

Dental assistant job description

Updated October 17, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team. Replace everything in [brackets].

Details

- Department: [Department]
- Reports to: [Manager title]
- Location: [City, State, or remote]
- Employment type: [Full-time, part-time, or seasonal]
- FLSA status: Nonexempt
- Pay range: [\$X to \$Y per hour]

About [Company]

[Two or three sentences about what your company does, who it serves, and why people like working here.]

Job summary

We're looking for a dental assistant to support our dentists chairside, keep treatment rooms and instruments ready, and help patients feel comfortable from the moment they sit down.

What you'll do

- Prepare and sterilize instruments, and set up and break down treatment rooms.
- Assist dentists chairside during exams, fillings, extractions, and other procedures.
- Take dental radiographs when credentialed under state law.
- Record treatment notes and charting in the practice management system.
- Explain post-treatment care and oral hygiene to patients.
- Perform expanded functions permitted by state law and the assistant's credentials.
- Follow infection control, OSHA, and radiation safety procedures.
- Track supplies and lab cases, and help at the front desk when needed.

What you'll need

- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Completion of a dental assisting program or equivalent on-the-job training.
- Radiography certification or eligibility as required by [State].
- Current CPR or BLS certification.

Nice to have

- Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) credential from DANB.
- Expanded function certification where your state offers it.
- One year of chairside experience.
- Experience with [practice management software].

Skills

Four-handed dentistry, Sterilization and infection control, Radiography, Patient comfort and reassurance, Attention to detail, Teamwork.

Physical demands and work environment

Dental office. Requires sitting and standing chairside for long periods, fine hand coordination, and exposure to radiation and bodily fluids with protective equipment provided.

Pay and benefits

[\$X to \$Y per hour], based on experience and location. [List benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plan match, paid time off, and training.]

Equal opportunity

[Company] is an equal opportunity employer. We consider all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other status protected by law. If you need a reasonable accommodation to apply or interview, contact [name] at [email or phone].

Hiring notes for HR and the hiring manager

Pay data

- Median hourly wage: \$23.11 (BLS OEWS, May 2025, SOC 31-9091, Dental assistants).
- Median annual equivalent: \$48,070 (hourly median x 2,080 hours).
- Mean annual wage: \$50,200.
- Check state and metro data at bls.gov/oes before setting your range, and include the range in postings where the law requires it.

Exempt status and legal notes

FLSA status: Nonexempt (overtime eligible). Duties and pay decide overtime eligibility, not the job title.

Dental assistant duties are regulated state by state. Most states require specific training or certification before an assistant can take X-rays, and expanded functions such as placing fillings or sealants are allowed only in some states and only with additional credentials. The Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) publishes a state-by-state guide. Dental offices also fall under OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.

How to customize it

- Check your state dental board rules before listing radiography or expanded functions.
- Say whether the role includes front desk or billing work.
- Mention the patient volume, such as patients per day.
- Highlight continuing education support, which assistants value.

Interview questions

1. Walk me through how you sterilize and set up a room between patients.
2. What X-ray certification do you hold, and in which state?
3. How do you help an anxious patient relax?
4. Tell me about a procedure where you anticipated the dentist's next step.

Before you post

- Separate required from preferred. Required means you won't hire without it. Everything else is preferred. Long required lists screen out qualified people.
- Describe physical demands and environment. Lifting, standing, shifts, travel, noise, temperature. This sets honest expectations and supports an ADA essential functions record.
- State the pay range. Required in a growing list of states and cities, and expected by candidates everywhere else.

- Say exempt or nonexempt. Decide based on duties and salary before you post, and keep the classification consistent with how you pay.
- Name required licenses and checks. Licenses, certifications, background checks, drug tests, and driving record reviews, with the timing of each.
- Add the accommodation and EEO statement. Tell candidates how to request a reasonable accommodation, and include your equal opportunity statement.

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