

Newsletter

TEXAS STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS

March 2026



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Change Is Hard, Changing Batteries Is Easy.

Dental care has changed much over the years including one often-overlooked yet key part of the dental care in your office: your emergency response and management.

Similar to changing your smoke detector batteries, attention must be given to your office. I want to encourage all licensees to review and update their medical emergency medications, equipment and procedures. Look at your oxygen, medications, batteries, AED pads, etc. to ensure they are operational and in date. All dentists must have oxygen with the ability to provide positive pressure ventilation. In addition, depending on your patients and the anesthesia provided in your office, your equipment and medications will need to be reviewed for their batteries, expiration dates and general fitness.

It is also prudent to practice your emergency procedures with your team. Ensure that everyone knows what to do. Who will call 911, who will get the crash cart, who will run the emergency, and other questions that could save your patient's life.

I want to advise those with an anesthesia permit Level 2 or higher that you signed an affidavit stating you would maintain your anesthesia and emergency equipment and medications. In addition, this allows TSBDE to inspect this equipment in your office. Your equipment must be operational and within its expiration date. Failure to do so would possibly allow regulators to revoke your dental licenses.

Please, check your emergency medication, equipment and batteries annually and replace any expired and soon-to-be expired items. If you have an emergency plan, I would suggest practicing it at least once a year. If you don't already have a plan, you should strongly consider creating one. Please remember that caring for your patient during an emergency is an essential part of dental care.

NOTICE: TSBDE is aware of certain equipment and drugs which may be out of stock or back ordered, such as the [attached notice for HeartSine AEDs](#).

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Henderson II DDS". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bryan Henderson II, DDS



AGENCY NEWS

Fraud Alert

The Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) has received numerous reports from licensees regarding fraudulent calls or emails purporting to be from the agency. TSBDE will never demand money or personal information over the phone or threaten you. For more information, please visit TSBDE's [Fraud Alert and Awareness](#) page.

If you suspect a telephone call or correspondence from our agency is fraudulent, please navigate to the Texas Attorney General's Office consumer protection division's website. The [Attorney General's Office](#) website will be able to assist you in how you can spot, avoid, and report fraud.

Dental Assistant Awareness Week

Dental Assistants Recognition Week is observed nationally on March 1-7, 2026. The American Dental Assistants Association designated this week to highlight the essential role dental assistants play in ensuring exceptional patient care.



LICENSING

Altering a TSBDE-Issued Certificate

All dental professionals licensed or registered with TSBDE have the ability to print a renewal certificate through their online licensing account. Please do not alter a TSBDE-issued certificate in any way. All license, registrations, and permits are government documents issued by a state agency. Altering government documents may result in criminal repercussions and is a violation of Board rule and statute.

If there is an error on your certificate, please log in to your online account or contact licensinghelp@tsbde.texas.gov for assistance.

E-Prescribing Waivers

Please request and renew an electronic prescribing waiver through your online licensing account. Simply log on to your account and follow the instructions provided. Please use the [TSBDE Public License Search](#) link to verify your electronic prescribing waiver status.

Dentists with an approved waiver will have its expiration date displayed under "Electronic Rx Waiver Expiration Date."



LICENSING

EXPO 2026 for Dental Hygiene Graduates

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting a Licensing Expo to provide onsite application processing for all recent dental hygiene graduates. Licensing Specialists will be available to review required documentation and provide on-the-spot approvals.

Event Details:

- Date: Monday, June 29, 2026
- Location: Barbara Jordan Building, 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.035, Austin, TX 78701

Read the flyer with details [here](#)

EXPO 2026 for Dental Graduates

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting a Licensing Expo to provide onsite application processing for all recent dental hygiene graduates. Licensing Specialists will be available to review required documentation and provide on-the-spot approvals.

Event Details:

- Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026
- Location: Barbara Jordan Building, 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.035, Austin, TX 78701

Read the flyer with details [here](#)

Fingerprint Renewal Requirement

All licensees lacking a State Identification (SID) number in the agency's licensing database will be mandated to undergo a fingerprint background check as a prerequisite for license renewal. An individual's SID serves as a unique identifier during background screenings, particularly for licensure and employment purposes.

Consequently, individuals licensed prior to 2016 may not have a SID number in the agency's licensure database. The absence of a SID number precludes the agency from receiving notifications regarding any criminal history events. Licensees lacking requisite fingerprint information will be notified by the TSBDE ninety (90) days prior to license expiration. You will receive an email and mail notification.

The Board is authorized to request this information in accordance with rules 101.1(c)(6), 103.1(c)(10), and 114.2(b)(3), and Section 411.12504 of the Government Code, which permits the acquisition of fingerprints for criminal history background checks. TSBDE staff respectfully ask licensees to refrain from contacting the Board to verify the presence of their information in the database. Please refer to the TSBDE website for the most up to date information.



Board Meeting February 20, 2026 Adopted Rules

Rules Adopted at the February 20, 2026 Board Meeting:

[Rule 101.2 Dental Licensure by Examination](#)

[Rule 101.6 Dental Licensing for Military Service Members, Military Veterans, and Military Spouses](#)

[Rule 101.14 Exemption from Licensure for Certain Military Service Members and Military Spouses](#)

[Rule 103.2 Dental Hygiene Licensure by Examination](#)

[Rule 103.10 Exemption from Licensure for Certain Military Service Members and Military Spouses](#)

[Rule 104.1 Continuing Education Requirements](#)

[Rule 104.2 Continuing Education Providers](#)

[Rule 114.2 Registration of Dental Assistants](#)

[Rule 114.3 Pit and Fissure Sealants](#)

[Rule 114.7 Exemption from Licensure for Certain Military Service Members and Military Spouses](#)

[Rule 115.4 Placement of Site Specific Subgingival Medicaments](#)



How to Avoid Patient Abandonment

TSBDE wanted to provide a few brief reminders regarding licensee obligations when severing a provider-patient relationship. As you all are likely aware, you are well within your rights to sever a relationship with an active patient for reasonable cause. The rule guiding the licensee's obligations in this circumstance is Texas Administrative Code Rule 108.5, which can be found in its entirety at the end of this note.

TSBDE is observing that when dismissing a patient from the practice, many of your colleagues do craft a letter and appropriately either hand deliver or mail the letter via certified mail to the patient; however, very frequently this letter does not contain all the necessary elements detailed in the rule. There are five necessary elements that must be included in the dismissal letter in order for it to meet the obligations set forth. We encourage each licensee to consult this rule when dismissing a patient from their practice so that the letter fulfills the obligation of adequate notice outlined below; and perhaps most importantly helps the patient be aware of their current oral health status, future needs, and possible consequences of no treatment.

In addition, the licensee should also thoroughly document in the patient record the reason(s) for dismissal, designated in the rule as reasonable cause. Remember, the patient record is not just for the patient, but to also cover the licensee. Should that file ever come under Board review, two minutes of documentation could save you from a permanent public Board action. Lastly, the letter can also be sent electronically; however, that does not relieve the licensee's obligation to hand deliver or mail the letter via certified mail. Each complaint and accompanying evidence is considered on a case by case basis.

§108.5

(a) A dentist, without reasonable cause, shall not abandon a dental patient. Once a dentist has undertaken a course of treatment, the dentist, absent reasonable cause, shall not discontinue that treatment without giving the patient adequate notice and the opportunity to obtain the services of another dentist. A dentist shall exercise the level of care necessary to prevent jeopardizing the patient's oral health during this process.

(b) Under this section, a dentist shall give a minimum of 30 days written notice of his/her intent to discontinue undertaken treatment. Notice shall be either hand-delivered to the patient or sent via certified mail, return receipt requested to the patient's last known address, with the dentist retaining a copy of the notice letter in the patient's file along with proof of service. Adequate notice shall include the following:

- (1) a short description of the patient's current status, including the patient's current diagnosis and a summary of the patient's current treatment plan;
 - (2) a short description of the patient's present and future needs;
 - (3) an explanation regarding the consequences of non-treatment;
 - (4) a recommendation that the patient continue care with another dentist; and
 - (5) a clear statement emphasizing that the dentist is available to provide any emergency treatment necessary to prevent patient harm during the 30-day period.
- (c) A dentist shall remain reasonably available to render any emergency treatment necessary under (b)(5) of this section for up to 30 days from the date of such notice.

Source Note: The provisions of this §108.5 adopted to be effective February 20, 2001, 26 TexReg 1494; amended to be effective April 14, 2002, 27 TexReg 2826.



In-Person Examination Now Required Prior to Clear Aligner Orthodontic Therapy

The Texas State Board of Dental Examiners is committed to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of patients across the State of Texas. As part of that mission, the Board is providing this update to ensure Texas-licensed dentists and orthodontists are aware of important changes affecting the provision of orthodontic clear aligner therapy to Texas patients. In the spring of 2025, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 4070 which went into effect on September 1, 2025 and this new law is a patient-safety measure intended to strengthen oversight and accountability in the delivery of orthodontic care.

Under the new law, an in-person examination is required by a licensed Texas dentist or orthodontist prior to initiating orthodontic clear aligner treatment. This requirement addresses patient health and safety relating to mail-order orthodontic treatment models where patients obtain aligners remotely—often through online platforms, social media, or advertising—without ever receiving an in-person clinical evaluation to ensure the patient is a qualified candidate for clear aligner treatment. Without such exams, significant patient harm can result from providing orthodontic treatment in the presence of contraindications such as periodontal issues, tooth or root issues, intraoral or radiographic pathology, or other factors that can only be assessed through an in-person examination and orthodontic diagnosis.

This new law in Texas protects patients by ensuring they receive an appropriate in-person examination before orthodontic treatment begins. This exam is to include a tactile and intraoral examination, necessary radiographic imaging, and a periodontal screening. The law also requires that the dentist or orthodontist who performs the in-person examination be the provider responsible for delivering the aligners and overseeing treatment or properly transfer records to the treating dentist. This ensures transparency so that patients understand who is providing their orthodontic care as well as promotes continuity of care.

Complaints arising from treatment provided in violation of this requirement will be investigated by the the Board and licensees found to be noncompliant are subject to disciplinary action under the Texas Dental Practice Act and Board rules, which are currently being amended to accommodate this new patient safety legislation. Newly adopted and proposed rules can be found on the Board's website. All licensees are encouraged to read and review the rule changes.

The Board appreciates the cooperation of all Texas dentists and orthodontists in adhering to this requirement and appreciates your continued efforts to deliver high-quality, safe orthodontic care in the State of Texas.



Dental Laser Use Regulations Review

Please see below for helpful information related to laser use in dental offices in Texas by TSBDE board member Janessa Bock, RDH FADHA.

1. Device Registration with Department of State Health Services (DHS)

- Who: Class 3B and Class 4 lasers must be registered with DHS.
- How: Submit a Certificate of Laser Registration (COR) application with device details, facility info and designated Laser Safety Officer (LSO).
- Renewal: Every two years. Equipment additions must be reported to DHS promptly.
- LSO: Every registered facility must designate an LSO; may be the dentist or qualified staff.

2. Use by Dentists and Dental Hygienists

- Supervision: Hygienists may use lasers only under the direct supervision of a Texas-licensed dentist.
- Scope limit for Dental Hygienists: No irreversible procedures; no intentional cutting of soft or hard tissue.
- CE required: Minimum 12 hours of in-person laser CE before non-diagnostic use, including 3 hours of clinical simulation, from a TSBDE-recognized provider. Documentation must be kept on file.
- Dentist responsibility: Supervising dentist must also meet the same 12-hour CE requirement and bears full responsibility for all delegated laser acts (§258.003, Dental Practice Act).
- Dental Assistants may not use a dental laser.

3. Scope of Practice

- All laser procedures must fall within the practitioner's licensed scope of practice.