

POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF CONE BEAM COMPUTERIZED  
TOMOGRAPHY UNITS (CBCT) BY LICENSED QUALIFIED DENTAL  
PERSONNEL

Preamble: The purpose of this policy is to clarify the Ohio State Dental Board's (Board) position regarding the cone beam computerized tomography unit (CBCT) and its use by licensed, qualified dental personnel.

The Dental Practice Act, Ohio Revised Code 4715, governs the licensure and regulation of dentists and dental personnel in the state of Ohio. Under the law and rules, dentists and dental hygienists may take radiographs in the dental office.

In addition to licensing dentists and dental hygienists, and registering EFDA's, the Board certifies dental assistant radiographers: those dental assistants who take radiographs in the dental office.

ORC 4715.51 states in pertinent part:

A "dental x-ray machine operator" is any individual who, under the direct supervision of a dentist, performs standard diagnostic, radiologic procedures for the purpose of contributing to the provision of dental care to a dental patient.

"Standard diagnostic, radiologic procedures" means those procedures involved in using dental equipment that emits ionizing radiation, as defined in ORC 4773.01.

ORC 4773.01 defines ionizing radiation as any electromagnetic or particulate radiation that interacts with atoms to produce ionization in matter, including x-rays, gamma rays, alpha and beta particles, high speed electrons, neutrons and other nuclear particles.

It is the position of the Board that the CBCT unit is a machine that is used in the scope of practice of dentistry. It is a dental imaging device that gives dentists a 3-D image of a patient's teeth and maxillofacial structures for diagnosis and treatment planning, including but not limited to the following: general dentistry procedures, oral and maxillofacial reconstruction, dental and maxillofacial trauma, dental and facial implant therapy, temporomandibular joint disorder evaluation, airway assessments, evaluation of tumors, cysts, dental impactions, and other lesions of the maxillofacial region and in diagnosing and treatment planning of periodontal, orthodontic, endodontic and other dental conditions.

It is the position of the Board that the CBCT unit is a standard diagnostic, radiologic procedure for the purpose of contributing to the provision of dental care to a dental patient. As stated previously, the image taken with the CBCT is a valuable adjunct to the dentist in determining what dental care is necessary for a given patient.

Further, there are specific American Dental Association (ADA) procedure codes for the use of the CBCT for the diagnosis and treatment of dental conditions.

It is the position of the Board that a certified dental assistant radiographer can operate the CBCT unit just like any other dental x-ray machine.

Because the CBCT is not a true medical Computerized Axial Tomography (CAT scan) unit, is specially made for the dental profession, emits a much smaller amount of radiation than a medical CAT scan, and training is given for its safe use by the manufacturers, the dental assistant radiographer can safely provide services utilizing the unit.

Finally, it should be noted that dental assistant radiographers can only practice under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist.

This policy is subject to review as more information becomes available.

(February 27, 2008)