

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," (2002: 400) which is part of its *Current Policies*, last updated in 2002. 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.

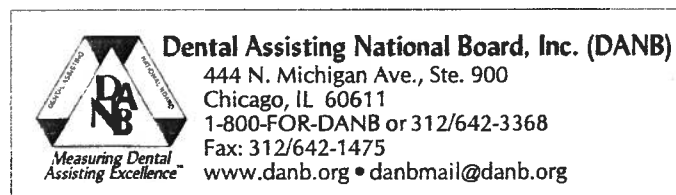
Direct supervision. A dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel and, before 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."

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



DANB/ADAA Core Competency Study

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 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



DANB

Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.

Measuring Dental Assisting Excellence

DANB
Home Page

State-Specific
Information

Acceptance of DANB Exams in Colorado

Please note: These data are provided for informational purposes only and are not intended as a legal opinion about dental practice in any state. To verify, or if you have questions, please contact your state's dental board.

To expose radiographs in the state of Colorado, dental assistants are required to complete 5 hours of practical or clinical experience and 3 hours of lecture for a total of 8 hours from a program accredited by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, the Private Occupational School Division, or the equivalent in any other state. The requirements can also be met with proof of successful completion of the DANB Radiation Health and Safety exam. For more information, contact the University of Colorado Dental School at (303) 315-7603, the Colorado Dental Association at (303) 740-6900, or the Colorado State Board of Dental Examiners at (303) 894-7758 or send an email to dental@dora.state.co.us. Website: www.dora.state.co.us/DENTAL

DANB's State Fact Booklet: A Complete Listing by State of Required DANB Examinations and Excerpts from State Practice Acts provides valuable dental assisting information by state as a resource for dental assisting professionals and other communities of interest. To download an order form click [here](#)

To receive a paper copy of the form, please contact a Client Services Representative at 1-800-FOR-DANB, or email your full name and mailing address to danbmail@danb.org.

[<< Return to List of States](#)

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 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.

Colorado

State-approved
4/18/06

Education/Training/ Credential Required	Job Title According to State of CO	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (See below)	Radiology Requirements	Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in CO
<p>Some dental assistants in the state of Colorado may choose to complete an Expanded Duties Dental Assistant (EDDA) educational program. The EDDA designation is not recognized by the Colorado State Board of Dental Examiners and does not qualify a dental assistant to perform expanded duties in the state.</p> <p>Note: To administer and induce conscious analgesia solely by means of nitrous oxide/oxygen inhalation techniques, a dental assistant must complete a course in an ADA-accredited institution or an institution certified by the Colorado Department of Higher Education Division of Private Occupational Schools. The course must have a minimum of 16 hours, including 4 patient contact hours. The dental assistant must submit proof of compliance to the Board.</p>	<p>Expanded Duties Dental Assistant (EDDA)</p>	<p>Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)</p>	<p>To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiologic procedures in the state of Colorado, a dental assistant <u>must</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete five hours of practical or clinical experience and three hours of lecture for a total of eight hours from a program accredited by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, the Private Occupational School Division (or the equivalent in any other state) <p>OR Successfully complete the national DANB Radiation Health & Safety (RHS) exam</p>	<p>The following functions are not permitted by any level of dental assistant:</p> <p>20. Scaling (supra- and sub-gingival), as it pertains to the practice of dental hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosis • Treatment planning • Prescription of therapeutic measures • Any procedure that contributes to or results in an irremediable alteration of the oral anatomy • Administration of local anesthesia • Root planing • Soft tissue curettage • Periodontal probing
<p>A dental assistant in the state of Colorado may perform basic supportive dental procedures specified by the state dental practice act (see opposite page) under the supervision of a licensed dentist.</p> <p>There are no education or training requirements for this level of dental assisting.</p> <p>Note: Dental assistants who render patient care services in a dental setting where anesthesia/sedation and/or nitrous oxide/oxygen is administered must have proof of current basic life support knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Dental Assistant</p>	<p>DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) or Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)</p> <p>Dental Assistant</p> <p>Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>	<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>Functions listed with bullets are part of this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB/ADAA research.</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 CO

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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Expanded
Duties
Dental
Assistant
(EDDA)

The Colorado state dental practice act does not recognize the EDDA designation or permit assistants who hold it to perform a specific list of expanded functions.

The state dental practice act does permit a dental assistant to administer and induce conscious analgesia solely by means of nitrous oxide/oxygen inhalation techniques if the assistant has met the education and training requirements listed on the previous page.

With Direct Supervision*

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| <p>44, 46. Making of preliminary and final impressions</p> <p>59. Administer and monitor the use of nitrous oxide on a patient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaw relation records and determination of vertical dimensions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tooth selection • A preliminary try-in of the wax-up trial denture prior to and subject to a try-in and approval in writing of the wax-up trial denture by the licensed dentist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denture adjustments that involve the periphery, occlusal, or tissue-bearing surfaces of the denture prior to the final examination of the denture • Repairs and relines of dentures pursuant to a dental laboratory work order signed by a licensed dentist |
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With Direct or Indirect Supervision*

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| <p>1-2. Gathering and assembling information including, but not limited to, fact-finding and patient history, oral inspection, and dental and periodontal charting</p> | <p>9. Smoothing and polishing natural and restored tooth surfaces</p> <p>18. Provision of preventive measures including the application of fluorides and other recognized topical agents for the prevention of oral disease</p> | <p>56. Administering topical anesthetic to a patient in the course of providing dental care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other task or procedure that does not require the professional skill of a licensed dentist. |
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Dental
Assistant

*Direct Supervision:

Supervision of those tasks or procedures that do not require the presence of the dentist in the room where performed but require the dentist's presence on the premises and availability for prompt consultation and treatment

Indirect Supervision:

Supervision of those tasks or procedures that do not require the presence of the dentist in the office or on the premises at the time such tasks or procedures are being performed, but do require that the tasks be performed with the prior knowledge and consent of the dentist.