

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.

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 ME	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in ME
<p>To perform expanded functions under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in the state of Maine, a dental assistant must earn status as an Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA).</p> <p>To qualify, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be at least 18 years of age <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be certified in CPR <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be a current DANB CDA OR be a current Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successfully complete a Maine Board-approved course <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successfully complete (grade of 90 percent) the Maine Board of Dental Examiners' jurisprudence exam <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Apply for state EFDA certification from the Maine Board of Dental Examiners 	<p>Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA)</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 Maine, a dental assistant must obtain a dental radiography license from the Maine Board of Dental Examiners.</p> <p>To qualify for a license, a dental assistant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be at least 18 years of age <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be certified in CPR <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successfully complete the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) or Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam OR Provide official transcript showing proof of completion of a dental radiography course within a CODA-accredited dental assisting program <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successfully complete (grade of 85 percent) the Maine Board of Dental Examiners' jurisprudence exam <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Apply for a license from the Maine Board of Dental Examiners 	<p>The following functions are not permitted by an Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning • Surgical or cutting procedures • Prescribing drugs • Performing pulp capping • Placement and adjustment of prosthetic appliances • Administration of anesthesia or sedation
<p>Dental assistants who hold the national DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) Certification are qualified in the state of Maine to perform the functions listed on the opposite page.</p>	<p>DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)</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>A dental assistant in the state of Maine 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>Dental Assistant</p>	<p>Dental Assistant</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> <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>	
		<p>Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>		

Job Title According to State of ME 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)

Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA)

- Under Direct Supervision***
- 6. Place and remove retraction cord.
 - 9, 33. Supragingival polishing: A Maine licensed dentist (DDS/DMD) or a Maine licensed hygienist (RDH) must first determine that the teeth to be polished are free of calculus or other extraneous material prior to polishing; dentists may only permit an EFDA to perform supragingival polishing using a slow speed rotary instrument and rubber cup; dentists may allow an EFDA to use high-speed, power-driven hand-pieces/instruments to contour or finish newly-placed composite material
 - 12, 33. Place and contour amalgam, composite and other restorative materials prior to the final setting and/or curing of the material
 - 18. Apply topical fluorides recognized for the prevention of dental caries
 - 29. Size, place and cement/bond orthodontic bands and brackets with final inspection by the dentist
 - 35, 62. Place and remove periodontal dressing
 - 40. Apply pit and fissure sealants after an evaluation of the teeth by the dentist at the time of sealant placement
 - 44. Take impressions for study casts, bleaching trays, sports guards, provisional/temporary crowns and bridges
 - 47, 54. Cement provisional/temporary crowns and bridges and remove excess cement
 - 49. Perform tooth vitality tests
 - Apply supragingival desensitizing agents to an exposed root surface and/or dentinal surface of teeth
 - All duties designated to Dental Assistants under direct supervision

DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)

- Under General Supervision***
- 13. Remove sutures with a follow-up appointment with the dentist within seven-10 days of suture removal
 - 50. Place temporary fillings on an emergency basis, provided that the patient is informed of the temporary nature of the fillings
 - 61. Remove excess cement from the supragingival surfaces of teeth
 - All duties designated to Dental Assistants, under the same levels of required supervision

Dental Assistant

- Under Direct Supervision***
- 6. Remove gingival retraction cord
 - 12. Deliver, but not condense or pack, amalgam or composite restoration material
 - 13. Remove sutures with a follow-up appointment with the dentist within seven-10 days of suture removal
 - 14. Irrigate and dry root canals
 - 15. Place wires, pins and elastic ligatures to tie in orthodontic arch wires that have been fitted and approved by the dentist at the time of insertion
 - 15. Place elastics and/or instruct in their use
 - 27. Place and remove rubber dams
 - 28, 44. Take and pour impressions or opposing models and retainers
 - 29. Perform preliminary selection and fitting of orthodontic bands, but final placement and cementing in the patient's mouth shall be done by the dentist
 - 34. Apply cavity varnish
 - 42. Place or remove temporary separating devices
 - 43. Select and try in stainless steel or other preformed crowns for insertion by the dentist
 - 45. Place and remove matrix bands
 - 48. Isolate the operative field
 - 54. Place and recement temporary crowns with temporary cement
 - 56. Apply liquids, pastes and gel topical anesthetics
 - 61. Remove excess cement from the supragingival surfaces of teeth
 - 64. Take impressions for single-arch athletic mouth guards and for custom fluoride trays
 - Place, hold or remove celluloid and other plastic strips prior to or subsequent to the placement of a filling by the dentist
 - Place and remove wedges
 - Remove orthodontic archwires, tension devices, and any loose bands or bonds, but only as directed by the dentist
 - Prepare tooth sites and surfaces with a rubber cup and pumice for banding or bonding of orthodontic brackets
 - Take intraoral measurements and make preliminary selection of arch wires and intra- and extraoral appliances, including headgear
 - Reapply orthodontic brackets (on an emergency basis only)

- Under General Supervision***
- 22, 52. Expose and process radiographs (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)
 - 24. Give oral health instructions
 - 26. Demonstrate to a patient how the patient should place and remove removable prostheses, appliances or retainers
 - 37. Take and record the vital signs of blood pressure, pulse and temperature
 - 44. Take impressions for study casts
 - 48. Retract lips, cheek, tongue and other tissue parts
 - 48. Irrigate and aspirate the oral cavity
 - Perform dietary analyses for dental disease control
 - Take intraoral photographs
 - Take dental plaque smears for microscopic inspection and patient education
 - For the purpose of eliminating pain or discomfort, remove loose, broken or irritating orthodontic appliances

*Direct Supervision: The dentist must be in the dental office at the time the duties are being performed. He/she must diagnose the condition to be treated, authorize the treatment prior to implementation, and evaluates the work performed by the Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA) prior to the patient's discharge.
General Supervision: The dentist is not required to be in the dental office at the time the procedures are being performed on a patient of record.