

Additional Renewal Information on Continuing Education Requirements for Dentists and Dental Hygienists

Amendments to the Board of Dentistry regulations pertaining to continuing education for dentists, hygienists, and registered dental assistants and limited registered dental assistants in orthodontics were published in the New Jersey Register and became **effective on April 19, 2021**.

The regulations are on the Board's website, [click here](#).

The next biennial licensing period for dentists is November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2023.

The next biennial licensing period for dental hygienists is January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023.

The next biennial registration period for registered dental assistants and limited registered dental assistants in orthodontics is January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024.

Specific courses required for renewal:

Because the amendments were adopted close to the time that dentists and dental hygienists will be renewing later this year, and due to the COVID pandemic, the Board and the Division of Consumer Affairs have made some modifications to the coursework required to renew licenses.

The amended regulations require ten of the forty credits mandated for dentists to renew to be in specific topics. **To renew for the upcoming dental biennial licensing period (November 2021- October 2023), the Board will require that dentists have completed one credit in prescription opioid drugs (mandated by statute) (N.J.A.C. 13:30-5.1(e) 1(v)), and two hours in preventing and controlling infectious diseases and managing personnel health and safety concerns related to infection control in dental settings. (N.J.A.C. 13:30-5.1(e) 1(iii)). The courses must be completed by October 31, 2021.**

To renew for the November 1, 2023 - October 31, 2025 biennial period, dentists must show that they have completed all ten hours identified in the regulations prior to renewing in October 2023. This includes: one hour related to opioid prescriptions, two hours in infection control, as well as the remaining seven required hours: three hours in CPR, three hours in pharmacology and internal medicine; and one hour in professional ethics and NJ law. A full description is found at N.J.A.C. 13:30-5.1(e).

The Board made a similar determination for dental hygienists. **To renew for the January 2022- December 2023 biennial registration period, hygienists must have completed one hour in prescription opioid drugs, including risks and signs of opioid abuse addiction and diversion, as well as one hour of continuing education in preventing and controlling infectious diseases and managing personnel health and safety concerns in dental settings. N.J.A.C. 13:30-5.2 (a)1. Those courses must be completed prior to December 31, 2021. To**

renew for the January 1, 2024-December 31, 2025 biennial period, hygienists will be required to complete all six hours of the required continuing education, prior to renewing in December 2023. This includes three hours in CPR.

Because registered dental assistants and limited registered dental assistants in orthodontics will not renew their registrations until shortly before January 1, 2023, the Board did not make a similar exception for completion of the mandated six hours of continuing education found at N.J.A.C. 13:30-5.3(f).

Remote course work counted toward live hours:

Note, too, due to the public health emergency related to COVID-19, in April 2020, the director the Division of Consumer Affairs entered an Administrative Order and waiver <https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/COVID19/Documents/DCA-W-2020-04.pdf> that permits remote continuing education credits earned during the public health emergency, including but not limited to credits earned prior to the date of the rule waiver, to be counted as in-person/live credits. **The Board of Dentistry will count courses taken online (remote) during the public health emergency and in the period up through January 11, 2022, toward the live continuing education hours** (online coursework is capped at half of required hours, thus capped at 20 hours for dentists, 10 hours for hygienists, and 5 for dental assistants). Courses taken online must have a post-test. Notwithstanding this requirement, the Board will permit watching a recorded webinar that does not have a post-test to be counted toward the required continuing education hours.

Note: other regulatory requirements remain. Dentists and dental auxiliaries must retain proof of completion of their continuing education. The Board in its discretion may waive up to half of required hours for donated dental services provided to eligible persons. Note, however, dentists and auxiliaries need to complete the specific, required continuing education hours as discussed above.