



PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF DENTISTRY



Secretary Carol Aichele

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Biennial Renewal of Licenses and Certificates in 2013; Now is the Time to Check Your Continuing Education Credits

By: Col. Edmund D. Effort, D.D.S.

If you are a licensed dental health professional you can be sure of three things . . . death, taxes, and continuing education requirements! No one can say for sure when the first will occur, but we all know that taxes are due every year and that a specific number and type of continuing education credits are required as a condition of the biennial renewal for your professional licenses, permits and certificates to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Credits must be completed during each biennial license period.

The intent of this regulation is to assure that Pennsylvania's dentists, dental hygienists and EFDAs maintain our skills, preserve our ethical and professional integrity, and keep abreast of the almost daily changes taking place in our beloved profession. To achieve the goal of such regulations, the required CE credit hours must be completed in subjects that contribute directly to maintaining clinical competence in the fields of dentistry, dental hygiene, public health dental hygiene, and expanded function dental assisting. Examples include: diagnosis and treatment of oral pathosis, clinical and technological subjects, emergency procedures (excluding hours required for CPR certification), infection control, abuse and neglect, medical and scientific subjects, laws and regulations pertinent to dentists, dental hygienists and EFDAs. Courses in non-clinical subjects, which may be helpful in other aspects of practice, are excluded from the list of approved subject areas and will not count towards CE credit requirements for re-licensure. Examples include: office management, billing and practice building, among others.

Specific requirements for Dentists

- Dentists must complete 30 hours of continuing education each biennial period to maintain their license to practice dentistry.

Note: Dentists who do not hold a permit to administer anesthesia who maintain offices where general anesthesia, deep sedation and/or conscious sedation is administered to their patients by a permit holder or another regulated practitioner, must complete 5 hours of continuing education in courses relating to general anesthesia, deep sedation and/or conscious sedation.

Specific requirements for Dentists who hold an Anesthesia Unrestricted or Restricted Permit I

- Dentists who hold an Anesthesia Unrestricted Permit must complete 15 of the required 30 hours of continuing education in courses related to general anesthesia, deep sedation and/or conscious sedation.
- Dentists who hold an Anesthesia Restricted Permit I must complete 15 of the required 30 hours of continuing education in courses related to conscious sedation.

Specific requirements for Dental Hygienists

- Dental hygienists must complete 20 hours of continuing education each biennial period to maintain their license to practice dental hygiene.
- Dental hygienists *may* complete no more than 3 of the required 20 hours of continuing education in courses relating to communication skills.
- Dental hygienists holding local anesthesia permits *must* complete 3 of the required 20 hours of CE in courses related to the

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administration of local anesthesia, including pharmacology or other related courses.

- Public health dental hygiene practitioners *must* complete 5 of the required 20 hours of CE in public health-related courses.

Specific requirements for Expanded Function Dental Assistants

- Expanded function dental assistants must complete 10 hours of continuing education each biennial period to maintain their certification.
- Unless an exemption applies, expanded function dental assistants must complete 3 of the required 10 required hours of continuing education in the area of coronal polishing. *Note: These credits may not be met through video, online or distance education. They must be completed by physical attendance at a hands-on clinical training course offered by an approved program sponsor or an approved EFDA education program.

CPR requirements

Under the Board's Regulations, every licensee is required to maintain current Infant, Child and Adult CPR certification through the American Red Cross, American Heart Association or an agency substantially similar approved by the Board. You are required to certify that you have met this requirement on your renewal application. The Board also conducts a random audit requesting you to show compliance with this requirement. Please be advised that online CPR is not accepted to fulfill this requirement nor may credits earned through CPR courses be applied to the continuing education credit requirements.

Additionally, Anesthesia Unrestricted and Restricted Permit I holders are required to maintain current ACLS and/or PALS certification to maintain these anesthesia permits.

Documenting, Submitting and Maintaining Records of Required Continuing Education

At the time of licensure renewal, each licensee must certify that he or she has fulfilled the continuing education requirements in accordance with the Board's

Regulations. If selected for participation in the Board's random audit, the licensee will be requested to submit to the Board proof of completion of the required continuing education courses as outlined above. Under the Board's Regulations, you are required to maintain the appropriate documentation/certificates for a minimum of 4 years. Certificates must include, but are not limited to, your name, the date and title of the course, number of credit hours completed, the type of c.e. (live/home study), the name of the approved program sponsor, etc. For other methods such as serving as an instructor of a continuing education course through an approved program sponsor or professional writing, appropriate documentation will be required for verification in order to receive the appropriate credit.

As a licensed practitioner, you have the responsibility of completing the required number of credits each biennial period in accordance with the Board's Regulations and for maintaining those records. Failure to provide the Board with the acceptable documentation may result in disciplinary action.

Additionally, any false statement made is subject to the penalties of 18 PA C.S. 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities and may result in your license being disciplined. Therefore, it is important that you verify that you completed the required continuing education prior to certification on your renewal application.

For the Board's Regulations relative to continuing education, please visit our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/dent and click on Rules and Regulations.

Important Reminder for Pennsylvania Dentists

By John F. Erhard, D.D.S.

Licensed dentists in Pennsylvania are obligated to verify that all employees/associates who are required by law to hold active licenses in the Commonwealth (dentists, dental hygienists, and EFDAs) possess *current*, *active* licenses, and display those licenses openly in the office.

Licensure can be verified electronically at www.licensepa.state.pa.us

