**On-The-Job Trained Dental Assistant: A Resource Guide for Dental Practices**

Due to the shortage of dental assistants (DA), the DPH Office of Oral Health has compiled this resource guide to aid dental practices in Massachusetts with the training and licensing of on-the-job trained (OJT) dental assistants.

The Board of Registration in Dentistry (BORID) regulations ([234 CMR 4.00: Licensure and license renewal requirements](https://www.mass.gov/regulations/234-CMR-400-licensure-and-license-renewal-requirements)) allow for non-formally trained dental assistants to join the dental workforce under two primary pathways:

1. Initial licensure for dental assistants trained on the job (234 CMR 4.12)
2. Notice of intent to apply as a first-time dental assistant trained on the job (234 CMR 4.13).

**Pathway 2: Notice of Intent**

Starts with licensure: [How to Apply for a Dental Assistant License](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-dental-assistant-license)

**Pathway 1: Initial licensure for OJT**

Ends with licensure: [How to Apply for a Dental Assistant License](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-dental-assistant-license)

This pathway can only be pursued by people with **absolutely no dental experience.**

Prior to practice, candidates must:

* successfully complete [a course on the CDC Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Healthcare Setting](https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/foundations-building-the-safest-dental-visit.html)
* pass the Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam
* have current CPR/BLS certification

The maximum length of training under the notice of intent is 6 months.

Requires successful completion of a course on the CDC Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Healthcare Setting and CPR/BLS prior to practice.

Until the OJT DA trainee completes an approved radiation health & safety training course, a letter must be submitted to BORID to attest that the OJT DA trainee will not take radiographs.

In advance of any practice, a notice of intent to train an OJT DA must be submitted to BORID by the supervising dentist.

OJT DA trainees are not permitted to take radiographs until successful completion of an approved radiation health & safety training course.

After completing an approved radiation health & safety training course, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to BORID.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. What qualifies as “practicing dentistry” as a dental assistant?**

* Almost anything with gloves on
* Hands-on contact
* Being involved in clinical care in any way
* Running an autoclave or any dental office equipment
* Helping with any aspect of the sterilization process
* Cleaning an operatory before or after a patient

Please note, per BORID, a “sterilization technician” is considered to be practicing as a dental assistant.

**2. What radiation health and safety training courses are approved by BORID?**

Below are the six Massachusetts radiation health and safety training courses approved by BORID:

1. Massachusetts Dental Society (through the Boston University School of Dental Medicine): <https://www.yankeedental.com/Attendees/Search-for-Courses>
   * Search for the Title: “Radiology”
2. Boston University School of Dental Medicine: <https://www.bu.edu/dental/ce/courses/>
   * Look for “Radiology Certification for Dental Auxiliaries”
3. Tufts University School of Dental Medicine: <https://dental.tufts.edu/CE>
4. Quinsigamond Community College: <https://www.qcc.edu/>
5. Springfield Technical Community College: <https://www.stcc.edu/wdc/descriptions/wden-001-dental-radiology-certificate-program/>
6. Mount Wachusett Community College: <https://mwcc.edu/academics/certificate/dental-assisting/>

**3. Are there other ways to demonstrate competence in radiation health and safety?**

In lieu of completion of a BORID approved radiation health and safety training course, BORID will accept:

* Proof of a passing score on the Dental Assistant National Board Radiation Health and Safety Exam for dental assistants.
* An official transcript documenting acceptable radiation health and safety training for foreign-trained dentists interested in practicing as a dental assistant.
* Proof of successful competition of a radiation health and safety training for dental students interested in practicing as a dental assistant.



**For questions related to licensure or the practice of dentistry, contact the Board of Registration in Dentistry.**

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Email: [dentistry.admin@state.ma.us](mailto:dentistry.admin@state.ma.us)

Webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/board-of-registration-in-dentistry>