



**American Medical Technologists  
Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Certification Competencies  
and Examination Specifications**

*Summary Table*

	<b>Work Area</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>	<b>Percentage of Exam</b>
I.	Office Assisting Skills	30	14.3%
II.	Dental Sciences	74	35.2%
III.	Clinical Procedures	56	26.7%
IV.	Dental Imaging	50	23.8%
Total		210	100%

*Question Weightings, Work Areas, Task Areas, and Competencies*

**Number of items**

[30]

**I. Office Assisting Skills (14.3% of exam)**

**A. Office Procedures**

1. Telephone protocol and courtesy  
\*\*Use proper telephone technique and etiquette
2. Appointment control and recall  
\*\*Utilize appointment system and know function (e.g., call, email, text, message)  
\*\*Utilize recall/reminder system and know function (e.g., call, email, text, message)
3. Procedures for Health Information Management  
\*\*Properly file documents, notes, reports, and patient communication in charts or electronic health record (EHR)
4. Inventory procedures  
\*\*Maintain inventory procedures for clinical supplies

**B. Patient Management and Communication**

1. Psychology

- \*\*Recognize patient fears and observe verbal and nonverbal cues
- \*\*Recognize indicators of personal stress
- 2. Team concept
  - \*\*Establish and maintain rapport
  - \*\*Use listening skills
- 3. Patient motivation
  - \*\*Establish and promote patient recognition of treatment and prevention

### ***C. Ethics and Professional Conduct***

- 1. Regulations
  - \*\*Know and identify state and federal regulatory agencies
- 2. Professional behavior and appearance
  - \*\*Develop and maintain professional attitudes
  - \*\*Maintain professional appearance
- 3. Professional responsibilities
  - \*\*Recognize and maintain professional responsibilities
- 4. Scope of Practice
  - \*\*Identify scope of practice and standard of care
- 5. Federal regulations
  - \*\* Comply with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations and patient confidentiality

[74]

## **II. Dental Sciences (35.2% of exam)**

### ***D. Dental Anatomy and Terminology***

- 1. Dental terminology
  - \*\*Know basic dental terminology including suffixes and prefixes
- 2. Tooth anatomy and supporting structures
  - \*\*Recognize permanent and deciduous dentition
  - \*\*Recognize supporting structures of the teeth and know their functions
  - \*\*Identify correct tooth name, location, and function
- 3. Head, neck, and oral anatomy
  - \*\*Name and locate muscles of mastication
  - \*\*Name and locate nerves that supply important dental structures
  - \*\*Know life-cycle of dentition
- 4. Pathology
  - \*\*Know and recognize major pathological conditions

### ***E. Patient Education***

- 1. Patient instruction
  - \*\*Demonstrate brushing technique to patient
  - \*\*Demonstrate flossing technique to patient
- 2. Prevention
  - \*\*Recognize plaque formation and its implications

3. Patient health history
  - \*\*Obtain, report, and document medical/dental history

#### ***F. Local Anesthesia***

1. Preparation, delivery, and disposal of anesthetic
  - \*\*Know and abide by OSHA guidelines regarding the disposal of anesthetic, ampules, and needles
  - \*\*Assist in preparation for, and delivery of, local anesthetic
2. Contraindications
  - \*\*Know contraindications for local anesthesia

#### ***G. Medical Emergencies***

1. First aid
  - \*\*Recognize situations requiring first aid and assist in administering first aid
2. Vital signs
  - \*\*Take and record vital signs
3. Health history
  - \*\*Recognize medically compromised and high-risk patients
4. Emergency protocol
  - \*\*Recognize signs and symptoms of medical/dental emergencies, including side effects of N<sub>2</sub>O, syncope, chest pain, insulin shock, and allergic reactions
  - \*\*Know location and availability of emergency equipment
  - \*\*Maintain emergency equipment

#### ***H. Infection Control***

1. Sterilization procedures and aseptic techniques
  - \*\*Perform sterilization procedures and aseptic techniques
2. Contaminated waste and OSHA guidelines
  - \*\*Understand disposal of contaminated waste, OSHA guidelines, and amalgam disposal
3. Infection control
  - \*\*Know barrier techniques
4. Waterlines DUWLS
5. PPE
6. Maintain instruments and handpieces
7. Radiography
  - \*\*Digital and analogue

#### ***I. Dental Materials***

1. Dental materials
  - \*\*Identify and use restorative materials
    - cements          composites: light- and cold-cured
    - amalgam      veneers
    - crown-bridge

2. Impression materials
  - \*\*Know care of impression materials
    - irreversible hydrocolloid
    - silicone
    - poly-vinyl
3. Other Materials
  - a. Gypsum – Prepare and pour study models
  - b. Resin
    - custom trays      temporary restorations
    - denture repair
  - c. Abrasives
  - d. Waxes
  - e. Whitening

[56]

### **III. Clinical Procedures (26.7% of exam)**

#### ***J. Instruments and Equipment***

1. Identification and usage
  - \*\*Identify and use handpieces, rotary, and power instruments
2. Maintenance
  - \*\* Maintain handpieces, rotary, and power instruments
3. Compressor and suction units
  - \*\*Use and maintain compressor and suction units
4. Procedural trays
  - \*\*Recognize and prepare procedural trays

#### ***K. Chairside Procedures***

1. Position of dentist, patient, and assistant
  - \*\*Know operating zones
  - \*\*Know seating for four-handed dentistry
2. Evacuation and retraction
  - \*\*Practice proper evacuation and retraction techniques
3. Instrument transfer
  - \*\*Maintain operating field
  - \*\*Perform four-handed instrument transfer
4. Manipulation and delivery of chairside materials
  - \*\* Mix, prepare, and deliver materials
5. Intra- and extraoral charting
  - \*\*Record intra- and extraoral charting (electronic and paper)
6. Hazards
  - \*\*Recognize operatory hazards
  - \*\*Recognize material hazards/SDS
  - \*\*Practice safety precautions related to chairside materials

***L. Dental Specialties: Endodontics, Periodontics, Orthodontics, Pediatric, Prosthodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery***

1. Terminology
2. Instruments
3. Procedures
4. ISO

***M. Laboratory***

1. Safety
  - \*\*Practice laboratory safety precautions
2. OSHA guidelines
  - \*\*Know and abide by laboratory-related OSHA guidelines (blood borne pathogens standard and material safety hazard)
3. Manipulation of laboratory materials
  - \*\*Understand manipulation of laboratory materials
4. Equipment
  - \*\*Identify and use laboratory equipment
5. Maintenance
  - \*\*Maintain laboratory equipment

[50]

**IV. Dental Imaging (23.8% of exam)**

***N. Principles and Theory***

1. Terminology
  - \*\*Know basic terms, nomenclature, and anatomy
2. Fundamental concepts of analogue (film) radiography
  - \*\*Know fundamental concepts of analogue (film) radiography handling
3. Fundamental concepts of digital radiography
  - \*\*Know fundamental concepts of digital radiography handling

***O. Techniques***

1. Radiographic procedures
  - \*\*Perform radiographic procedures, and operate equipment using paralleling and bisected-angle techniques
2. Radiographic images
  - \*\*Produce acceptable radiographic images (analogue and digital) including periapical, bitewing, occlusal, panoramic, and cephalograms
3. Intraoral imaging
4. Extraoral imaging
5. Evaluation
  - \*\*Evaluate errors in placement, exposure, and processing for digital and analogue images

***P. Radiograph Film Processing and Mounting***

1. Manual processing
  - \*\*Understand manual radiographic processing and associated errors (e.g., reticulation)
2. Mounting
  - \*\*Perform mounting of radiographs
3. Duplication
  - \*\*Duplicate radiographs using automatic methods

***Q. Safety***

1. Safety requirements and equipment
  - \*\*Follow recommended radiation safety requirements
2. State and federal radiation safety laws
  - \*\*Comply with state and federal law concerning dental radiation

**Task Inventory Note**

\*\*The tasks included in this inventory are considered by American Medical Technologists to be representative of the dental assisting job role. This document should be considered dynamic, to reflect the dental assistant's current role with respect to contemporary health care. Therefore, tasks may be added, removed, or modified on an ongoing basis.