arch wires and placing arch wires after final adjustment and approval by the dentist 15. Placement of chain elastics on brackets 15. Placement of exposure chains and attachments 18. The application of topical fluorides 24. The instruction of patients in dietary principles 24. Demonstration of oral hygiene procedures and oral health care regimen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. The maintenance of instrument and operatory infection control 27. The placement and removal of rubber dam 29. The selection, prefitting, cementation, curing and removing of orthodontic bands or brackets 34. Placement of cavity bases and liners 35, 62. The placement and removal of periodontal dressings 41. The preparation of instrument trays 42. Placement and removal of pre-treatment separators 43. Selecting and pre-fitting of stainless steel crowns or other pre-formed crowns for insertion by the dentist 44, 46. The taking of alginate impressions for any purpose other than permanent restorations 45. The placement and removal of matrices for restoration 48. Irrigating extraction site 49. Performing pulp testing 50, 55. The fabrication, placement and removal of temporary restorations 52. The processing of radiographs, including digital, of the mouth, gums, jaws, teeth or any portion thereof for dental diagnosis 56. The application of topical anesthetics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61. Removal of cement excess from supragingival surface of teeth by hand instruments only 61. The removal of cement from restorations and bands 63, 69. The placement and removal of socket dressings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The taking of dental plaque smears • The removal of ligature and arch wires • Wound care as directed • Placement of springs on wires • Placement of hooks on brackets • Ligation of arch wires to brackets • The taking of oral cytologic smears • Removal of loose or broken bands or brackets • The application of desensitizing agents • Application of tooth conditioners for bonding • Packing of pulpotomy paste • Fitting, adjusting and cementation of correctional appliances • Other duties specifically approved by the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board |
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Practical
Dental
Assistant

Under Direct Supervision*

- Concurrently perform noninvasive supportive chairside procedures

DANB's Note on Allowable Dental Assisting Functions

In the state of Tennessee, 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/employer must physically be in the office and examine the patient immediately prior and after the procedure.

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
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

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 dental auxiliaries, 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 2012. Note that “allied dental personnel” refers to dental assistants, dental hygienists, community dental health coordinators 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 ADA/DANB Alliance did not address the question of supervision, the ADA/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 ADA/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 footer of the second page of the state chart.



Measuring Dental Assisting Excellence®

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