States That Allow Hygienists to Use Lasers: 31

Authorizing rule, Law, or Policy

Alaska

If the statutes and regulations are silent on a procedure or do not prohibit a procedure, the interpretation is a licensee can perform that procedure as long as they have the appropriate training and supervision.

Arizona

R4-11-601. Duties and Qualifications H. To qualify to use emerging scientific technology as authorized by A.R.S. § 32-1281(D)(2), a dental hygienist shall successfully complete a course of study that meets the following criteria: 1. Is a course offered by a recognized dental school as defined in A.R.S. § 32-1201(17), a recognized dental hygiene school as defined in A.R.S. § 32-1201(16), or sponsored by a national or state dental or dental hygiene association or government agency; 2. Includes didactic instruction with a written examination; 3. Includes hands-on clinical instruction; and 4. Is technology that is scientifically based and supported by studies published in peer reviewed dental journals.

Arkansas

A. EXCLUSIVE FUNCTIONS TO BE PERFORMED BY A DENTAL HYGIENIST WHEN DELEGATED BY A DENTIST 2. The following f

California

1764. (a) Any procedure performed or service provided by a dental hygienist that does not specifically require direct supervision shall require general supervision, so long as it does not give

Colorado

12-35-125. What constitutes practicing supervised dental hygiene. (1) Unless licensed to practice dentistry, a person shall be deeme

Florida

64B5-16.001 Definitions of Remediable Tasks and Supervision Levels. (1) Remediable tasks, also referred to as expanded functions of dental assistants, are those intra-oral tasks which do

Georgia

150-5-.03 Supervision of Dental Hygienists. (6) Nothing in these rules shall be construed as authorizing dental hygienists to utilize other techniques in the

Hawaii

BODE Meeting Minutes 5/21/12: It was moved by Ms. Nakagawa, seconded by Ms. Nonaka, and unanimously carried to inform Ms. Dellman that the Board previously made the determination that under the current rules, dental hygienists are not prohibited [allowed] to use laser for curettage and has not changed its determination. Therefore lasers can be used for treating periodontal pockets.

Idaho

Idaho: 030. DENTAL HYGIENISTS - PRACTICE (RULE 30). Subject to the provisions of the Dental Practice Act, Chapter 9, Title 54, Ida

Indiana

Indiana: IC 25-13-1-11 Practice of dental hygiene; acts performed Sec. 11. A person is deemed to be practicing dental hygiene within the

Iowa

The board recommends that all licensees need to be fully instructed in a recognized course prior to utilizing a laser. In addition, any services provided by a licensee, regardless of the device used, must be within the scope of practice for each licensee. Dental hygienists, for example, cannot utilize a laser or other device to cut tissue. Furthermore, all licensees should ensure the services they provide are within the standard of care.

Kansas

Q: What are the regulations in regards to ZOOM whitening machines? For example, who is eligible to use the machine on patients, and does the dentist need to be present in the office when it is being used, etc? Is it legal for dental hygienists to use lasers? A: At recent Board meetings questions have been presented regarding lasers, diagodent units and "special bleaching equipment" like the Zoom light. The policy statement issued by the Board in January 2006 was that the Dental practices act does not pertain to a specific piece of equipment but rather the board looks at the intended use of that equipment. In the case of the Zoom light, KSA 65-1423(a)(8) along with 65-1423(a)(8)(A) and 65-1423(b)(1) should be applied.

Kentucky


Maine

Section I. GENERAL SUPERVISION OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS G. Perform all procedures necessary for a complete prophylaxis, including root planing and curettage;

Michigan

Rule 11409. (1) A registered dental hygienist shall not perform the following intra-oral dental procedures unless the procedures are performed under the direct supervision of a dentist as defined in section 16601 of the code: (a) Performing soft tissue curettage.
The Minnesota Board of Dentistry published an article in its Winter 2005 newsletter (see page 4 of http://www.dentalboard.state.mn.us/Portals/3/2005%20.pdf). The bottom line is expressed in the paragraph in the article that states: The current statutes (laws) and rules in Minnesota do not adequately address laser use by hygienists. At this time, the Minnesota Board of Dentistry would allow a dental hygienist to use a laser if the particular procedure they intend to perform with the laser is one that law and rules currently allows them to perform. Basically, the Board regulates the procedure, and not the instrumentation at this point. As we learn more about the type of care that can be done with lasers, and also more learned about the risks of harm, the Board will likely make some changes to rules.

Minnesota

Missouri

20 CSR 2110-2.130 Dental Hygienists (3) A hygienist may perform the following procedures under general supervision: (A) Scaling and

Montana

24.138.407 FUNCTIONS FOR DENTAL HYGIENISTS (2) A dental hygienist will be allowed to perform the following dental auxiliary functions, under general supervision, including, but not limited to: (a) making radiographic exposures, as prescribed by the supervising dentist; (b) taking impressions for study or working casts; (c) removing sutures and dressings; (d) applying topical anesthetic agents; (e) providing oral health instruction; (f) applying topical fluoride agents; (g) removing excess cement from coronal surfaces; (h) placing and removing rubber dams; (i) placing and removing matrices; (j) collecting patient data; (k) polishing amalgam restorations; (l) placing pit and fissure sealants; and (m) coronal polishing. (3) A dental hygienist shall not be allowed to perform the following: (a) diagnosis and treatment planning as per 37-4-401, MCA; (b) cutting hard or soft tissue (except root planing and soft tissue curettage) or extracting teeth;

Nebraska

Nebraska: Title 172, Chapter 53. 002 SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF DENTAL HYGIENE 002.01 Authorized Services. A licensed dental h

Nevada

NRS 631.030 “Dental hygiene” defined. “Dental hygiene” means the performance of educational, preventive and therapeutic periodontal treatment including scaling, curettage and planing of roots and any related and required intraoral or extroral procedures that a dentist is authorized to assign to a dental hygienist.

New Jersey

N.J.A.C. 13:30-1A.2(b)(31) “holding a curing light for any dental procedure. Such curing light shall not include a laser capable of altering, cutting, burning or damaging hard or soft tissue or electro-surgery for tissue retraction.”

New York

The New York State Board for Dentistry does not prohibit a dental hygienist from using laser technology while performing tasks within the scope of her/his practice. You should be aware however, that generally the scope of practice of a licensed hygienist would not include performing procedures that would alter the hard or soft tissue of the oral and maxillofacial area. Therefore, care should be taken in the use and setting of any laser instrument. You must be competent in the use of any technique you employ. We also rely on you and your supervising dentist to only employ procedures that you and your supervisor have determined, using professional judgment, to be effective.

North Dakota
North Dakota: 3) Policy regarding laser technology It is the position of the Board that any services provided by a licensee, regardless

Oregon

679.010 Definitions. (2) “Dental hygiene” means that portion of dentistry that includes the rendering of educational, preventive and therapeutic dental services and diagnosis and treatment planning for such services. “Dental hygiene” includes, but is not limited to, scaling, root planing, curettage, the application of sealants and fluoride and any related intraoral or extraoral procedure required in the performance of such services.

South Carolina

Dental Hygienists and Dental Assistants are not authorized to use lasers in performing bleaching of teeth procedures; they may, however, perform the isolation and clean-up procedures.

Tennessee

TENNESSEE BOARD OF DENTISTRY POLICY STATEMENT ON USE OF LASERS FOR DEBRIDEMENT AND BACTERIAL REDUCTION BY DENTAL HYGIENISTS The position of the Tennessee Board of Dentistry is that the use of lasers for debridement and bacterial reduction by licensed dental hygienists is permitted after a certification course which should include didactic and hands-on training.

Texas

The Texas State Board of Dental Examiners is aware that lasers can be used to replace or supplement traditional dental instruments such as handpieces, scalpels, curing lights, and the Explorer. It is the position of the Board that licensed dental hygienists may use lasers that are not capable of cutting or removing hard tissue, soft tissue, or tooth structure to perform clinical tasks that are otherwise within the hygienist’s scope of practice. Dental hygienists must perform intraoral procedures involving a laser under the general supervision of a licensed dentist. Whenever a new treatment modality is brought forward, it is the Board’s policy that the licensee must have proficiency and training in the use of the technology for the procedure performed. Licensees utilizing new technology must maintain documentation of the satisfactory completion of formal continuing education or training using the technology for the procedures performed. The particular technology utilized performing any particular clinical task does not alter the requirement that a dentist is ultimately responsible for any procedure delegated to an auxiliary and the auxiliary performing the procedure remains responsible for performing the task within the standard or care. 1) This policy statement is not intended to determine what type of lasers an RDH can or cannot use. The specific type of laser that a dental hygienist utilizes must be appropriate for his/her scope of practice and follow all laws, rules, and policies of the Board and the state of Texas. 2) “General supervision” means that the dentist employs or is in charge of the dental hygienist and is responsible for supervising the services performed by the dental hygienist. The dentist may or may not be present on the premises when the dental hygienist performs the procedures.

Utah


Vermont

1.11 Permitted Practices (b) Clarifications, Limitations on Scope of Practice, Dentists or Dental Hygienists: Oral prophylaxis, oral debridement, periodontal descriptions and charting, including periodontal probing and placement of subgingival chemotherapeutic agents shall be performed only by a licensed dentist or dental hygienist.

Washington State

RCW 18.29.050 Scope of Licensee’s Functions – Employment – Supervision. Any person licensed as a dental hygienist in this state may remove deposits and stains from the surfaces of the teeth, may apply topical preventive or prophylactic agents, may polish and smooth restorations, may perform root planing and soft-tissue curettage, and may perform other dental operations and services delegated to them by a licensed dentist: PROVIDED HOWEVER, That licensed dental hygienists shall in no event perform the following dental operations or services: (1) Any surgical removal of tissue of the oral cavity; (2) Any prescription of drugs or medications requiring the written order or prescription of a licensed dentist or physician, except that a hygienist may place antimicrobials pursuant to the order of a licensed dentist and under the dentist's
required supervision; (3) Any diagnosis for treatment or treatment planning; or (4) The taking of any impression of the teeth or jaw, or the relationships of the teeth or jaws, for the purpose of fabricating any intra-oral restoration, appliance, or prosthesis. Such licensed dental hygienists may perform dental operations and services only under the supervision of a licensed dentist, and under such supervision may be employed by hospitals, boards of education of public or private schools, county boards, boards of health, or public or charitable institutions, or in dental offices.

West Virginia

The Board regards the use of any laser which can cut tissue to be practicing dentistry, and therefore limits its use to dentists. This includes the so called "low power" lasers used for periodontal treatments, such as pocket debridement, scaling, polishing, planning, and the removal of calculus deposits. The Board will allow the use of lasers that are used as an alternative to a traditional curing light to be used by a dental hygienist or dental assistant for the sole purpose of curing resin restorations. In addition, the Board will also allow the use of the laser as a diagnostic aid by a dental hygienist or dental assistant for interpretation by the dentist.

States That Do Not Allow Hygienists to Use Lasers: 6

Alabama
Delaware
Louisiana

At its 02/24/2006 meeting, the Board determined that licensed Mississippi dental hygienists and dental assistants are not allowed to perform sulcular debridement of periodontal pockets using a Diode dental laser. Furthermore, at its 03/12/2010 meeting, the Board considered a request as to whether licensed Mississippi dental hygienists are allowed to use lasers for bacteria reduction and/or reduction of pocket depths. The Board noted this question had been addressed by its 02/24/2006 determination, wherein the Board opined that licensed Mississippi dental hygienists and dental assistants ARE NOT allowed to perform sulcular debridement of periodontal pockets using a Diode dental laser. Refer to Board Regulation 13.

Mississippi
North Carolina
Pennsylvania

States That Do Not Address Laser Use by Hygienists: 3

D.C.
Illinois
Maryland

States We Do Not Have Information for: 11

Connecticut
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
New Mexico
Ohio
Oklahoma
Rhode Island
South Dakota
Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Board currently in the process of updating rule on lasers - New information pending

Disclaimer:

This chart reflects information gathered from state law, rule and board policy/statements. Please contact your state dental board for further clarification of the requirements for use of lasers.