

DENTAL BOARD of TASMANIA

Dental Code

A By-law pursuant to s11 of the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001* for the purpose of providing practical guidance and direction to dental practitioners in matters pertaining to the practise of dentistry by registered dentists, dental therapists and dental hygienists.

Short title: This By-law may be cited as
BY-LAW No. 2008/01 - Dental Practitioners Code of Practice

Commencement: This By-law commences on the First Day of July 2008.

Repeal: The Dental Practitioners Interim Code of Practice – 2001 is repealed

By-law No. 2008/01 was made by the Dental Board of Tasmania at a duly constituted meeting on
7th March 2008.

By-law No. 2008/01

DENTAL PRACTITIONERS CODE OF PRACTICE

This by-law commences on 1 July 2008

**This document must be kept on site at all times at all
Dental Surgeries/Clinics**

The Dental Board encourages re-production of this By-law for distribution among and for the information of providers and users of dental services.

DENTAL BOARD of TASMANIA

Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001

Section 11 - Dental Code

By-law No. 2008/01

Dental Practitioner’s Code of Practice

OBJECTIVE

The objective of *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001* is to control and regulate the practise of dentistry in Tasmania so as to -:

- (a) ensure that persons who practise as dentists, dental therapists and dental hygienists do so according to the highest professional standards;
- (b) ensure that dental services provided to the public are of the highest possible standard; and
- (c) guard against unsafe, incompetent and unethical dental practices.

It is the role of the Dental Board to administer the *Act* and exercise its powers to ensure compliance with those objectives.

By-law 2008/01 has been developed for the purposes of -:

- Providing guidance and direction with respect to expected levels of practitioner responsibilities and accountabilities in the delivery of dental services,
- Promoting and maintaining a team approach among all categories of registered practitioners in the delivery of dental services; and
- Establishing -:
 - parameters for a working relationship between registered therapists, hygienists, dentists and dental specialists; and
 - “*scope of practice*” guidelines to assist employers and users of dental services better understanding the roles, functions and fitness of dental therapists and dental hygienists within the overall dental community.

The provisions of By-law 2008/01 establish the parameters against which the Dental Board may measure a practitioner’s conduct in any complaint circumstance.

**

Pursuant to the powers vested under Section 11(1) of the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001* the Dental Board of Tasmania at its meeting on 7th March 2008 made and adopted **By-law No.2008/01 - Dental Practitioner’s Code of Practice**

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title:

This by-law may be cited as **By-law No. 2008/01- Dental Practitioner's Code of Practice**

2. Commencement: This By-law takes effect from **1 July 2008**.

3. Interpretation:

In this by-law, unless the contrary intention appears -

"**the Act**" means the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001*;

"**Board**" means the Dental Board of Tasmania constituted under Section 6 of the Act;

"**certificate of registration**" means a certificate of registration issued under Section 30 of the Act.

"**dental therapist**" means a person who is registered under sub-section (2) of Section 20 of the Act;

"**dental hygienist**" means a person who is registered under sub-section (3) of Section 20 of the Act;

"**dental practitioner**" means a person who is registered under sub-section (1) or (2) or (3) of Section 20 of the Act;

"**dental service**" whether in the singular or plural context means any procedure undertaken or advice given within the definition of "dentistry"

"**dentist**" means a person who is registered under sub-section (1) of Section 20 of the Act;

"**dentistry**" has the same meaning as the definition of "dentistry" in sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of Section 3 of the Act;

"**register**" means the register of dental practitioners kept pursuant to Section 32 of the Act;

"**clinical guidance**" means consultation with, the giving of advice or direction to another dental practitioner and periodic general oversight of dental services undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by another dental practitioner.

"**autonomously**" means with the freedom to determine ones own actions.

Review

4. This by-law will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it accords with legislation, national and international standards and any relevant developments in the provision of dental care.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PRACTICE OF DENTISTRY AND DELIVERY OF DENTAL SERVICES

Professional/Ethical Objectives

5. Dental practitioners shall contribute to the promotion and maintenance of a safe, competent and ethical dental health environment by:
 - (a) acknowledging and respecting each others' entitlement to practice dentistry within the restrictions and limitation imposed under the provisions of the *Act*;
 - (b) participating in the promotion of "dental health team" concepts for the consultation, referral and professional advice to other dental practitioners;
 - (c) practicing dentistry in a manner consistent with achieving the objectives of the *Act*.
 - (d) consulting with and referring to other experienced practitioners when dental care services require expertise beyond the individual's scope; and
 - (e) consulting with and referring to other health care professionals when a client's needs fall outside the scope of dentistry.

REQUIREMENTS

Education and Competence

6. Registered practitioners must demonstrate at least the level of competence of a graduating final year dental, dental hygiene or dental therapy student in a course of study entitling the practitioner to a certificate of registration under PART 3 of the *Act* or other such course of study approved by the Board.

Scope of Practice of Dental Hygienists and Dental Therapists

7. Dental hygienists and dental therapists practice in a team environment in collaboration with other oral health care providers in the prevention and treatment of dental diseases. They are educated in a particular range of procedures included in the definition of dentistry, and practice in a collaborative and consultative relationship with a registered dentist or dental specialist in the provision of overall integrated care to their patient groups.
8. Dental hygienists work in a consultative and referral relationship with other oral health care professionals to provide any or all of the following: preventive, periodontal, and orthodontic dental services.
9. Dental therapists work autonomously and in collaboration with other dental and health care professionals to assess and prevent the onset of oral disease, treat and manage client's general oral health
10. A dental hygienist or dental therapist may practice dentistry provided always that any procedures undertaken and advice given is within their scope of education, acquired skills and competency and does not exceed the scope of education applicable to the curriculum leading to;
 - (a) Award of the qualification(s) entitling the dental hygienist or dental therapist to a certificate of registration under PART(3) of the *Act*; or
 - (b) Award of such other further or advanced course(s) of training as may be approved by the Board.

11. Dental hygienists and dental therapists are responsible and accountable for their own clinical practice within their recognised education acquired skills and competency and for referring appropriately any issue outside of this.

Responsibilities and accountabilities of team members

12. Dental practitioners shall at all times be personally responsible and accountable for familiarisation with the legal requirements of the *Act, Dental Code (by-laws)* and other legislation affecting the delivery of dental services, including but not limited to;
 - (a) infection control procedures,
 - (b) procurement, storage and administration of substances under the provisions of the Poisons Act;
 - (c) operation of radiographic equipment,
 - (d) administration of anaesthetics,
 - (e) exercising appropriate levels of duty of care in the practice of dentistry'
 - (f) identifying and responding appropriately to instances of unsafe practice, and
 - (g) recognising and acting appropriately in respect of breaches of the law.
13. A registered dentist must be available to provide clinical guidance or referral if required. (Not necessarily on site.)
14. A dentist is not permitted to direct a dental hygienist or dental therapist to undertake any dental procedures or give advice beyond their scope of education, acquired skills and competency.
15. A dental hygienist or dental therapist whether acting alone or in combination with others and not being in the employ of a dentist or organisation must enter into a formal agreement with at least one registered dentist whereby the dentist agrees to;
 - (a) act as a consultant and give clinical guidance as required, and
 - (b) accept referrals for the undertaking of procedures and/or giving of advice determined to be outside the scope of education, acquired skills and competency of the dental hygienist or dental therapist.
16. A dental hygienist or dental therapist not engaged in the employ of a dentist must if requested to do so, provide to the Board the names and practice addresses of registered dentists with whom they have entered into an agreement as required under Clause 15.
17. A dental hygienist or a dental therapist may appeal to the Board in any circumstance where it is believed that a dentist may have unreasonably withheld consent to provide clinical guidance and accept referrals where the patient requires advice or treatment determined to be outside the scope of the dental hygienist or dental therapist as referred to in Clause 15.

Agreements

18. In the interests of public safety and to guard against unsafe, incompetent and unethical dental practices that might lead to disciplinary actions and or legal implications, an agreement made between a dental hygienist or dental therapist and a dentist could include reference to;
- (a) each parties' responsibilities and accountabilities;
 - (b) a description of procedures to be undertaken and advice to be given by the dental hygienist or dental therapist. (See appendix 1)
19. Without limiting the generality of this by-law, any condition of employment or any agreement made between a dental hygienist or dental therapist and a dentist, shall not contain any term, or condition or impose any restriction limiting the practicing of dentistry at a level below that permitted under Clause 10 of this by-law.

Non-compliance

20. The Board may take disciplinary action against practitioners who fail to comply with this by-law or any other by-law within the *Dental Code*.

Acknowledgments:

The subcommittee acknowledges the kind input and assistance from the following groups:

ADOHTA
DHAA TAS
ADA Federal
TDTA Inc
Oral Health Services Tasmania

Appendix 1/ Information Sheet/ Guidelines.

Agreements

A working relationship between a dental hygienist or dental therapist and a dentist (or dentists) who will provide clinical support when required must be established.

The by-law requires that consultation arrangements be documented in an agreement.

The consultation agreement is separate from an employment agreement.

The agreement should be available for inspection upon the request of the Board.

General functions of dental hygienists and dental therapists a guide for practitioners and clients

The general functions of a dental hygienist may include:

- Measuring and recording signs of periodontal disease.
- Dental radiography on the prescription of a registered dentist and in accordance with Radiation Control Council limitations.
- Application and removal of rubber dam.
- Irrigation of the mouth and removal of sutures.
- Application of topical agents for fluoride therapy, remineralisation and desensitisation.
- Debridement to remove supragingival and subgingival deposits from the teeth.
- Root planning.
- Cleaning and polishing of teeth.
- Recontouring and polishing of restorations.
- Taking alginate impressions
- Application of fissure sealants
- Removal of periodontal packs.
- Orthodontic band selection and sizing.
- Removal of orthodontic appliances and cements.
- Caries susceptibility testing.
- Administration of infiltration and inferior nerve block analgesia.

The general functions of a dental therapist may include:

- Oral examination diagnosis and recording of coronal caries, gingival conditions and recognition of abnormalities.
- Prescription and interpretation of intra-oral radiographs in accordance with Radiation Control Council limitations.
- Application and removal of rubber dam.
- Administration of infiltration and inferior nerve block analgesia.
- Preparation and restoration of primary and secondary teeth using appropriate materials.
- Emergency pulp capping of secondary teeth
- Vital pulpotomy of primary teeth.
- Extraction of primary teeth under local anaesthetic.
- Application of fissure sealants.
- Taking alginate impressions.
- Application of topical agents for fluoride therapy, remineralisation and desensitisation.
- Debridement to remove supragingival deposits from the teeth.

Roles and responsibilities of team members

All members of the team are expected to work co operatively to provide the best possible care to the patient.

A registered dentist nominated in an agreement must be available for consultation and advice as needed by the dental hygienist or dental therapist (not necessarily on site).

It is assumed that practitioners will exercise their professional judgement and seek the necessary support to ensure the best outcome for their patients. The individual practitioner will be accountable for a lapse of professional judgement.

Courses approved by the Board

Practitioners may extend their skills by undertaking educational programs that the Board has formally approved. These courses are generally provided through an accredited tertiary institution. In order to have these qualifications added to their registration record the practitioner must provide evidence of satisfactory completion of the formal program of education.

Appendix 2

Example of consultation agreement;

I, (*name of practitioner*).....

Qualification and year of attainment.....

Registration certificate number.....

Address of practise.....

Undertake to provide dental care within the scope of education, acquired skills and competency entitling me to registration as a dental hygienist / dental therapist with the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001*.

So as to provide the best possible patient care through appropriate referral pathways;

Name of practitioner/s (registered dentist/s).....

Qualification and year of attainment.....

Registration certificate number.....

Address of practice.....

Shall consent to be available to provide clinical guidance when required, and to accept referrals for the undertaking of procedures and/ or giving of advice determined to be outside the scope of education of the dental hygienist or dental therapist.

To facilitate these referral pathways clinical guidance may be obtained and provided by phone, facsimile, and email or in person. Patients may be required to attend the practicing rooms of the referral dentist/s when active and/or ongoing treatments are necessary.

Signed.....

Signature Dentist/s

Signed.....

Dental hygienist/therapist

Signed.....

Witness

Date...../...../.....

NOTE: The patient or parent in the event of referral to the dentist becoming necessary may also sign this document.