

Rule Changes Affecting Dental Assistants

These are rule changes became effective on December 26, 2007:

- Adds an application fee of \$15.00 for nitrous oxide monitoring certification, restorative functions certification and prosthetic functions certification.
- Creates Dental Radiology Certification and adds an application fee of \$15.00.
- Amends the definitions of a practical dental assistant and registered dental assistant in rule 0460-1-.01 as follows:
 - Practical Dental Assistant - An auxiliary employee of a licensed dentist(s) who performs supportive chairside procedures under the direct supervision and full responsibility of that licensed dentist or who is a dental assistant student in an educational institution accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, as defined by Rule 0460-4-.01.
 - Registered Dental Assistant - An auxiliary employee of a licensed dentist(s) who has been issued a registration to practice intraoral dental assisting procedures in accordance with the statutes and rules of the Board, and is eligible to seek certification and training in advanced dental assisting areas, and who practices under the direct supervision and full responsibility of a licensed dentist.
- Deletes the requirement to show proof of education, training or current certification as a certified dental assistant by the Dental Assisting National Boards, Inc. (DANB) to qualify for registration.
- Removes the examination requirement to become registered as a dental assistant in Tennessee.
- Amends the Scope of Practice section of the rules as follows:
 - Amends Rule 0460-4-.08(1) to allow dentists to delegate to dental assistants procedures for which they have received adequate training and for which the dentist exercises direct supervision and full responsibility. The rule does not allow procedures which require the professional judgment and skill of a dentist or clinical procedures which are primarily concerned with the practice of dentistry or dental hygiene to be delegated.
 - Amends Rule 0460-4-.08(3) to allow any dental assistant to perform the duties listed in (a) thru (pp), as amended without being a registered dental assistant as long as the duties are assigned or delegated to the dental assistant by the employer dentist.
 - Amends Rule 0460-4-.08(3)(a) by removing the word “exposure” and changing it to “processing” so that the sentence now reads “The processing of radiographs, including digital, of the mouth, gums, jaws, teeth or any portion thereof for dental diagnosis”. Exposure of radiographs now requires a dental radiology certification.
 - Clarifies that no dental assistant is permitted to perform the procedures listed under Rule 0460-4-.08(4). Prohibits procedures that require certification by the Board without the certification being issued. Certifications that can be issued include:
 - Monitoring of nitrous oxide
 - Coronal Polishing
 - Application of Sealants
 - Restorative or prosthetic functions
 - Exposure of radiographs
- Creates Dental Radiology Certification for registered dental assistants in Rule 0460-4-.11, and the courses set forth in Rule 0460-5-.03(7).
 - Dental assistants who are registered on the effective date of these rules will have the dental radiology certification added to their registration automatically. New renewal certificates with dental radiology certification have been issued to all currently registered dental assistants.

- Dental assistants must be currently registered before attending a board approved dental radiology certification course and/or qualifying for certification. After completion of the course, the certification application and fee must be submitted to the Board's administrative office.
 - Dental assistants who attend or are currently enrolled in a board approved dental assisting program or an ADA accredited dental assisting program which offers radiology as part of the curriculum must apply for registration and certification after graduation. The course provider must submit proof of completing the course for the certification to be added to the registration.
 - Dental assistants who complete a comparable course in another state must apply for registration and certification and must request that the information on the course content be submitted to be reviewed for equivalency.
 - Dental assistants currently certified as dental assistants (CDA) by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) must submit proof of current DANB certification as a dental assistant for the dental radiology certification to be added to their registration.
 - The certification is only valid if the dental assistant has a current registration in Tennessee.
 - The renewal certificate with dental radiology certification must be prominently displayed in the dental assistant's place of employment.
- Changes the requirement to be admitted to the coronal polishing course to full time employment as a dental assistant for one year in Tennessee or any other state. The applicant is not required to have been a registered dental assistant, but the dental assistant must be registered prior to applying for the course.
 - If a dental assistant completed a coronal polishing course in another state, the course can be considered for equivalency. The course provider must submit information regarding the content of the course and proof that the dental assistant completed the course. If the dental assistant was issued a certification or permit by another state, verification of that certification or permit must be received from the other state. The dental assistant must be registered as a dental assistant in Tennessee and must pass the coronal polishing examination given by the Board for the certification to be added.
 - The coronal polishing examination application must be received at least 45 days prior to the scheduled examination. All dental assistants who complete either a board approved course or complete an out of state course that has been approved as equivalent must pass the board's coronal polishing examination.
 - If a dental assistant has completed a comparable nitrous oxide monitoring course in another state, the course provider must submit the information regarding content of the course and proof of course completion for review for equivalency. If the dental assistant was issued a certification or permit in the other state, verification must be received from the other state. The dental assistant must be registered as a dental assistant in Tennessee before the nitrous oxide monitoring certification may be added to the registration.
 - If a dental assistant has completed a comparable sealant application course in another state, the course provider must submit the information regarding content of the course and proof that the dental assistant completed the course for review for equivalency. If the dental assistant was issued a certification or permit in another state, verification must be received. The dental assistant must be registered as a dental assistant in Tennessee before the sealant application certification may be added to the registration.
 - If a dental assistant has completed a comparable restorative functions course in another state, the course provider must submit the information regarding content of the course and proof of course completion for review for equivalency. The dental assistant must be registered as a dental assistant in Tennessee before the restorative functions certification may be added to the registration.

- If a dental assistant has completed a comparable prosthetic functions course in another state, the course provider must submit the information regarding content of the course and proof that the dental assistant completed the course for review for equivalency. The dental assistant must be registered as a dental assistant in Tennessee before the prosthetic functions certification may be added to the registration.
- Changes the requirement for dental assistants to qualify for the restorative and prosthetic courses to two years continuous full-time employment within the past three years. The dental assistant must have been registered for a minimum of two years before admittance to the course.
- Course providers must apply for board approval for dental radiology courses at least 30 days prior to a scheduled board meeting on forms provided by the board. The section of the rule that governs these courses is in Rule 0460-5-.03(7).
 - The rule governing dental radiology certification courses applies to ADA accredited and Board approved dental assistant programs as well as to any other individual or entity wanting to teach a course to students who are currently registered dental assistants. The students enrolled in ADA accredited and board approved dental assisting courses are not required to be registered before attending the ADA accredited or board approved dental assisting courses.
 - ADA accredited and Board approved dental assistant programs are not required to be approved by the board to teach dental radiology if only teaching students enrolled in the dental assisting program. If the course is only in dental radiology, then it must be approved by the board.
 - The dental radiology course must be taught by a dentist who is licensed and in good standing. Tennessee licensed dental hygienists or registered dental assistants certified in dental radiology may assist during the clinical portion of the course.
 - Class size is limited to 40 students and the clinical instructor-to-student ratio must be no greater than 1:8 for the clinical portion of the course.
 - The dental radiology certification course must be a minimum of 14 hours in length and the course syllabus must be approved by the Board. Rule 0460-5-.03(7)(d)4. lists the subject matters to be covered in the course.
 - Students must pass a course administered examination that determines competency in dental radiology. The exam can be retaken only two additional times before the dental radiology course must be repeated.
 - The director/instructor of course must notify the board within 30 days after course completion or upon graduation that the student successfully completed the course and report the student's exam grade.
 - The student must submit the certification application and fee for the certification to be added to the registration.
 - No continuing education will be credited for attending the dental radiology certification course.

The amended rules are available on the Board's website under Rules and Regulations. All applications and forms are also available online.