

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 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 MD	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions <u>NOT</u> Permitted by Dental Assistants in MD
<p>To perform expanded functions in the state of Maryland (see listing on opposite page), a dental assistant must register as a Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties.</p> <p>To qualify, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a training program (minimum of 35 hours) approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners and pass the Maryland General Dental Assisting Expanded Functions (MDG) exam administered by DANB OR Pass the national DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners for state recognition as a Maryland Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties <p>Note: While not required by law, it is recommended that a Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties also earn status as a Dental Radiation Technologist (see requirements to the right).</p>	<p>Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties</p>	<p>Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)</p>	<p>A dental assistant in the state of Maryland must be state certified as a Dental Radiation Technologist in order to operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures. This must be performed under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist. To obtain this state certification, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be at least 18 years of age AND Be of good moral character AND Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent AND Successfully complete a dental radiography course (minimum of 30 hours) approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners AND Pass the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam or Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam AND Apply for state certification to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners <p>Note: An individual holding an active radiology license or certification in another state may apply for Maryland certification if he or she has engaged in practicing dental radiation technology for at least 150 hours in the three years preceding application and meets any ADA or federal requirements. In addition, beginning in 2011, all Dental Radiation Technologists seeking to renew or reinstate their certificates shall have completed a two-hour, Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners-approved course in infection control.</p>	<p>The following functions are not permitted by a Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties or a non-registered Dental Assistant:*</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing and polishing teeth Placing or removing an arch wire Placing elastics or ligatures Preparing or fitting orthodontic bands Condensing, carving or finishing any restoration Placing an initial surgical dressing Apply pit and fissure sealants Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning Surgery on hard or soft tissues Administering injectable local anesthesia Initiation of treatment at any time for the correction of malocclusions and malformations of the teeth or jaws Adjusting occlusion of natural teeth, restorations or appliances Registration of jaw relations Selecting headgear Adjusting prosthetic appliances Cementing of orthodontic bands, placement of bonded attachments or the removal of cement or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments Cementing permanent crowns or restorations <p>* Some of these functions may be permitted by Dental Assistants Qualified in Orthodontics; see this state's "Orthodontic Assisting" template</p>
<p>A dental assistant in the state of Maryland may perform basic supportive dental procedures specified by the state dental practice act (see opposite page) under the direct 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 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>Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>		



Job Title
According to
State of MD

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)

Dental
Assistant
Qualified
in General
Duties

Under Direct Supervision*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Placing or removing retraction cord 13. Removing sutures 14. Drying a root canal 18. Applying topical fluoride 27. Placing or removing a rubber dam 35, 62. Removing or placing a periodontal dressing (except placing the original periodontal dressing) 43. Preparing and fitting stainless steel crowns 44. Taking alginate impressions for intraoral appliances 45. Placing or removing a matrix band 47. Preparing temporary crowns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47. Cementing temporary crowns or restorations 49. Performing vitality tests 54. Removing temporary crowns 54. Removing excess cement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etching • Fabricating indirect restorations in a dental office • Applying desensitizing agents • All duties designated to non-registered Dental Assistants, under the same level of required supervision • Any other duty approved by the Maryland State Dental Board of Examiners |
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Note: This state allows dental assistants to perform a separate set of orthodontic functions, which are specified by state in a section at the end of this booklet. Any functions specific to orthodontic assisting included on this page will also be reflected in the orthodontic assisting duties section of this booklet.

Dental
Assistant

Under Direct Supervision*

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Instructing on oral hygiene 44. Taking impressions for study models or diagnostic casts 48 Rinsing and aspiration of the oral cavity 48. Retraction of the lips, cheek, tongue and flaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48. Placement and removal of materials for the isolation of the dentition, provided that the material is not retained by the dentition 56. Applying topical anesthesia 64. Constructing athletic mouth guards on models | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing intraoral photography • Curing by the use of halogen light • Checking for loose bands • Any other duty approved by the Board |
|---|---|--|

***Direct Supervision:** The supervising dentist is in the dental office; personally diagnoses the condition to be treated; personally authorizes the procedure; and, before dismissal of the patient, personally evaluates the performance of the dental assistant.
General Supervision: Means the supervision of a dental assistant by a dentist where the dentist may or may not be present when the dental assistant performs the dental assisting procedures.

Maryland (Orthodontic)

State-approved 1/1/11
Updated by DANB 1/1/11

Education/Training/ Credential Required?	Job Title According to State of MD	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions NOT permitted by orthodontic assistants in MD
<p>To perform orthodontic functions in the state of Maryland, a dental assistant must register as a Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics.</p> <p>To qualify, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete a training program (minimum of 35 hours) approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners and pass the Maryland Orthodontic Assisting Expanded Functions (MDO) exam administered by DANB OR ■ Pass the national DANB Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA) exam AND ■ Apply to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners for state recognition as a Maryland Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics 	<p>Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics</p>	<p>Expanded Functions Orthodontic Assistant (EFOA)</p> <hr/> <p>DANB Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA) or Registered Orthodontic Assistant (ROA)</p>	<p>A dental assistant in the state of Maryland must be state certified as a Dental Radiation Technologist in order to operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures. This must be performed under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist. To obtain this state certification, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be at least 18 years of age ■ AND ■ Be of good moral character ■ AND ■ Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent ■ AND ■ Successfully complete a dental radiography course (minimum of 30 hours) approved by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners ■ AND ■ Pass the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam or Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam ■ AND ■ Apply for state certification to the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners <p>Note: An individual holding an active radiology license or certification in another state may apply for Maryland certification if he or she has engaged in practicing dental radiation technology for at least 150 hours in the three years preceding application and meets any ADA or federal requirements. In addition, beginning in 2011, all Dental Radiation Technologists seeking to renew or reinstate a certificate shall have completed a two-hour, Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners-approved course in infection control.</p>	<p>The following functions are not permitted by a Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Placing or removing retraction cord 9, 20. Oral prophylactic procedures, including scaling, root planing and polishing of teeth with rotary instruments 14. Drying a root canal 27. Placing or removing a rubber dam 33. Condensing, carving or finishing any restoration 35, 62. Removing or placing a periodontal dressing 40. Applying pit and fissure sealants 43. Preparing and fitting stainless steel crowns 45. Placing or removing a matrix band 47. Preparing temporary crowns 49. Performing vitality tests 54. Removing temporary crowns 63. Placing an initial surgical dressing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination, diagnosis and treatment planning • Surgery on hard or soft tissues • Administering injectable local anesthesia • Initiation of treatment at any time for the correction of malocclusions and malformations of the teeth or jaws • Adjusting occlusion of natural teeth, restorations or appliances • Cementing temporary or permanent crowns or restorations • Adjusting prosthetic appliances
<p>There are no specified education or training requirements in the state of Maryland for any level of orthodontic assisting other than Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Orthodontic Assistant</p> <hr/> <p>Entry Level Orthodontic Assistant</p>	<p>The ADAA/DANB Alliance developed a listing of standardized job titles based on its national Core Competencies Study conducted from 2002-2005, for general chairside assistants only. Currently, only four states (MD, MA, NJ, and OR) recognize one or more separate levels of orthodontic assisting.</p> <p>← If the ADAA/DANB Alliance were to attempt to replicate the general chairside assistant Core Competencies Study for orthodontic assistants, the templates would contain the proposed standardized job titles that appear at left.</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.) Functions listed with bullets are part of this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB/ADAA research.</p>	

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Job Title According to State of MD	Allowable functions (Functions with numbers relate specifically to Core Competency designation, functions with bullets are not a specific match to the list.)
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Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics

N/A

- Under Direct Supervision***
- 15. Placing and removing arch wires
 - 15. Placing elastics and ligatures
 - 18. Applying topical fluoride
 - 24. Instructing on oral hygiene
 - 29. Preparing and fitting orthodontic bands
 - 44. Taking impressions for study models or diagnostic casts
 - 44. Taking alginate impressions for intraoral appliances
 - 48. Rinsing and aspiration of the oral cavity
 - 48. Retraction of the lips, cheek, tongue and flaps
 - 48. Placement and removal of materials for the isolation of the dentition, provided that the material is not retained by the dentition
 - 56. Applying topical anesthesia
 - 61. Removing excess cement from around orthodontic bands
 - 64. Constructing athletic mouth guards on models
 - Performing intraoral photography
 - Curing by the use of halogen light
 - Checking for loose bands
 - Etching
 - Cementing of orthodontic bands, placement of bonded attachments, or the removal of cemented or bonded orthodontic bands and attachments
 - Selecting headgear
 - Applying desensitizing agents
 - Any other duty approved by the Board
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- No allowable functions are specified in the Maryland dental practice act for any level of orthodontic assisting other than Dental Assistant Qualified in Orthodontics.

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*Direct Supervision: The supervising orthodontist is in the office; personally diagnoses the condition to be treated; personally authorizes the procedure; and, before dismissal of the patient, personally evaluates the performance of the dental assistant.