



**Code of Ethics and
Conduct for Clinical
Dental Technicians (CDTs)**

March 2010



1. General Principle

- 1.1 The Clinical Dental Technician shall be motivated by the aims of maintaining the honour and integrity of the profession and of co-operating with the dentist in safeguarding the health, especially the oral health, of patients and promoting the welfare of the community.

2. The Dental Council

- 2.1 A Clinical Dental Technician may not treat patients unless he/she is registered in the Register of Clinical Dental Technician s maintained by the Dental Council.
- 2.2 Persons whose names are entered in the Register may use the title ‘Registered Clinical Dental Technician’ and the letters CDT after their names.
- 2.3 A Clinical Dental Technician should not practise under a name other than the name under which he/she is registered in the Register.
- 2.4 The Clinical Dental Technician should arrange to have his/her current Certificate of Registration displayed at his/her practice locations at all times while engaged in the duties of a Clinical Dental Technician.
- 2.5 A Clinical Dental Technician who employs locums or engages associates has an obligation to ensure that they are registered in the Register of Clinical Dental Technicians and remain registered for the duration of their employment.

- 2.6 A Clinical Dental Technician who receives a communication from the Council, or a statutory committee thereof, which requires a reply must so reply with reasonable promptness.

3. The Patient

- 3.1 The primary duty of a Clinical Dental Technician should be to safeguard the health of the patient without regard to his/her gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the travelling community.
- 3.2 A Clinical Dental Technician must only carry out dental work which he/she is legally entitled to perform.
- 3.3 A Clinical Dental Technician has an obligation to provide treatment for medically compromised patients including those with communicable diseases.
- 3.4 A Clinical Dental Technician should ensure that all necessary treatment is made available to patients and to this end should, when the need arises, obtain the advice and/or assistance of those appropriately qualified.
- 3.5 When the patient is partially dentate a Clinical Dental Technician must be satisfied that the patient has established oral health, or is in the process of doing so, through recent attendance with a dentist.
- 3.6 In cases where conjoint treatment is indicated a Clinical Dental Technician must balance the needs of the patient with their expressed requirements before undertaking treatment on the basis of informed consent.

- 3.7 If, when undertaking any item of treatment for a patient, a Clinical Dental Technician becomes aware of something which requires the attention of a dentist, the Clinical Dental Technician must ensure that the patient is informed of the need for further treatment and the patient's records should include this advice.
- 3.8 A Clinical Dental Technician must only undertake treatments which he/she is competent to complete to a satisfactory standard. If a recommended treatment is beyond the competence of a Clinical Dental Technician the patient should be referred.
- 3.9 A Clinical Dental Technician should act correctly, sympathetically and in a courteous manner towards patients at all times. Under no circumstances should unnecessary treatment or treatment that is contrary to the expressed wishes of the patient be carried out.
- 3.10 Good communications with patients are essential and a Clinical Dental Technician should be prepared to answer patients' questions openly and honestly and in terms that the patient can understand.
- 3.11 A Clinical Dental Technician who accepts a patient for treatment has a responsibility to complete the course of treatment. If, for some reason, the professional relationship between a Clinical Dental Technician and patient breaks down during the course of treatment the Clinical Dental Technician should refer the patient to a colleague to have the course of treatment completed.
- 3.12 Patients are entitled to a second opinion and a Clinical Dental Technician, if requested, should facilitate same by arranging an appropriate referral.

- 3.13 In making a referral a Clinical Dental Technician will normally refer to a colleague, with whom he/she has established a professional relationship. In the rare occasion where a patient asks to be referred to a specific person the patient's wishes should be accommodated unless there is some compelling reason on professional grounds not to refer to such person.
- 3.14 A Clinical Dental Technician should not give guarantees or make unreasonable promises about the outcome of treatments.
- 3.15 A Clinical Dental Technician has duty to explain to the patient and provide information so that the patient understands the treatment to be carried out. The informed consent of the patient must be received before treatment commences.
- 3.16 An estimate of the cost of treatment should be given and agreement reached before treatment commences. If, in the course of treatment, the estimate has to be revised a full explanation should be given at the first opportunity.
- 3.17 A Clinical Dental Technician must furnish receipts for payments rendered.
- 3.18 A Clinical Dental Technician who leaves a practice has an obligation to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for the completion of any course of treatment commenced and for the ongoing care of his/her patients.

- 3.19 Professional confidentiality should be observed and this obligation extends to a Clinical Dental Technician's staff. Disclosure of information relating to a patient's attendance or treatment may only be given with the patient's consent except in the following circumstances:
- when required by law
 - when directed by a Court of law
 - when necessary to protect the interests of the patient or the welfare of society.
- 3.20 A Clinical Dental Technician has a duty to maintain adequate and accurate records of all matters relating to their treatment of patients. These records should be kept in a secure location and retained for a reasonable period, not likely to be less than ten years, before being destroyed.
- 3.21 A Clinical Dental Technician must assume responsibility for any service or treatment delegated to his/her staff. This specifically includes responsibility for standards of hygiene, disinfection, sterilisation and infection control undertaken by support staff. Any service or treatment must only be delegated to a person within whose competence such service or treatment resides and who is legally entitled to provide such service or treatment. Clinical Dental Technicians should encourage member of their staff to avail of relevant training and to obtain qualifications and should provide assistance towards achieving this objective.
- 3.22 A Clinical Dental Technician shall respect the special professional relationship that exists between Clinical Dental Technician and the patient and shall do nothing which abuses that relationship.

- 3.23 When treating a patient it is strongly recommended that a Clinical Dental Technician should have a third person present in the surgery throughout the procedure.
- 3.24 A Clinical Dental Technician has an obligation to patients to hold professional indemnity insurance against accidents and malpractice suits.

4. The Profession

- 4.1 A Clinical Dental Technician shall maintain his/her professional knowledge and skill by continuing education and by keeping himself/herself informed of up to date developments in methods of treatment.
- 4.2 A Clinical Dental Technician should support the advancement of his/her profession through membership of scientific and professional organisations and should share the fruits of his/her experience and research.
- 4.3 A Clinical Dental Technician shall maintain the honour, morality, dignity and integrity of their profession. Unprofessional conduct, improper statements or certificates and misleading announcements must be avoided.
- 4.4 A Clinical Dental Technician shall not make gratuitous comments of a derogatory or disparaging nature on the services of other members of their profession or on the services or treatments of dentists or dental hygienists. There is a considerable scope in dentistry for genuine differences of clinical opinion and a Clinical Dental Technician must not criticise the treatment of a colleague solely on the grounds that it was not the treatment he/she would have provided.

- 4.5 A Clinical Dental Technician should be informed by the Dental Council's Code of Conduct pertaining to Public Relations and Communications regarding advertising and canvassing. Professional details relating to name plates, letter headings, entries in directories, press announcements etc must conform with the provisions of the Code.
- 4.6 Patients must not be canvassed from other practices. Particular attention in this regard must be paid by those acting as locums, assistants or associates.
- 4.7 A Clinical Dental Technician must not falsely suggest or imply that he/she possesses special qualifications or skills and must not use any title or description which could reasonably be calculated to suggest that he/she possesses any professional status or qualification other than the professional status or qualification which he/she in fact possesses and which is entered in the Register of Clinical Dental Technicians.
- 4.8 When patients are referred by a dentist to a Clinical Dental Technician for specified care they should be referred back when the treatment for which they were referred has been completed. If further care is required it should be arranged by the referring dentist.

5. The Community

- 5.1 A Clinical Dental Technician should assume a responsible role in the community. He/she should endeavour to promote measures to improve the health and especially the oral health of the community. He/she should be prepared to engage in oral health education programmes but in so doing must not promote his/her own practice or canvass for patients.
- 5.2 A Clinical Dental Technician should ensure that his/her private life is in keeping with his/her status as a member of a caring profession. Conduct which might lower the esteem of the profession in the eyes of the public must be avoided.
- 5.3 A Clinical Dental Technician has an obligation to protect his/her patients, his/her staff and himself/herself from the risk of cross infection in the dental surgery. A Clinical Dental Technician shall follow the Codes of Practice relating to Infection Control issued by the Dental Council.





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