

DENTAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Job Description

A Dental laboratory technician makes dental prostheses, which are replacements for natural teeth to help people eat, chew, talk or smile. The dental laboratory technician needs artistic aptitude for detailed and precise work, manual dexterity and skill in using small hand instruments and equipment.

Technicians are valuable members of the dental care team although they rarely work directly with patients. They receive instruction from dentists by following written instructions and using impressions (molds) of the patient's teeth or soft tissue to create full dentures, crowns, bridges, or orthodontic appliances. They often perform much of their work without close supervision.

Some duties of a dental laboratory technician may include:

- Fabricates fixed bridges, partials, dentures, veneers and crowns
- Create orthodontic appliances and splints to help straighten and protect teeth
- Work with materials such as waxes, plastics, precious and non-precious alloys, stainless steel, a variety of porcelains and composites or polymer glass combinations

Educational requirements could include:

- Community college/ course work
- Vocational/technical school/ education and training
- Apprenticeships
- On-the-job training

Professional Outlook

Experienced technicians can find well-paid positions in commercial laboratories based on their technical or communication skills, become a member of a larger laboratory team, or potentially start their own laboratories. Technicians may teach dental technology courses through educational programs. They may apply their knowledge to research, sales and/or marketing of prosthetic materials, equipment or instruments.

Services performed by dental technicians will always be needed. As the population grows older, the demand for prostheses (which improves patients' nutrition, appearance and ability to speak clearly) will continue to rise.

Contact Information

California Dental Association

<http://www.cda.org>

American Dental Association

<http://www.ada.org>

California Dental Laboratory Association

<http://www.cdla.org>

California Dental Laboratory Owners' Association

<http://www.dloac.org>

National Association of Dental Laboratories

<http://www.nadl.org>