

TITLE IV  
AUXILIARY PERSONNEL

## CHAPTER 20

## DENTAL ASSISTANTS

[Prior to 5/18/88, Dental Examiners, Board of[320]]

**650—20.1(153) Registration required.** A person shall not practice on or after July 1, 2001, as a dental assistant unless the person has registered with the board and received a certificate of registration pursuant to this chapter.

**650—20.2(153) Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

*“Dental assistant”* means any person who, under the supervision of a dentist, performs any extraoral services including infection control or the use of hazardous materials or performs any intraoral services on patients. The term “dental assistant” does not include persons otherwise actively licensed in Iowa to practice dental hygiene or nursing who are engaged in the practice of said profession.

*“Direct supervision”* means that the dentist is present in the treatment facility, but it is not required that the dentist be physically present in the treatment room while the registered dental assistant is performing acts assigned by the dentist.

*“General supervision”* means that a dentist has delegated the services to be provided by a registered dental assistant. The dentist need not be present in the facility while these services are being provided.

*“Personal supervision”* means the dentist is physically present in the treatment room to oversee and direct all intraoral or chairside services of the dental assistant and a licensee or registrant is physically present to oversee and direct all extraoral services of the dental assistant.

[ARC 8369B, IAB 12/16/09, effective 1/20/10]

**650—20.3(153) Scope of practice.**

**20.3(1)** In all instances, a dentist assumes responsibility for determining, on the basis of diagnosis, the specific treatment patients will receive and which aspects of treatment may be delegated to qualified personnel as authorized in these rules.

**20.3(2)** A licensed dentist may delegate to a dental assistant those procedures for which the dental assistant has received training. This delegation shall be based on the best interests of the patient. The dentist shall exercise supervision and shall be fully responsible for all acts performed by a dental assistant. A dentist may not delegate to a dental assistant any of the following:

- a. Diagnosis, examination, treatment planning, or prescription, including prescription for drugs and medicaments or authorization for restorative, prosthodontic or orthodontic appliances.
- b. Surgical procedures on hard and soft tissues within the oral cavity and any other intraoral procedure that contributes to or results in an irreversible alteration to the oral anatomy.
- c. Administration of local anesthesia.
- d. Placement of sealants.
- e. Removal of any plaque, stain, or hard natural or synthetic material except by toothbrush, floss, or rubber cup coronal polish, or removal of any calculus.
- f. Dental radiography, unless the assistant is qualified pursuant to 650—Chapter 22.
- g. Those procedures that require the professional judgment and skill of a dentist.

**20.3(3)** A dentist may delegate an expanded function duty to a registered dental assistant if the assistant has completed board-approved training pursuant to rule 650—20.16(153) in the specific expanded function that will be delegated. The supervising dentist and registered dental assistant shall be responsible for maintaining in the office of practice documentation of board-approved training. In addition to the other duties authorized under this rule, a dentist may delegate any of the following expanded function duties:

- a. Taking occlusal registrations;
- b. Placement and removal of gingival retraction;
- c. Taking final impressions;
- d. Fabrication and removal of provisional restorations;

- e. Applying cavity liners and bases, desensitizing agents, and bonding systems;
- f. Placement and removal of dry socket medication;
- g. Placement of periodontal dressings;
- h. Testing pulp vitality; and
- i. Monitoring of nitrous oxide inhalation analgesia.

**20.3(4)** A dental assistant may perform duties consistent with these rules under the supervision of a licensed dentist. The specific duties dental assistants may perform are based upon:

- a. The education of the dental assistant.
- b. The experience of the dental assistant.

**650—20.4(153) Categories of dental assistants.** There are two categories of dental assistants. Both the supervising dentist and dental assistant are responsible for maintaining documentation of training. Such documentation must be maintained in the office of practice and shall be provided to the board upon request.

**20.4(1) Dental assistant trainee.** Dental assistant trainees are all individuals who are engaging in on-the-job training to meet the requirements for registration and who are learning the necessary skills under the personal supervision of a licensed dentist. Trainees may also engage in on-the-job training in dental radiography pursuant to 650—22.3(136C,153). The dental assistant trainee shall meet the following requirements:

a. Within 12 months of employment, the dental assistant trainee shall successfully complete a course of study and examination in the areas of infection control, hazardous materials, and jurisprudence. The course of study shall be prior approved by the board and sponsored by a board-approved postsecondary school.

b. Prior to satisfactorily completing 12 months of work as a dental assistant, the trainee must apply to the board to be reclassified as a registered dental assistant.

c. Dental assistant trainee status is valid for practice for a maximum of 12 months. If trainee status has expired, the trainee must meet the requirements for registration and receive a certificate of registration in order to practice as a dental assistant.

d. Notwithstanding paragraphs “b” and “c,” the expiration date for dental assistant trainee status for a person enrolled in a cooperative education or work-study program through an Iowa high school shall be extended until the trainee is 17 years of age and a high school graduate or equivalent. However, a trainee under 18 years of age shall not participate in dental radiography.

**20.4(2) Registered dental assistant.** A registered dental assistant may perform under general supervision dental radiography, intraoral suctioning, and all extraoral duties that are assigned by the dentist and are consistent with these rules. During intraoral procedures, the registered dental assistant may, under direct supervision, assist the dentist in performing duties assigned by the dentist that are consistent with these rules. The registered dental assistant may take radiographs if qualified pursuant to 650—Chapter 22.

**20.4(3) Expanded function dental assistant.** Rescinded IAB 9/17/03, effective 10/22/03.

**650—20.5(153) Registration requirements prior to July 2, 2001.**

**20.5(1)** A person employed as a dental assistant as of July 1, 2001, shall be registered with the board as a registered dental assistant without meeting the application requirements specified in 20.6(153), provided the application is postmarked by July 1, 2001.

**20.5(2)** Applications for registration prior to July 2, 2001, must be filed on official board forms and include the following:

- a. The fee as specified in 650—Chapter 15.
- b. Evidence of current employment as a dental assistant as demonstrated by a signed statement from the applicant’s employer.
- c. Evidence of current certification in dental radiography pursuant to 650—Chapter 22 if engaging in dental radiography.

**20.5(3)** Applications must be signed and verified by the applicant as to the truth of the documents and statements contained therein.

**650—20.6(153) Registration requirements after July 1, 2001.** Effective July 2, 2001, dental assistants must meet the following requirements for registration:

**20.6(1)** Dental assistant trainee.

*a.* A dentist supervising a person performing dental assistant duties must notify the board in writing of such employment within seven days of the time the dental assistant begins work.

*b.* Applications for registration as a dental assistant trainee must be filed on official board forms and include the following:

- (1) The fee as specified in 650—Chapter 15.
- (2) Evidence of high school graduation.
- (3) Evidence the applicant is 17 years of age or older.
- (4) Any additional information required by the board relating to the character and experience of the applicant as may be necessary to evaluate the applicant's qualifications.
- (5) If the applicant does not meet the requirements of (2) and (3) above, evidence that the applicant is enrolled in a cooperative education or work-study program through an Iowa high school.

*c.* Within 12 months of employment, the dental assistant trainee is required to successfully complete a board-approved course of study and examination in the areas of infection control, hazardous materials, and jurisprudence. The course of study may be taken at a board-approved postsecondary school or on the job using curriculum approved by the board for such purpose. Evidence of meeting this requirement shall be submitted within 12 months by the employer dentist.

*d.* Upon expiration of the trainee status, the dental assistant trainee's supervising dentist must ensure that the trainee has received a certificate of registration before performing any further dental assisting duties.

**20.6(2)** Registered dental assistant.

*a.* To meet this qualification, a person must:

- (1) Work in a dental office for six months as a dental assistant trainee; or
- (2) Have had at least six months of prior dental assisting experience under a licensed dentist within the past two years; or
- (3) Be a graduate of an accredited dental assisting program approved by the board; and
- (4) Be a high school graduate or equivalent; and
- (5) Be 17 years of age or older.

*b.* Applications for registration as a registered dental assistant must be filed on official board forms and include the following:

- (1) The fee as specified in 650—Chapter 15.
- (2) Evidence of meeting the requirements specified in 20.6(2) "a."
- (3) Evidence of successful completion of a course of study approved by the board and sponsored by a board-approved, accredited dental assisting program in the areas of infection control, hazardous materials, and jurisprudence. The course of study may be taken at a board-approved, accredited dental assisting program or on the job using curriculum approved by the board for such purpose.
- (4) Evidence of successful completion of a board-approved examination in the areas of infection control, hazardous materials, and jurisprudence.
- (5) Evidence of high school graduation or the equivalent.
- (6) Evidence the applicant is 17 years of age or older.
- (7) Evidence of meeting the qualifications of 650—Chapter 22 if engaging in dental radiography.
- (8) A statement:
  1. Confirming that the applicant possesses a valid certificate from a nationally recognized course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) that included a "hands-on" clinical component;
  2. Providing the expiration date of the CPR certificate; and
  3. Acknowledging that the CPR certificate will be retained and made available to board office staff as part of routine auditing and monitoring.

(9) Any additional information required by the board relating to the character, education and experience of the applicant as may be necessary to evaluate the applicant's qualifications.

**20.6(3)** Rescinded IAB 9/17/03, effective 10/22/03.

**20.6(4)** All applications must be signed and verified by the applicant as to the truth of the documents and statements contained therein.

[ARC 8369B, IAB 12/16/09, effective 1/20/10; ARC 0265C, IAB 8/8/12, effective 9/12/12]

**650—20.7(153) Registration denial.** The board may deny an application for registration as a dental assistant for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to meet the requirements for registration as specified in these rules.
2. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.4, upon any of the grounds for which registration may be revoked or suspended as specified in 650—Chapter 30.

**650—20.8(147,153) Denial of registration—appeal procedure.** The board shall follow the procedures specified in 650—11.10(147) if the board proposes to deny registration to a dental assistant applicant.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 147.3, 147.4 and 147.29.  
[ARC 7789B, IAB 5/20/09, effective 6/24/09]

**650—20.9(153) Examination requirements.** Beginning July 2, 2001, applicants for registration must successfully pass an examination approved by the board on infection control, hazardous waste, and jurisprudence.

**20.9(1)** Examinations approved by the board are those administered by the board or board's approved testing centers or the Dental Assisting National Board Infection Control Examination, if taken after June 1, 1991, in conjunction with the board-approved jurisprudence examination. In lieu of the board's infection control examination, the board may approve an infection control examination given by another state licensing board if the board determines that the examination is substantially equivalent to the examination administered by the board.

**20.9(2)** Information on taking the examination may be obtained by contacting the board office at 400 S.W. 8th Street, Suite D, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-4687.

**20.9(3)** An examinee must meet such other requirements as may be imposed by the board's approved dental assistant testing centers.

**20.9(4)** A dental assistant trainee must successfully pass the examination within 12 months of the first date of employment. A dental assistant trainee who does not successfully pass the examination within 12 months shall be prohibited from working as a dental assistant until the dental assistant trainee passes the examination in accordance with these rules.

**20.9(5)** A score of 75 or better on the board infection control/hazardous material exam and a score of 75 or better on the board jurisprudence exam shall be considered successful completion of the examination. The board accepts the passing standard established by the Dental Assisting National Board for applicants who take the Dental Assisting National Board Infection Control Examination.

**20.9(6)** The written examination may be waived by the board, in accordance with the board's waiver rules at 650—Chapter 7, in practice situations where the written examination is deemed to be unnecessary or detrimental to the dentist's practice.

**650—20.10(153) System of retaking dental assistant examinations.**

**20.10(1)** *Second examination.*

*a.* On the second examination attempt, a dental assistant shall be required to obtain a score of 75 percent or better on each section of the examination.

*b.* A dental assistant who fails the second examination will be required to complete the remedial education requirements set forth in subrule 20.10(2).

**20.10(2)** *Third and subsequent examinations.*

*a.* Prior to the third examination attempt, a dental assistant must submit proof of additional formal education in the area of the examination failure in a program approved by the board or sponsored by a school accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association.

b. A dental assistant who fails the examination on the third attempt may not practice as a dental assistant in a dental office or clinic until additional remedial education approved by the board has been obtained.

c. For the purposes of additional study prior to retakes, the fourth or subsequent examination failure shall be considered the same as the third.

**650—20.11(153) Continuing education.** Beginning July 1, 2001, each person registered as a dental assistant shall complete 20 hours of continuing education approved by the board during the biennium period as a condition of registration renewal.

**20.11(1)** At least two continuing education hours must be in the subject area of infection control.

**20.11(2)** A maximum of three hours may be in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

**20.11(3)** For dental assistants who have radiography qualification, at least two hours of continuing education must be obtained in the subject area of radiography.

**20.11(4)** For the renewal period July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2003, at least one hour of continuing education must be obtained in the subject area of jurisprudence.

[ARC 0265C, IAB 8/8/12, effective 9/12/12]

**650—20.12(252J,261) Receipt of certificate of noncompliance.** The board shall consider the receipt of a certificate of noncompliance from the college student aid commission pursuant to Iowa Code sections 261.121 to 261.127 and 650—Chapter 34 or receipt of a certificate of noncompliance of a support order from the child support recovery unit pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 252J and 650—Chapter 33. Registration denial or denial of renewal of registration shall follow the procedures in the statutes and board rules as set forth in this rule.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 252J and sections 261.121 to 261.127.

[ARC 0265C, IAB 8/8/12, effective 9/12/12]

**650—20.13(153) Unlawful practice.** A dental assistant who assists a dentist in practicing dentistry in any capacity other than as a person supervised by a dentist in a dental office, or who directly or indirectly procures a licensed dentist to act as nominal owner, proprietor or director of a dental office as a guise or subterfuge to enable such dental assistant to engage directly or indirectly in the practice of dentistry, or who performs dental service directly or indirectly on or for members of the public other than as a person working for a dentist shall be deemed to be practicing dentistry without a license.

[ARC 0265C, IAB 8/8/12, effective 9/12/12]

**650—20.14(153) Advertising and soliciting of dental services prohibited.** Dental assistants shall not advertise, solicit, represent or hold themselves out in any manner to the general public that they will furnish, construct, repair or alter prosthetic, orthodontic or other appliances, with or without consideration, to be used as substitutes for or as part of natural teeth or associated structures or for the correction of malocclusions or deformities, or that they will perform any other dental service.

[ARC 0265C, IAB 8/8/12, effective 9/12/12]

**650—20.15(153) Expanded function training approval.** Expanded function training shall be eligible for board approval if the training is offered through a program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association or another program prior-approved by the board, which may include on-the-job training offered by a dentist licensed in Iowa. Training must consist of the following:

1. An initial assessment to determine the base entry level of all participants in the program. At a minimum, participants must be currently certified by the Dental Assisting National Board or must have two years of clinical dental assisting experience as a registered dental assistant;

2. A didactic component;

3. A laboratory component, if necessary;

4. A clinical component, which may be obtained under the personal supervision of the participant's supervising dentist while the participant is concurrently enrolled in the training program; and

5. A postcourse competency assessment at the conclusion of the training program.  
[ARC 0265C, IAB 8/8/12, effective 9/12/12]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 153.

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<sup>1</sup> The Administrative Rules Review Committee at their May 21, 1979, meeting delayed the effective date of Chapters 20 and 21 70 days.