

Restricted activities policy

Date last reviewed	March 2025
Scheduled review	
Approved by	Dental Council

1. Certain oral health activities are restricted by law to registered practitioners.

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (Restricted Activities) Order 2005 deems the following health procedures to be restricted activities – i.e. restricted to registered health practitioners:

- (a) Surgical or operative procedures below the gingival margin or the surface of the skin, mucous membranes or teeth.
- (b) Clinical procedures involved in the insertion and maintenance of fixed and removable orthodontic or oral and maxillofacial prosthetic appliances.

It is illegal for anyone other than a registered health practitioner to perform these or any other restricted activity, regardless of whether they are working under supervision.

The only exception to this, is if the activity is to be performed in an emergency situation (see References).

Breaches of the above are investigated by the Ministry of Health and may be prosecuted.

2. The Dental Council considers the following activities to be restricted activities:

- (a) Management of any disorder or condition/disease of the oral cavity and associated facial structures.
- (b) Removal of supra-gingival hard deposits or sub-gingival hard and soft deposits (calculus, dental plaque).
- (c) Applying bands to the tooth crown.
- (d) Applying pit and fissure sealants involving modification of tooth surfaces (e.g. etching, micro abrasion).
- (e) Taking working/secondary impressions or intra-oral digital/optical scans for the fabrication of dental and/or oro-facial prosthesis.
- (f) Placing and removing fixed separators.
- (g) Placing fixed appliances, orthodontic attachments or retainers involving etching and bonding of tooth surfaces

- (h) Placing fixed appliances, orthodontic attachments or retainers at/or below the gingival margin (subgingival).
- (i) De-bonding/de-banding fixed appliances, orthodontic attachments or retainers.
- (j) Final fitting and/or activation or adjustment of removable retainers, aligners and appliances.

These activities must not be carried out by unregistered assistants, even working under supervision.

3. Activities that can be provided by unregistered assistants aiding a registered oral health practitioner

Council recognises that unregistered assistants aid registered oral health practitioners in providing a range of clinical services to patients. Council considers this appropriate, provided:

- (a) The unregistered assistant providing clinical services to patients is suitably trained and assessed - preferably through a formal training programme/course or by a competent and experienced oral health practitioner taking on the training responsibility of a particular activity.
- (b) The registered oral health practitioner provides onsite clinical direction and monitoring of the assistant in relation to all clinical activities undertaken by the unregistered assistant.
- (c) The registered oral health practitioner is responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes.
- (d) Patients are not given the impression that unregistered assistants who undertake some of the activities are doing so in a registered capacity.
- (e) The use or application of a registered medicine must be prescribed by an authorised prescriber or used under a standing order.
- (f) The use of radiation sources is conducted under the applicable Radiation Safety Codes.

4. If these conditions are met, the activities that can be carried out by unregistered assistants include:

- (a) Removal of supragingival external stains and soft deposits on the tooth crown, providing this does not involve gingival contact or the use of energised dental instruments e.g. dental torque handpiece, ultrasonic scaler, air abrasion, laser
- (b) Oral hygiene instruction and advice and dietary counselling relative to dentistry
- (c) Taking primary impressions or intra-oral digital/optical scans for study/planning purposes
- (d) Placing and removing elastomeric separators
- (e) Taking extra- and intra-oral dental radiographs under the onsite supervision of an oral health practitioner holding a use licence authorised under the Radiation Safety regulations.
- (f) Developing extra- and intra-oral dental radiographs
- (g) Taking photographic/digital/optical clinical images
- (h) Recording medical histories, occlusal relationships
- (i) Placing elastomeric ligatures after the dentist/orthodontist has inserted the archwire
- (j) Removing elastomeric ligatures

- (k) Removing archwires associated with elastomeric ligatures and self ligating brackets
- (l) Engaging self ligating brackets when the archwires are in place
- (m) Tracing cephalometric radiographs
- (n) Trial fitting of removable retainers and appliances
- (o) Making retainers
- (p) Application and removal of dental dam
- (q) Fluoride application for prevention of dental caries using either sodium fluoride varnish or acidulated phosphate fluoride gel
- (r) Application of topical anaesthetics
- (s) Application of desensitizing agents
- (t) Oral irrigation
- (u) Removing periodontal dressings that are uncomplicated
- (v) Removing simple interrupted sutures
- (w) Fabricating a mouthguard
- (x) Fabricating an occlusal rim
- (y) Application of pit and fissure sealants without modification of the tooth surface by the unregistered assistant.