



**Canadian  
Dental Assistants  
Association**

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# Code of Ethics for Dental Assistants

*A guide for professional  
conduct and ethical decisions*

## Preamble

The Code of Ethics of the Canadian Dental Assistants' Association is intended for use in the practice of dental assisting as a guide for professional conduct and for ethical decisions.

The Code of Ethics reflects the values of the profession of dental assisting based on the principles of veracity, integrity and respect. The Code is intended for application in all clinical, educational, administrative and institutional settings. It is the obligation of all dental assistants to be familiar with the Code and incorporate its guidelines and obligations in their practice. Adherence to the Code will maintain public trust in our profession.

By endorsing and complying with the Code of Ethics, dental assistants will ensure that ethical commitments to patients, the public, community and the profession are fulfilled.

The Code shall be a guideline to augment the licensing/certifying and regulating policies within each federal, provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

*The Code of Ethics of the Canadian Dental Assistant's Association is intended for use in the practice of dental assisting as a guide for professional conduct and for ethical decisions.*

## Practice of a Dental Assistant

As multi-skilled professionals, dental assistants possess a diverse knowledge base and apply clinical skills, administrative principles and practitioner autonomy through assignment and delegation of duties within provincial legislation. Dental assistants communicate effectively and collaborate with all members of the oral health care team in the delivery of patient-centred care. Dental assistants are educated professionals who maintain technical competence through advanced or continuing education.

## Responsibilities to Patients

### CONFIDENTIALITY

The dental assistant shall protect and maintain the confidentiality of all patient records and respect a patient's right to privacy and dignity within legal limits and professional responsibilities. Further, they will ensure that all confidential and proprietary information acquired in the course of duty is used solely in the patient's best interests.

### INFORMED CONSENT

The primary health care provider may delegate to the assistant the responsibility to explain treatment recommendations to the patient. The dental assistant will provide information to the extent of their knowledge to assist the patient in understanding the proposed treatment options. The dental assistant will obtain informed consent, respect the patient's autonomy and their right of choice.

### DENTAL JURISPRUDENCE

Dental assistants shall endorse and uphold their legal obligations (local, provincial, territorial and federal) as they pertain to dentistry and the laws of Canada.

The relationship between the dental patient and the dental assistant is one of trust, morality and responsibility. The dental assistant will uphold these fiduciary responsibilities and protect the best interests of the patient at all times.

## Responsibilities to Patients Cont'd

In all clinical, educational, institutional and emergency situations, the dental assistant shall maintain the standards of care in a reasonable, prudent, and professional manner.

Acts of omission and commission that cause injury or harm to a patient will be considered professional negligence.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

The dental assistant has an ethical responsibility for all procedures they perform during the delivery of patient care. Full disclosure to the proper authorities of any problems arising during the provision of care is required.

### COMFORT AND WELFARE

The dental assistant will provide optimum oral health care to all patients with a focus on the health, welfare and security of the person.

## Responsibilities to the Public and Community

### HUMAN RIGHTS

The dental assistant will uphold the principles of dignity, equity, fairness and respect for all individuals.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The dental assistant will take every measure in the fulfillment of their duties to minimize their impact on the environment and to promote environmentally friendly practices.

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The dental assistant will contribute, through education and service, to promotional activities and initiatives designed to advance oral and general health care knowledge and service.

## Responsibilities to the Profession

### EQUALITY AMONG PROFESSIONALS

The dental assistant shall assume the responsibilities and ethical obligations required to provide and promote quality oral health care and service.

The dental assistant shall be open and honest in all relationships with members of the oral health care team and the public.

### REPRESENTATION

Dental assistants are recognized by the public as a distinct health care profession. Therefore the dental assistant has a responsibility to uphold the highest principles and standards of the profession, promoting the profession in the advancement of quality oral health care and service.

### PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The dental assistant will perform, to the highest standards, only those duties within assigned authority as outlined in licensing / certifying and regulating legislation within the provincial, territorial or federal jurisdictions governing professionals.

Dental assistants will endeavour to protect the profession, the oral health care team and the public by reporting to regulatory authorities all actions that contravene provincial, territorial or federal jurisdictions.

The dental assistant has an obligation to maintain membership, to support and participate in the initiatives of the local, provincial and national professional associations. The dental assistant will maintain and comply with legislation / regulation and relevant continuing education requirements to remain in good standing with their representative professional bodies and regulatory authorities.

The dental assistant shall not compromise the reputation of the profession by dishonest or illegal behaviour and shall not misrepresent qualifications or abilities in the fulfillment of their duties and obligations.

## Responsibilities to the Profession Cont'd

### **INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING AND AUTONOMY**

The dental assistant shall assume all responsibility for functions legally delegated to dental assistants within their respective provincial, territorial and federal jurisdictions. The dental assistant will promote a scope of practice suited to the knowledge and experience attained or attainable by members of the profession and always in the interest of patient welfare.

### **COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

The dental assistant will co-operate with all members of the oral health care team in the best interests of patient health and welfare.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

The dental assistant will support the mission, goals and objectives of their local provincial and national associations. Dental assistants will contribute time, skill, talent and expertise to these associations throughout their careers, for the betterment of successive generations of professional dental assistants.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

The dental assistant will maintain continued competence, theoretical knowledge and awareness of technological advancements through education programs, professional literature and peer associations.

The dental assistant will maintain and practice the highest standards of competence and proficiency in the performance of their duties and will encourage the sharing of new methods, education and knowledge.

### **RESEARCH**

The dental assistant will support and pursue legitimate research as it pertains to the profession of dental assisting, and the advancement of oral health.



*Protect yourself and your patients*



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