

## DENTAL ASSISTING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS & STATUS DESCRIPTIONS

Employers are asked to identify the minimum skills and registration status that will fulfill the job requirements. Any skills not required for the job but considered an asset should be identified as such. If you have any questions about what these skills include please contact the EDAA. **We no longer use the terms RDA1 and RDA11. We only use RDA** as the designation for a dental assistant in Alberta who is registered with the College of Alberta Dental Assistants.

It is strongly recommended that employers **ask to see the applicants practice permit** to ensure the candidate is currently registered to work in Alberta **before** they make an offer of employment. Each registered dental assistant has been issued an annual license wallet card that will identify the skills they are registered to perform in this province and they are also required to hang their practice certificate for the current year in the dental practice they are employed in for the public to see.

It is strongly recommended that employers **have a written Employment Agreement** with each staff member, and signed by both parties, that clearly outlines the job description, hours of work, salary including reviews and criteria for increases, vacation policies, leaves or absence policies, benefits provided or cost-shared and any other considerations of importance to the position offered. Clear and consistent communication is vital to excellent employer / employee relations.

**Student DDP** – students enrolled in the NAIT DDP program are allowed to work in dental offices as they are learning during their program. The employers must agree to be involved in the training of these students through an agreement with NAIT DDP. Employers must be certain of the duties these students are allowed to practice while under their supervision before allowing them to participate in any skills. Contact the NAIT Distance Delivery Program directly with any questions.

**RDA (Chairside)** – a dental assistant may be registered with the CADA once they have completed basic chairside training (incl suctioning). Additional training is required for each of the intra oral skills that follows. These assistants may perform laboratory procedures such as fabricating study models, custom trays and maintain removable prosthesis, perform routine maintenance of equipment and instruments, maintain inventory, manage patient records, collect and update patient histories, support and practice infection control in the dental office and provide information and instruction to patients to assist them in maintaining their oral health.

**Basic 5** intraoral skills - These 5 basic skills include rubber cup prophylaxis, application of anticariogenic and disclosing agents, application of rubber dam, initial impressions and exposing radiographs. This 5 pack of skills were the first offered to dental assistants when intra oral training was made available in 1973. Preparation of simple facebow transfers and bite registrations and performing coronal whitening using non-prescription materials are additional skills that can be included here.

**Expanded 6** skills – These additional 6 skills were first offered to dental assistants in 1992. They include application of topical anesthetic, placement and removal of matrices and wedges, placing treatment liners and bases, suture and surgical dressing removal, application of pit and fissure sealants and application of desensitizing agents.

**TRC - Temp Rest & Cr** – This skill was first offered to dental assistants in 1997. Includes: fabricating and applying direct provisional restorations, cementing and removing provisionals (crowns and bridges), placing and removing retraction cords, selecting moulds and shades, application of acid etching and cavity bonding.

**PP - Periodontal Probing** - Originally called Periodontal Screening and Recording, this module allows RDA's to evaluate gingival health using the PSR System. This skill was first introduced in 1997.

**Ortho** module – RDA's in Alberta who have graduated from the Ortho module may be employed to use special skills geared towards assisting in Orthodontics. These include: placement and removal of separators, fitting ortho appliances, bands and brackets, application of bonding materials for direct and indirect brackets, placing and removing ortho bands, brackets and appliances, placing and removing adapted arch wires, placing and removing ligatures, tracing and measuring cephalometric radiographs. This skill was first offered in 1995.

**PDM – scaling** module. The class of graduates from the pilot program in 2006 produced the first 17 RDA's in Alberta who were trained in this module.

**HCP – Healthcare Provider cpr** is the current level of cpr for health and allied health providers and is the highest level of basic life support. The old level Basic Rescuer C cpr and the new level C cpr do not have the same skills training.

**NOTE:** Pursuant to the Health Professions Act, only registered dental assistants can call themselves "Dental Assistant", "DA", "Registered Dental Assistants" and/or "RDAs". Student grads cannot use the title and initials until they are officially registered and have a valid practice permit and license issued.

Prepared October 1, 2008 for EDAA-DGH