
Professional Certificate in Dental Compliance

Health and Safety in Dental Practice

Health and Safety in Dental Practice Glossary

A

1. Accident: An unplanned event that results in injury, damage, or loss.
2. Accident Report: Document completed after an accident occurs to record details of the incident, including date, time, location, individuals involved, and nature of the injury.
3. Acronyms: Abbreviations formed from the initial letters of a multi-word name or phrase, used commonly in health and safety guidelines (e.g., PPE for Personal Protective Equipment).
4. Aerosols: Small airborne particles generated during dental procedures that can carry bacteria, viruses, and other contaminants.
5. Asbestos: A mineral fiber once used in various building materials that can cause serious health risks when disturbed and inhaled.
6. Assessment: Process of evaluating risks and hazards in the workplace to determine necessary control measures for health and safety.

B

7. Biohazard: Biological substance that poses a threat to human health, such as blood, saliva, and other bodily fluids in a dental practice setting.
8. Bloodborne Pathogens: Microorganisms found in blood that can cause diseases when transmitted to others, such as HIV, HBV, and HCV.
9. Body Mechanics: Proper positioning and movement of the body to prevent strain and injury, especially important for dental professionals who perform repetitive tasks.
10. Chemical Hazard: Potential danger posed by exposure to chemicals in the workplace, which can cause adverse health effects if not properly managed.
11. Clinical Waste: Waste generated during healthcare activities that may be contaminated with blood, body fluids, or other potentially infectious materials.
12. Compliance: Adherence to laws, regulations, and guidelines related to health and safety in the dental

practice to ensure a safe working environment.

13. Confidentiality: Protection of sensitive patient information to maintain privacy and trust, a critical aspect of healthcare practices.

14. Control Measures: Actions taken to eliminate or minimize risks and hazards in the workplace, including engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment.

15. COSHH: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, which require employers to control exposure to hazardous substances and protect employees' health.

D

16. Dental Dam: Thin latex sheet used during dental procedures to isolate the operative field and prevent contamination from saliva and blood.

17. Dental Unit Waterlines: Tubing that delivers water to dental instruments, which must be monitored and maintained to prevent bacterial growth and ensure water quality.

18. Disinfection: Process of killing or inactivating microorganisms on surfaces to prevent the spread of infection, often using chemical agents or heat.

19. Documentation: Recording and maintaining records of health and safety procedures, training, incidents, and risk assessments for regulatory compliance and accountability.

20. Emergency Procedures: Protocols and actions to follow in case of accidents, injuries, fire, or other emergencies in the dental practice to ensure the safety of patients and staff.

21. Exposure Control Plan: Written plan outlining procedures to minimize occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other infectious materials in the dental setting.

E

22. Eyewash Station: Emergency equipment providing a continuous stream of water to rinse eyes in case of exposure to chemicals or other hazardous substances.

F

23. Fume Extractor: Device used to remove chemical fumes, aerosols, and other airborne contaminants from the dental operatory to protect the health of patients and staff.

G

24. GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation, a set of data protection rules in the European Union that regulate the processing of personal data and ensure privacy rights.

25. Hand Hygiene: Practice of cleaning hands to prevent the spread of infection, including handwashing with soap and water or using hand sanitizers.
26. Hazardous Waste: Waste materials that pose a risk to human health or the environment, requiring special handling, storage, and disposal procedures.
27. Hepatitis B Vaccination: Immunization against the hepatitis B virus recommended for healthcare workers, including dental professionals, to prevent infection and transmission.
28. Hazard Communication: System for identifying and communicating chemical hazards in the workplace through labels, safety data sheets, and training programs.

I

29. Infection Control: Practices and procedures implemented to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in healthcare settings, including hand hygiene, sterilization, and disinfection.
30. Incident Investigation: Process of examining the causes of accidents, injuries, or near misses to identify contributing factors and prevent future occurrences.
31. ISO: International Organization for Standardization, which develops and publishes international standards for quality, safety, and efficiency in various industries.

L

32. Laser Safety: Measures to protect patients and staff from potential hazards associated with dental lasers, including eye protection, training, and proper use of equipment.
33. Lifting Techniques: Safe methods for lifting and moving heavy objects to prevent musculoskeletal injuries, such as using proper body mechanics and mechanical aids.

M

34. Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS): Document containing information on the properties and hazards of chemicals, required for safe handling, use, and disposal in the workplace.
35. Medical Emergency: Sudden illness or injury requiring immediate medical attention, such as cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis, or severe bleeding, which may occur in the dental practice.
36. Musculoskeletal Disorders: Injuries or pain affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, and joints, commonly associated with repetitive tasks and poor ergonomics in dentistry.

N

37. Needlestick Injury: Accidental puncture of the skin by a needle or other sharp object, posing a risk of

bloodborne pathogen transmission and requiring prompt medical attention.

38. Noise Exposure: Occupational exposure to high levels of noise in the dental practice, which can cause hearing loss and other health effects if not controlled.

O

39. Occupational Health and Safety: Discipline focused on protecting the health and safety of employees in the workplace through risk assessment, hazard control, and training programs.

40. OSHA: Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a regulatory agency in the United States that sets and enforces workplace safety and health standards.

41. Overhead Delivery System: Dental equipment used to deliver instruments, air, water, and other materials to the dental operatory, which must be maintained for safety and efficiency.

P

42. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Clothing and gear worn to protect against workplace hazards, such as gloves, masks, goggles, and gowns, essential in dental practice.

43. Pharmacological Waste: Waste generated from expired or unused medications, which must be handled and disposed of properly to prevent environmental contamination.

44. Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP): Treatment administered after potential exposure to a bloodborne pathogen to reduce the risk of infection, such as with HIV or hepatitis.

45. Preventive Maintenance: Scheduled inspections, cleaning, and repairs of dental equipment to ensure proper functioning, safety, and longevity in the dental practice.

46. Proper Lifting Techniques: Safe methods for lifting and moving objects to prevent back injuries, including bending the knees, keeping the back straight, and using leg muscles.

47. Patient Safety: Ensuring the well-being and protection of patients during dental procedures, including infection control, informed consent, and proper treatment protocols.

48. Radiation Safety: Measures to protect patients and staff from ionizing radiation used in dental imaging, including lead aprons, thyroid collars, and monitoring devices.

49. Respiratory Protection: Equipment worn to protect against inhalation of airborne contaminants, such as N95 respirators, required during certain dental procedures.

R

50. Record Keeping: Maintenance of accurate and up-to-date records related to health and safety training,

incidents, risk assessments, and compliance measures in the dental practice.

51. Regulatory Compliance: Adherence to laws, regulations, and guidelines set by government agencies and professional organizations to ensure safe and ethical practices in dentistry.

52. Risk Assessment: Process of identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing potential risks and hazards in the workplace to implement control measures and reduce the likelihood of accidents.

53. Risk Management: Systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and controlling risks in the dental practice to protect patients, staff, and the broader community.

54. Root Cause Analysis: Methodical process of investigating incidents to determine underlying causes and contributing factors, enabling the development of effective preventive measures.

S

55. Sharps Injury: Penetration of the skin by a sharp object, such as a needle or scalpel, which poses a risk of infection and requires immediate first aid and reporting.

56. Standard Precautions: Infection control guidelines that assume all patients are potentially infectious, requiring the use of protective barriers and equipment for all encounters.

57. Sterilization: Process of killing all microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and spores, to render instruments and equipment safe for patient use in the dental practice.

58. Stress Management: Techniques and strategies to cope with stressors in the workplace, including mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and work-life balance practices.

T

59. Toxic Chemicals: Substances that can cause harm to human health through ingestion, inhalation, or skin contact, requiring careful handling, storage, and disposal.

60. Training and Development: Ongoing education and skill-building programs for dental staff to enhance knowledge, competence, and compliance with health and safety regulations.

61. Transmission-Based Precautions: Additional infection control measures used for patients with known or suspected infections, such as airborne, droplet, and contact precautions.

U

62. Universal Precautions: Infection control concept that all blood and body fluids are treated as potentially infectious, requiring the use of protective barriers and equipment in all patient interactions.

V

63. Ventilation System: HVAC system designed to provide fresh air, control indoor temperature, and remove airborne contaminants in the dental practice to maintain air quality.

64. Violence Prevention: Strategies and protocols to prevent workplace violence, including verbal abuse, threats, and physical assaults, and ensure the safety of staff and patients.

W

65. Waste Management: Proper handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of various types of waste generated in the dental practice, including general, clinical, and hazardous waste.

66. Workplace Ergonomics: Designing workspaces, equipment, and tasks to fit the capabilities and limitations of the human body, reducing strain, fatigue, and musculoskeletal injuries.

67. Workstation Design: Layout and organization of dental operatories to optimize efficiency, safety, and infection control, considering workflow, equipment placement, and ergonomics.