



DENTAL ASSISTANTS

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Dental assistants perform a variety of tasks, such as taking x-rays, assisting the dentist during dental procedures, teaching appropriate oral hygiene techniques to patients, and performing office functions.

Source: [American Dental Association](#)

This report summarizes Connecticut law on dental assistants, and provides examples of dental assistant training requirements in other states.

SUMMARY

Connecticut law does not require dental assistants to be licensed. To take dental x-rays, dental assistants must pass an exam. Connecticut law does not otherwise set requirements for dental assistants' education or training. The law prohibits dental assistants from performing various procedures, and requires dentists to supervise assistants performing delegated dental procedures.

The Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. ([DANB](#)) is the national certification board for dental assistants. According to DANB, the majority of states, like Connecticut, set certain requirements for dental assistants to be allowed to take x-rays; this often includes passing a DANB examination. Unlike Connecticut, many states provide for different levels of dental assistants, allowing assistants with additional training or education to perform more tasks than those without such experience.

CONNECTICUT DENTAL ASSISTANT LAW

Connecticut law allows a dentist to delegate certain dental procedures to a dental assistant, as the dentist deems advisable. The dentist must supervise the assistant and control and assume responsibility for such procedures.

Dentists may only delegate the taking of dental x-rays to a dental assistant if the assistant has passed the dental radiography portion of a DANB-prescribed exam ([CGS § 20-112a](#)).

The law prohibits dental assistants from engaging in the following:

1. diagnosing for dental procedures or dental treatment;
2. cutting or removing any hard or soft tissue or suturing;
3. prescribing drugs or medications that require the written or oral order of a licensed dentist or physician;
4. administering local, parenteral, inhalation, or general anesthetic agents in connection with any dental operative procedure;
5. taking an impression of the teeth or jaws or the relationship of the teeth or jaws for the purpose of fabricating an appliance or prosthesis;
6. placing, finishing, and adjusting temporary or final restorations, capping materials, and cement bases; or
7. practicing dental hygiene as defined in law ([CGS § 20-112a](#)).

The radiographer statutes specify that they should not be construed as requiring radiographer licensure for a dental assistant who has passed the DANB radiography exam and who takes dental x-rays under the supervision and control of a dentist. These statutes also do not require radiographer licensure for a dental assistant student, intern, or trainee pursuing practical training in taking of dental x-rays if such activities are part of a supervised course or training program and the person is designated by a title clearly indicating his or her student, trainee, or intern status ([CGS § 20-74ee](#)).

EXAMPLES OF OTHER STATES' REQUIREMENTS

Table 1 provides examples of education, training, and examination requirements for dental assistants in four other states. The table does not provide all details for such states' requirements; for more information, see the DANB website and the state websites linked below.

Table 1: Dental Assistant Education, Training, and Examination Requirements, Selected States

State	Requirements to Take Dental X-Rays	Other Education or Training Requirements
Delaware	Must hold state certificate as a dental radiation technician (requires passing examination).	<p><u>Dental assistants</u>: no training or education requirements; supervising dentist has responsibility for training.</p> <p>Delaware Board of Dentistry and Dental Hygiene: http://dpr.delaware.gov/boards/dental/.</p>
Maine	Must be licensed as dental radiographer (requires high school diploma or equivalent and passing examination, among other things).	<p><u>Dental assistants</u>: no training or education requirements.</p> <p><u>Certified dental assistants (CDAs)</u>: must be DANB-certified, and can perform a few functions that are prohibited for non-certified dental assistants.</p> <p><u>Expanded function dental assistants (EFDAs)</u>: among other things, must (1) hold current CDA certificate or a registered dental hygiene license and have completed a board-approved EFDA program, or have similar credentials from another state or Canadian province, and (2) pass examination. They are allowed to perform several additional functions that are prohibited for other dental assistants and CDAs.</p> <p>This chart by the state Board of Dental Examiners summarizes the scope of practice for each level: http://www.mainedental.org/forms/SOPCompGrid.pdf.</p> <p>Maine Board of Dental Examiners: http://www.mainedental.org/.</p>

Table 1: Continued

<p>New York</p>	<p>No training requirements to operate x-rays.</p>	<p><u>Unlicensed dental assistants</u>: no training or education requirements.</p> <p><u>Dental assistants with limited permit</u>: must be age 17 or older, high school graduate or equivalent, and complete education requirements: (1) board-approved one-year course of study with at least 24 semester hours and 200 hours of clinical experience or (2) alternative program that includes at least 1,000 hours of relevant work experience. Permit is good for one year and can be renewed once. Permit holder can perform all tasks designated to CDAs (see below) under the direct personal supervision of a dentist.</p> <p><u>Licensed certified dental assistant (CDA)</u>: same requirements as limited permit, plus examination requirements. CDAs can perform various tasks not allowed for unlicensed assistants.</p> <p>New York State Education Department (NYSED), Certified Dental Assistant License Requirements: http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/dent/dentcdalic.htm.</p> <p>NYSED, Questions and Answers About Working as a Dental Assistant: http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/dent/dentasst.htm#.</p>
<p>Rhode Island</p>	<p>Must complete course in dental radiography from accredited program.</p>	<p><u>Dental assistants</u>: no training or education requirements to become dental assistant.</p> <p><u>Certified dental assistants (CDAs)</u>: must be DANB-certified. They can perform a few functions that are prohibited for non-certified dental assistants, if the procedures were incorporated into their academic training program or they completed academic clinical training to clinical competence.</p> <p>All dental assistants must receive one hour of annual training on bloodborne pathogens.</p> <p>Rhode Island Department of Health, Board of Examiners in Dentistry; Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Dentists, Dental Hygienists, and Dental Assistants: http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/DOH/7053.pdf.</p>

Sources: DANB website, <http://www.danb.org/meet-state-requirements/state-specific-information.aspx>; state websites (linked above)

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