

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CLASS**

The DENTAL HYGIENIST, under the supervision of a licensed dentist, trains patients in dental hygiene and renders preventive and therapeutic oral prophylaxis. Some employees in this class provide chairside dental assistance and, if licensed for expanded functions, may take patient x-rays and administer local anesthetic agents.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES**

This is a single classification and not currently part of a series of classes.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1.Oral Prophylaxis.** Typical tasks: under the general supervision of a dentist, removes calcareous deposits, accretions, and stains from teeth by scaling accumulation of tartar from teeth and beneath margins of gums using rotating brush, rubber cap, and cleaning compound; performs root planing and curettage; renders fluoride treatments and polishes exposed tooth surfaces using rotating cap and polishing compounds; applies topical anesthetic and desensitizing agents; makes preliminary intra- and extraoral examinations and charts conditions of decay or disease for diagnosis and treatment by a dentist; places or removes periodontal dressings; removes matrixes and rubber dams.
- 2.Dental Hygiene Education.** Typical tasks: instructs and demonstrates to patients or students of various age levels proper care of the mouth and teeth; promotes interest in the prevention of dental disease; some employees in this class instruct teachers, dental students, or institutional staff on the techniques of oral hygiene and dental health; may provide technical assistance in the planning of a dental health program through conference with professional superiors.
- 3.Dental Assisting.** Typical tasks: under the supervision of a dentist, provides chairside dental assistance support to dentists, dental students, dental hygienists, or dental technicians; prepares work station, instruments, and materials; greets and escorts patient to the work station; retracts patient's cheek, tongue, or other parts of tissues during a dental operation; assists with the placement or removal of a rubber dam and accessories used for its placement and retention as directed by dentist; removes debris normally created and accumulated during or after operative processes by the use of vacuum devices, compressed air, mouthwashes, and water; prepares amalgams and adhesives; applies topical fluoride; sterilizes and wraps instruments; wipes down and cleans work station between patients; places matrix retainers for alloy and composite restorations; removes supragingival excess cement from crowns, bridges, and orthodontic appliances with hand instruments; polishes amalgam restorations; makes impressions as directed by the dentist.
- 4.Administrative Functions.** Typical tasks: schedules and confirms patient appointments and recalls; prepares daily schedules and pulls charts for patients; checks charts for communicable diseases and advises dentist as necessary; under dentist's supervision, makes entries to patient charts to record examination findings or treatment procedures; some employees in this class process dental insurance forms, assist with patient billing and account collection, and prepare patient and office production statistics.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

Employees in this class have daily in-person contact with patients to provide oral prophylaxis or hygiene training and to schedule further treatment. Employees in this class have daily in-person contact with dentists or dental students to assist with treatment of patients or discuss cases. Some employees in this class have regular meetings with school faculty or medical staff during patient treatment or in private to discuss patient needs.

**SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Employees in this class are authorized by the Oregon Board of Dentistry to practice dental hygiene on a patient under the authorization of a supervising dentist. Employees in this class receive general supervision from a licensed dentist who daily reviews the hygienist's work through patient review, charts, and informal or formal meetings with the employee. Work is evaluated for professionalism, thoroughness, compliance with professional standards such as those of the American Dental Association, and effectiveness of treatment as reflected in patient's well-being.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Positions in this class are primarily found in hospitals, clinics, or health care facilities. They require the willingness to work in the environment associated with the position's location and purpose. In addition, they require the willingness to maintain a sympathetic and understanding attitude towards mentally ill, mentally retarded, handicapped, and physically ill patients. Some positions require the willingness to work overtime, on-call, and/or rotating schedules.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES (KSA)**

General knowledge of the equipment, terminology, and procedures and methods used in dental hygiene and dental assisting.

General knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of hard and soft oral structures.

General knowledge of oral bacteriology and pathology.

General knowledge of professional and legal standards required to practice as a dental hygienist.

Basic knowledge of pharmacology related to agents used in oral evaluations and treatments.

Skill in mixing amalgams, cements, and impression materials.

Skill in performing oral prophylaxis such as removal of calcareous deposits, accretions, and stains from teeth.

Skill in applying medicaments to aid in arresting dental decay.

Ability to provide clinical services and health education to patients of all ages and in a variety of physical environments.

Ability to maintain patient charts, schedule treatment, and answer questions from patients, parents, or institutional staff.

Ability to safely perform moderate to heavy lifting.

Some positions in this class require one or more of the following:

Basic knowledge of oral radiology and/or expanded function dental assistance.

Skill in taking study model impressions.

Ability to set up and maintain patient recall systems.

Ability to deal with inmates or mental patients who may become aggressive or abusive.

### **SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Certification by the Oregon Board of Dentistry as a dental hygienist.

**NOTE:** The KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS are required for initial consideration. ABILITIES may be required for initial consideration, at any time during the selection process, or during a trial service period as a final stage of the selection process. Some duties performed by positions in this class may require different KSA's. No attempt is made to describe every KSA required for **all** positions in this class. Additional KSA requirements will be explained on the recruiting announcement.

Adopted 4/90

Revised

Examples of work are typical of duties assigned to this class. No attempt is made to describe every duty performed by all positions in this class.