



**Dental
Assisting
ALLIANCE**

California Dental Assistants Association
California Association of Dental Assisting Teachers
Registered Dental Assistants in Extended Functions Association

Synopsis of May 1, 2008 Amendments to SB2537 (Eng) 4-25-08

Generally, the amendments retain the DA, RDA, and EF licensure categories, establish Orthodontic Assistant and Dental Sedation Assistant permit categories, and include the following effective January 1, 2010:

Unlicensed Dental Assistants

1. Places into statute the duties that regulations currently allow DAs to perform, with the addition of certain duties. Following are all of the duties, with new duties noted in italics:

(a) A dental assistant may perform the following duties under the general supervision of the supervising dentist:

(1) Extra-oral duties or procedures specified by the supervising dentist, provided that they meet the definition of a basic supportive procedure specified in section 1750.

(2) Operate dental radiography equipment for the purpose of oral radiography if the dental assistant has complied with the requirements of section 1656 of the code.

(3) *Perform intra- and extra-oral photography*

(b) A dental assistant may perform the following duties under the direct supervision of the supervising dentist:

(1) Apply non-aerosol and non-caustic topical agents

(2) Apply topical fluoride

(3) *Take intra-oral 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 dentist

(8) Perform measurements for the purposes of orthodontic treatment

(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 arch wires

(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 licensed dentist who shall be at chairside during this procedure.*

(18) Assist in the administration of nitrous oxide when used for analgesia or sedation; however, 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 dentist who shall be present at the patient's chairside at the implementation of these instructions. This regulation shall not be construed to prevent any person from taking appropriate action in the event of a medical emergency.

2. Retains the SB1546/SB1541 statutory requirement that unlicensed DAs who are in a dentist's continuous employment 120 days or more must complete courses in basic life support, a course of at least 8 hours in infection control, and a course in the California Dental Practice Act, within a year of the date of employment.

Orthodontic Assistants (OA) and Dental Sedation Assistants (DSA)

3. Establishes Orthodontic Assistant and Dental Sedation Assistant permit categories, which require completion of 12 months of work experience as a DA, completion of a board-approved course which may commence after 6 months of work experience, a written examination, and completion of courses in the California Dental Practice Act, infection control (8 hours), and basic life support. Requires such permits to be maintained in the same manner as other licenses, including required CE.

4. Specifies that the OA course must be a minimum of 84 hours, and the DSA course a minimum of 110 hours, and that both must be board-approved.

5. Allows completion of OA and DSA licensure prior to RDA licensure, or allows RDAs to complete such courses post-RDA licensure.

6. Specifies the duties of an OA as:

- (a) All duties that a unlicensed dental assistant is allowed to perform.
- (b) Prepare teeth for bonding, select, preposition, and cure orthodontic brackets after their position has been approved by the dentist
- (c) Remove only orthodontic brackets and attachments with removal of the bonding material by the supervising dentist
- (d) Size, fit, and cement orthodontic bands
- (e) Remove orthodontic bands and remove excess cement from supragingival surfaces of teeth with a hand instrument
- (f) Place and ligate archwires
- (g) Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment.

7. Specifies the duties of a DSA as:

- (a) All duties that a unlicensed dental assistant is allowed to perform.
- (b) Monitor patients during the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative phases, using noninvasive instrumentation such as pulse oximeters, electrocardiograms, and capnography, limited to selection and validation of monitoring sensors, selecting menus and default settings and analysis for electrocardiogram, pulse oximeter and capnograph, continuous blood pressure, pulse, and respiration rates; interpretation of data from noninvasive patient monitors including readings from continuous blood pressure and information from the monitor display for electrocardiogram waveform, carbon dioxide and end tidal carbon dioxide concentration, respiratory cycle data, continuous noninvasive blood pressure data, and pulse arterial oxygen saturation measurements, for the purpose of evaluating the condition of the patient during preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative treatment.
- (c) Drug identification and draw, limited to identification of appropriate medications, ampule and vial preparation, and withdrawing drugs of correct amount as verified by the dentist.
- (d) Add drugs, medications, and fluids to intravenous lines using a syringe, provided that a licensed dentist is present at the patient's chairside, limited to determining patency of IV line, selection of injection port, syringe insertion into injection port, occlusion of IV line and blood aspiration, line release and injection of drugs for appropriate time interval.
- (e) Removal of intravenous lines.

8. Allows RDAs to perform the overlapping OA duties that they are currently allowed to perform (placing ligature ties and archwires, removing orthodontic bands, and removing excess cement from tooth

surfaces with a hand instrument), and exempts RDAs applying for an OA permit from completing further training in such duties.

Registered Dental Assistants (RDA)

9. Places into statute most of the duties that regulations currently allow RDAs to perform, with the addition of certain duties, and some duties moved to the DA category. Following are all of the duties, with new duties noted in italics:

(a) On and after January 1, 2010, a registered dental assistant may perform the following duties under the appropriate supervision level assigned by the supervising dentist:

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

10. Allows an RDA to optionally perform the following additional duties if he or she has completed a board-approved RDA educational program approved to instruct in such duty or duties, or if he or she has provided evidence to COMDA of having completed a board-approved course in such duty or duties:

- (1) Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment.
- (2) The permitted duties of an orthodontic assistant, except that a licensed RDA 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 permitted duties of a dental sedation assistant.
- (4) The application of pit and fissure sealants.

11. Requires that RDAs who are licensed on and after January 1, 2010, complete a board-approved course in the application of pit and fissure as a condition of the first renewal that requires CE.

12. Requires that individuals applying via the work experience pathway on or after January 1, 2010, must have 15 months of work experience, and must have completed a board-approved course in the California Dental Practice Act, an 8-hour course in infection control, and a course in basic life support within five years prior to application.

13. Allows credit toward the 15-month work experience requirement for graduation from non-board dental assisting programs on a week-for-week basis, eliminating the current 16-week maximum credit.

14. Requires that individuals applying after January 1, 2010 must pass a written examination in Law and Ethics.

15. Places the RDA examination requirements into statute.

16. Allows, but does not require, RDA educational programs to apply for approval to teach the OA, DSA, and ultrasonic scaling courses.

Registered Dental Assistants in Extended Functions (EFs)

17. Places into statute most of the duties that regulations currently allow EFs to perform, with the addition of certain duties, and certain duties moved to other categories. Following are all of the duties, with new duties noted in italics:

(b) A registered dental assistant in extended functions issued a license on or after January 1, 2010, is authorized to perform the following additional procedures under direct supervision and pursuant to the order, control, and full professional responsibility of a licensed dentist:

(1) *Preliminary evaluation of the patient's oral health, including but not limited to charting, intra- and extra-oral 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 DDS, RDH or RDHAP*

(3) Cord retraction of gingivae for impression procedures

(4) Size and fit endodontic master points *and accessory points*

(5) *Cement* master points and accessory points

(6) Take final impressions for permanent indirect restorations (*broader description*)

(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 (*broader description*)

(10) *Adjust and cement permanent indirect restorations*

(11) Other procedures authorized by regulations adopted by the board

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

18. Requires existing EFs to complete a course in all of the new duties if they wish to perform such duties.

19. Places the EF examination requirements in statute.

Dental Assistant Courses and Programs

20. Places into statute the requirements that the various dental assisting courses and programs must meet to obtain and maintain board approval.