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Healthy, *Wealthy* and **WISE**



Top 10 **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK** Mistakes



Do Florida Dental Laboratories Have to
Pay **OVERTIME** ?



Your Lab's Guide to **HEALTH AND SAFETY**





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Being a Successful Lab

Today's successful lab owner not only needs to know their sales and marketing numbers, but also how to promote internal controls that provide quality crowns and revenue, while operating within the guidelines of state and federal human resource and OSHA regulations.

Recently, OSHA issued a statement that there was a "steady decline in workplace injuries and illnesses. The decrease in the injury rate is a product of tireless employers, unions, worker advocates and occupational safety and health professionals." If you are one of the labs that helped to produce these enhanced numbers, give yourself a pat on the back.

While the number of inspections has declined from last year, it is vital that all labs are OSHA ready. The online NADL store (www.nadl.org/store/productlist.cfm) offers a variety of health and safety products, including compliance manuals and training DVD's.

Regardless of the business you are in, but particularly in a small business, human resource issues can sap a businesses' productivity quicker than the loss of a top client. If you haven't had that problem employee yet, you probably haven't hired enough people.

The key to any employee interaction, both positive and negative, is documentation. Good employee interactions tend to take care of themselves, but there is always that one problem child who is always pushing the limits of your patience. Your first defense is a proper orientation for the new hire, along with a standardized employee manual that clearly outlines company standards and the expectations for the employee. When an employee changes roles, it's not bad policy to revisit the manual and to review new expectations.

The key to any employee interaction, both positive and negative, is documentation.

Lack of open and honest communication is the first step towards employee conflict. Bad habits not corrected become the norm and are more difficult to correct the longer they are allowed to fester. While we don't advocate micromanaging your employees, negative behavior must be addressed, lest it infect more and more of the staff. Disciplining, or better yet, correcting one employee is much easier than dealing with five.

These are not revolutionary thoughts. Any successful company must find the right balance in dealing with employees, but having an active human resource department can help to keep personal problems to a minimum and allow you the owner/manager to concentrate on what actually makes the business profitable.

By Gail Perricone

GPS Dental Lab Inc.
FDLA president



Expo ribbon cutting

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Serving Florida's dental technology professionals as a valued part of the dental team enhancing oral health care.

FDLA Vision

Advancing the individual and collective success of Florida's dental technology professionals in a changing environment.

Values Statement

FDLA's board of directors and professional staff are guided by these principles:

- Integrity
- Leadership
- Recognition
- Safety
- Acceptance
- Innovation



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Above: Friday Night Reception at the Southern States
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Spotlight on Esthetic Zirconia

Zirconia has become a commonly accepted and highly-demanded material for dental restorations. However, one of the critiques of the material has been that it isn't esthetic enough. Manufacturers, seeing a demand in the market, have now begun to release what is being called esthetic zirconia. It is being promoted as a stronger replacement for lithium disilicate in the anterior region. Here is a little bit more about two of the most talked about esthetic zirconias.

DD cubeX² is a new cubic zirconia system from Dental Direkt GmbH based in Germany. The company promotes the material as having the translucence of lithium disilicate and the strength of zirconia.

"The new DD cubeX² – cubic zirconia system is a material revolution for

technicians who love esthetics and excellence," according to Dental Direkt. "A highly biocompatible material with outstanding transparency. The DD cubeX² system combines the known positive properties of zirconia with a significant increase in translucency as it is known only from lithium disilicate. This material is perfect for all highly esthetic treatments in anterior tooth region. Moreover, it is also perfectly appropriate for use in the posterior tooth region."

According to its FDA pre-market 510(k) application, DD cubeX² has the following features.

- Dental blanks made from DD cubeX² are indicated for crowns, multi-unit bridges (up to a maximum of three elements) and inlay bridges. Applications include both anterior and posterior bridges.
- DD cubeX² is a semi-finished dental blank made of yttrium stabilized pre-sintered zirconium dioxide, which has a high translucency and is designed for milled production of crowns and bridge frameworks.
- The modification of the material composition results in a higher translucency of the product, which leads to better esthetic results. However, it also leads to a lower flexural strength when compared to the unmodified product. The flexural strength testing result of DD cubeX² (modified product) is considerably higher than required by DIN EN ISO 6872 for class 5 dental ceramics indicated for three element bridges including molar restorations.

One of the other major esthetic zirconia available today is BruxZir Anterior from Glidewell Laboratories.

"This highly esthetic restorative material is designed specifically to satisfy the

esthetic and functional requirements of the anterior region of the mouth," according to Glidewell Laboratories. "Exhibiting an average flexural strength of 650 MPa with translucency and color similar to natural dentition, BruxZir Anterior is a strong, esthetic solution for your anterior cases. What's more, BruxZir Anterior restorations are kind to natural opposing dentition and require less reduction than monolithic glass ceramic restorations."

They are indicated for anterior and premolar crowns as well as anterior and premolar bridges with one pontic.

According to its FDA pre-market 510(k) application, BruxZir Anterior has the following features.

- The high esthetics of BruxZirAnterior makes it ideal for use in the anterior region.
- The manufactured full contour dental restorations are made utilizing the CAD/CAM system for design and manufacture. The designed and manufactured full-contour dental restorations are then sintered at a high temperature. BruxZir Anterior White will have to undergo color alteration prior to sintering (colorants not provided by Prismatik).
- No color needs to be added to pre-shaded BruxZir Anterior Blanks before sintering. Basic staining and glazing techniques need to be used after sintering to achieve the desired shade. The sintered material exhibits maximum strength and translucent pearlescence.

Will esthetic zirconia sweep the market like its predecessor zirconia did? Only time will tell, but dentists throughout the country are already beginning to inquire about it. We hope this gives you a starting point to converse with your dentists about esthetic zirconia. [!\[\]\(e3275251d0893157c3584e20c81dc3ba_img.jpg\)](#)

Find Your Zirconia

The demand for zirconia restorations isn't slowing down. Here are some of the product choices you have for zirconia-based dental restorations.

ArgenZ Zirconia Argen	Chang's Zirconia Blocks IDS
Origin Live Zirconia B&D technologies	Jensen Full Contour Zirconia Jensen Dental
BioZX2 High Translucency Zirconia DT Technologies	Jensen XT Zirconia Jensen Dental
BK Zirconia Blocks BK-MEDENT	Ceramill-Compatible Zirconia KEROX
BruxZir Glidewell Laboratories	NexxZr Zirconia SAGEMAX
CAP FZ Full Contour Zirconia CAP	Noritake KATANA Zirconia ML/HT Kurray America
Crystal Diamond+ Zirconia Dental Laboratory Milling Supplies	Prettau Anerior Zirconia Zirkonzahn
Delta Zirconia Aurident	Prettau Zirconia Zirkonzahn
Cercon ht Zirconia Dentsply	Renishaw Zirconia Renishaw
Cercon ht Full Contour Zirconia Dentsply	Suntech Full Zirconia Suntech
DTS Radiance Zirconia Doceram	Talladium Zirconia Discs Talladium
GC Initial Zirconia Disks GC America	Zenostar Zirconia Ivoclar Vivadent
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Healthy, Wealthy AND WISE



Ask ten dental laboratory owners what is the difference between a good laboratory and a great laboratory and nine of them will say, the people. Still, human resources is one area in which dental laboratory owners continue to struggle—much to their bottom line's detriment.

"Human resource issues can sap a businesses' productivity quicker than the loss of a top client. If you haven't had that problem employee yet, you probably haven't hired enough people," said FDLA President Gail Perricone in this month's president's message on page 3. "Lack of open and honest communication is the first step towards employee conflict. Bad habits not corrected become the norm and are more difficult to correct the longer they are allowed to fester. While we don't advocate micromanaging your employees, negative behavior must be addressed, lest it infect more and more of the staff. Disciplining, or better yet, correcting one employee is much easier than dealing with five."

To help you deal with some of the most common human resource headaches for a dental laboratory owner, we've included articles in this issue about what needs to be in your employee handbook and the most frequent overtime questions. In addition, you'll find one of the most accessible guides to laboratory health and safety regulations out there in Mary Borg-Bartlett's article on page 18.

Together, all of these articles can help dental laboratory owners become—to borrow a phrase from Benjamin Franklin—healthy, wealthy and wise.

—TOP 10—

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Mistakes

By Scott Ludema

DONE RIGHT, EMPLOYEE HANDBOOKS SERVE MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS. THEY PROVIDE EMPLOYEES WITH IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT A COMPANY, ITS PRACTICES AND THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT. THEY ALSO HELP PROTECT EMPLOYERS LEGALLY BY SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS THAT EMPLOYEES MUST COMPLY WITH.

But done wrong, employee handbooks can do more harm than good. Policies that are too specific and rigid can potentially limit an employer's flexibility when dealing with real issues. Policies that are too general make it difficult for employers to hold employees accountable for their actions and behavior. So how does an employer find the right balance? The first step is to be aware of the potential pitfalls. Below are ten of the most common employee handbook mistakes, and what to do about them.

10. AN OVERLY DETAILED DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Some employers like to include a detailed discipline procedure in the employee handbook, specifying what disciplinary steps they will take if an employee violates company policy or does not meet performance standards. Unfortunately, these discipline procedures are often too detailed and constricting to address with workplace realities. For instance, a policy promising a verbal warning as a first disciplinary step does not make sense if the first incident is a serious violation of a harassment prevention policy or an act of workplace violence. In such a situation, an employer wants the flexibility to skip steps, or even ignore the process entirely. If an employer has a policy of employment at-will—that is, that termination and everything leading up to it can happen for any reason that is not illegal—then the employer has no obligation to provide a specific discipline procedure, much less explain it in detail. Instead, the employer can handle disciplinary issues as they arise, maintaining consistency by centralizing discipline functions (for example, by ensuring supervisors partner with human resources).

To avoid confusion and maximize flexibility, an employer should specify at the beginning of the handbook that violation of any company policy—even one not stated in the handbook—has the potential to lead to discipline. Dealing with the issue upfront prevents the need to repeat the phrase throughout the handbook.

9. NOT CONTROLLING MEAL AND REST PERIODS

Many employers address breaks by only generally promising to comply with the law, without explaining what that means. Employees should be advised that if they do not take their meal and rest periods as described, they must notify their supervisors immediately. Also, if denied the right to take their meal or rest periods, employees should be advised how and where to bring complaints. These precautionary measures put the burden on employees to take meal or rest periods and reduce the employer's legal exposure.



- KEEPING POLICIES •
- up-to-date*
- ENSURES —
- decision makers*
- AND EMPLOYEES
- ARE INFORMED.

8. NOT CONTROLLING OVERTIME

Like meal and rest periods, unauthorized overtime can create significant liability for employers. Overtime policies should be structured to limit unauthorized overtime. First, employers should define the workweek for purposes of calculating overtime. For example, the workweek could be Sunday at 12:00 a.m. to Saturday at 11:59 p.m. Otherwise, employees may be free to define the workweek as they choose, potentially increasing overtime liability.

The overtime policy also should specify that employees are not permitted to work overtime without prior supervisory authorization. Though an employer can't refuse to pay an employee who works unauthorized overtime, the employer can discipline employees who fail to follow the specific directive not to work overtime without permission.

Editor's Note: For more on this important topic for Florida laboratory owners, see page 12.



—NEED—

HUMAN Resource HELP?

The average dental laboratory does not have the workforce or means to hire a human resources manager. Even larger laboratories that have a human resources manager may need some advice on tough situations from time to time. FDLA members receive human resources telephone consultation services free of charge from Seay Management Consultants. In addition, they can help you create, revise or update your laboratory's employee handbook.

7. IMPROPER DEDUCTIONS AND PROPER REIMBURSEMENTS

Some employers make a big mistake not only in making improper or illegal deductions from a paycheck, but also in reflecting that practice in their handbooks. Carefully ensure that any policies relating to deductions do not violate the law. Employers should include a safe harbor policy that addresses deductions for exempt employees. This policy should require exempt employees to notify the employer immediately if they believe illegal deductions—such as certain deductions for partial-day absences—have been made from their salaries.

Many employers make mistakes when drafting expense reimbursement policies. Commonly, employers seek to encourage employees to submit business expenses for reimbursement promptly by stating that failure to do so within a certain timeframe will result in no reimbursement. As with unauthorized overtime, employees should be directed to submit their expenses on time and in certain form. If they fail to do so, they can be disciplined. However, the employer cannot refuse to pay the expenses.

6. PUTTING A CAP ON MEDICAL LEAVES

Under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employers may be required to permit an employee with a disability to take time off if doing so will allow the employee to recover and return to work. Unfortunately, few employers are aware that a policy imposing a cap on the amount of leave provided for this purpose—such as three months—can create legal problems.

In the past few years, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) challenged several employers' leave policies with longer but definite time limits, such as one year.

When deciding how much leave is appropriate, the ADA requires an individual assessment. Employers can limit the possibility of problems with the EEOC—or employees filing lawsuits—by maintaining flexible leave policies that make clear each situation will be evaluated individually.

5. USE IT OR LOSE IT VACATION POLICIES

Employers can't encourage employees to take vacations with a use it or lose it policy. Under such a policy, an employee who fails to use all his or her vacation/PTO at the end of the year loses the right to take it. Because vacation/PTO is considered a wage, such a policy deprives employees of a vested right.

Instead, vacation policies should be written to allow accrual up to a maximum, with no additional vacation accrual once an employee reaches the maximum. If an employee's accrual falls below the maximum, then he or she begins accruing vacation again. The maximum should be a reasonable amount, so that employees have sufficient opportunity to take time off. The Labor Commissioner has stated, for example, that one year's worth of vacation is not reasonable. Employees should be permitted to accrue more than one year's worth of vacation. Generally, adopting a maximum or cap of 1.25 times the annual accrual should be sufficient.

4. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

The reality of many workplaces today is that employees need access to e-mail, the Internet and other modes of electronic communication to do their work. For employers, these technologies have potential downsides, such as wasted time, security problems and the possibility that employees will use these means to violate company policy. To control these problems, some employers specify that electronic communications and systems can be used only for business purposes.

However, the federal National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has taken the position that an employer's rigid policy prohibiting the use of its electronic communications systems for any non-business purpose may have the effect of chilling union organizing. Such a restriction, the NLRB reasoned, could violate the National Labor Relations Act. Therefore, a policy on electronic communications should not entirely prohibit use of electronic systems for non-business use.

3. A RIGID HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

A no harassment or harassment prevention policy is a must-have for all employee handbooks. It

helps employers defend claims of harassment when employees fail to follow the company's internal processes for reporting potentially harassing behavior. But employers should not focus on unlawful harassment. For example, if a policy defines a hostile work environment in the same way the law does, then any violation of the policy will automatically be a violation of the law. To avoid this result, the employer should define harassment under the policy using a stricter standard than the actual legal definition. A policy could define harassment as disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on a protected characteristic, such as sex, race or national origin. Then, an inappropriate joke based on one of these characteristics would violate the policy, not the law.


2. OVER- OR UNDER-ACKNOWLEDGING

Employers should request that employees acknowledge receiving and reading the handbook. Most importantly, an acknowledgment is a key place to reiterate a concept that the employer should have communicated many times already: employment at-will. That means either party can end the employment relationship at any time, for any reason and with or without notice. The acknowledgment should also specify which specific person (such as the company CEO or president) can make an agreement to the contrary on the company's behalf, in a written agreement only. This language gives the company the flexibility to make a written agreement in the limited circumstances in which it might prefer to—perhaps when hiring a highly sought executive—without unknowingly creating an agreement to the contrary.

1. NOT REVIEWING/REVISING THE HANDBOOK REGULARLY

Employment laws change frequently. Keeping policies up-to-date ensures decision makers and employees are informed. A handbook is a great place to summarize information for the benefit of employees and for the benefit of those people who will help an employer implement the policies. It also gives everyone direction about where to go with workplace concerns not addressed in the handbook.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Do —FLORIDA DENTAL LABORATORIES— *Have to* *Pay Overtime?*

By Raleigh “Sandy” Seay, Jr.

MANY YEARS AGO, IN ANCIENT CRETE, LIVED A MONSTER CALLED THE MINOTAUR WHO WAS HALF MAN AND HALF BEAST. BECAUSE OF THE DANGER, KING MINOS BUILT A PRISON FOR HIM FROM WHICH HE COULD NOT ESCAPE. THE NAME OF THE PRISON WAS THE LABYRINTH AND, ONCE INSIDE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND YOUR WAY OUT, EXCEPT FOR THE GREEK HERO THESEUS, WHO FIGURED OUT HOW TO DISPOSE OF THE MINOTAUR AND ESCAPE FROM THE LABYRINTH. THE EMPLOYMENT ARENA TODAY SOMETIMES SEEMS LIKE THE LABYRINTH OF ANCIENT CRETE AND THE EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS SEEM, WELL, LABYRINTHINE. ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT INVOLVES PAYMENT OF OVERTIME TO EMPLOYEES.

America has more employment regulations than any other country in the world. Some countries have different regulations, but America has more of them. In fact, America has so many employment regulations that employers must take those regulations into consideration when making any employment decision, such as hiring, counseling and paying employees. And, we know that the regulations can be confusing and unclear, and that what's logical isn't always what's legal. In fact,

it's possible to make a perfectly logical business decision, and yet that decision might be contrary to one of the myriad employment regulations.

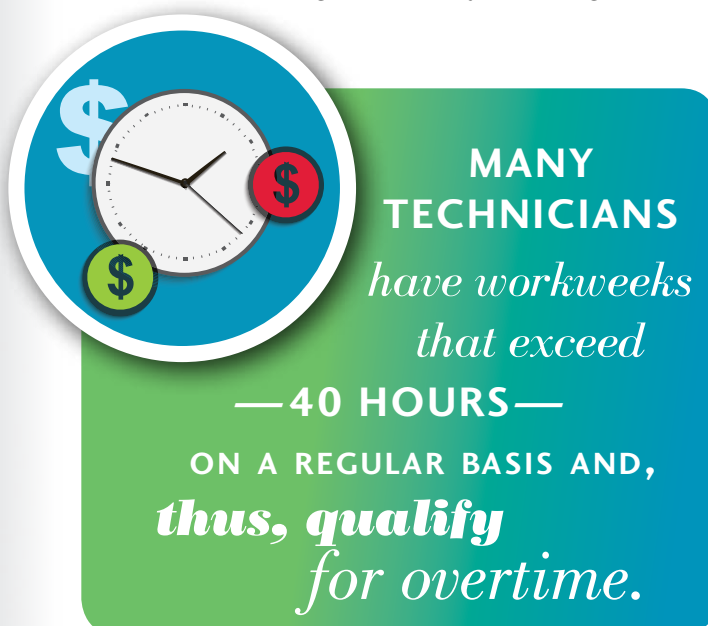
The group of regulations that has been around for the longest, and that cause the most difficulty for employers, includes the wage and hour regulations. Since there are only three major requirements, the wage and hour regulations may seem fairly simple, at first. The three requirements are:

1. Have all non-exempt employees keep a true and accurate time record each day.
2. Pay all non-exempt employees at least the minimum wage each week.
3. Pay overtime (time and one-half) to all non-exempt employees who work more than 40 hours in any given week.

A closer look, however, reveals that there are many trails to follow and, if we're not careful, we can wander off into the wage and hour wilderness. Here are but a few ways that can happen.

EXEMPT AND NON-EXEMPT

One of the fundamental payroll questions employers face is whether an employee is exempt or non-exempt. As mentioned above, non-exempt



employees must keep a daily time record, receive at least the minimum wage for each hour worked, and receive overtime compensation for all hours worked in excess of 40 per week. Exempt employees, on the other hand, don't have to do those things. They are exempt from them. In most cases, we pay exempt employees a salary and we expect them to work whatever hours are necessary to get the job done.

It would be wonderful if we could classify all employees as exempt, as this would eliminate many payroll issues and make compensation planning and budgeting much simpler. However, the Department of Labor will not allow us to classify all employees in this way. To the contrary, the position of the Department of Labor is that all employees are non-exempt, unless management can prove they are exempt. To be classified as exempt, an employee must meet the exemption tests that are enforced by the Department of Labor.

THE FIVE EXEMPTION CATEGORIES ARE:

1. Executive - those who supervise other employees.
2. Administrative - those performing management duties, not supervising other employees.
3. Professional - doctors, etc.
4. Outside Sales
5. Information Technology

In a nutshell, an exempt employee must spend at least 50 percent of his or her time in management activity, be a decision maker on matters of significance, and receive a guaranteed salary, not subject to deduction, of at least \$455 per week (reports suggest that this amount is going up fairly significantly later this year). Some employers think that they can simply place any employee on a salary and make an employee exempt from overtime. However, this is not true—salary is only one requirement and if an employee is not a decision maker and does not supervise others, the person will be non-exempt, regardless of salary, and must be paid overtime.

DENTAL TECHNICIANS

Some dental laboratories hire dental technicians, whose job it is to perform various duties



The formula for • CALCULATING • *half time* IS A THREE STEP PROCESS.

surrounding dental products, such as dentures, crowns, inlays and appliances for straightening teeth. Dental technicians are, by definition, non-exempt and must be paid overtime. If a laboratory has a lead technician whose job it is to look after the other technicians but who performs the same work as they do most of the time, that person is non-exempt, also.

Many technicians have workweeks that exceed 40 hours on a regular basis and, thus, qualify for overtime. Some dental laboratories pay technicians an hourly rate and if that is the case, then overtime would be time and one-half the hourly rate. For example, if a technician earns \$10 per hour, the overtime rate would be \$15, for all hours worked in excess of 40 in any given week.

On the other hand, some dental laboratories pay technicians a piece rate, sometimes called a production rate, or sometimes called a commission. Under this kind of pay plan, the technician receives a certain amount of money for each dental product completed. Piece rate workers must be paid overtime, just like hourly paid workers. The wage and hour regulations say that this piece rate covers straight time for all hours worked. Since the regulations call for straight time and one-half, we must now calculate the half time, in order to meet the overtime requirement.

CALCULATING HALF TIME FOR PIECE RATE

The formula for calculating half time is a three step process. First, divide the total amount of money earned in the week by the total number of hours worked in the week. This produces an hourly rate. Then, divide this hourly rate by two to get half


time. Then, multiply the half time rate times the overtime hours. The result is the overtime due to the piece rate employee for this particular week. For example, suppose the employee earned \$600 and worked 52 hours. Divide \$600 by 52 to get an hourly rate of \$11.54. Divide this rate by two to get half time of \$5.77. The last step is to multiply \$5.77 times the 12 overtime hours to get total overtime of \$69.24.

Some dental laboratories have had encounters with the Wage and Hour Division by not paying overtime to technicians. This is an example of what's logical isn't always what's legal. Many technicians actually prefer a piece rate because they can earn more money, and dental laboratory management often prefers to pay technicians by piece rate because they are more productive. There is nothing wrong with paying a piece rate, and it may be the better alternative, from a production standpoint—we just have to remember to pay the overtime. If you're not paying overtime now, you may need to adjust your piece rates downward so that when you do pay the overtime, you're not paying more than you intended.

COMP TIME

In wage and hour accounting, each work week stands alone. In other words, what happens in one week must be accounted to that week and may not roll over into a subsequent week. Some dental laboratories prefer to pay comp time to non-exempt employees who work overtime. Comp time is shorthand for compensatory time off in lieu

of overtime. That is, if an employee works overtime in week one, we do not pay overtime but we allow the employee to take comp time in a subsequent week. Often, this is an amicable arrangement and both employees and employers like it. However, the wage and hour regulations are against us once again and they do not allow comp time, even if the employee agrees to it. The principle is that if a non-exempt employee works overtime in one week, the employee must be paid the overtime, regardless of what goes on in any other week.

The wage and hour regulations have been around since 1938 and investigators are continually auditing employers, either because of an employee complaint or a routine investigation. In most cases, the investigator will go back three years to calculate back wages. If you have a question about overtime compensation in your dental laboratory, or if you would like a comprehensive HR audit to make sure you don't have any exposure, don't hesitate to call Seay Management. We're always glad to talk with you. 

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is shorthand for
**compensatory
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A background image featuring laboratory safety equipment. At the top, a pair of clear safety glasses with blue frames is visible. To the right, a pair of white nitrile gloves is shown. At the bottom, a blue surgical mask is partially visible. These items are layered over a light blue spiral-bound notebook. A white label with the word 'Safety' is partially visible on the left side of the notebook.

By Mary Borg-Bartlett

YOUR LAB'S GUIDE TO Health and Safety

Prioritizing health and safety is one of the keys to making a laboratory profitable and running as smoothly as possible. We have made it our mission at Safelink Consulting to help laboratory owners comply with FDA and OSHA requirements. Recently, we gathered some of the most common health and safety questions and answers so you could ensure your laboratory was in compliance.

Editor's Note: Every CDT is required to obtain one regulatory standard credit each year. The quiz accompanying this article will help you meet the CDT requirement as well as Florida state Prevention of Medical Errors CE requirements.

Is the Hepatitis B Vaccination mandatory?

It is mandatory that the employer offer the Hepatitis B vaccination to all category one task employees. The employer should coordinate with their company's doctor or health department to administer the vaccine and it should be offered at the expense of the employer and on company time (not on the employee's own time nor at the employee's cost). Mileage is also reimbursable to the employee if they have to drive to the doctor's location for the vaccine. If a category one task employee refuses the vaccine, the employee needs to sign the refusal of vaccination form (they can always change their mind later). Other category employees can be offered it, but it is not required nor does it have to be provided/paid for by employer.

We are receiving bloody impressions from one of the dentist offices. How do I go about handling this situation? Is it okay to call the dentist office to talk to them about it?

There are several actions you can take. Besides the usual standard precautions, you can rinse the impression with water and a soft brush to remove the excess blood. Also, you can gently scrub the impression with a mixture of stone and water or you can soak the impression in an enzyme cleaner. Always confer with the manufacturer of the impression material prior to taking any steps to clean the items prior to disinfection. You can contact the dentist and ask him what procedures he is taking to clean the impressions prior to shipment to the lab and ask him if he could at least rinse them with water prior to packaging.

Our chemicals are not properly labeled and our MSDS sheets are a mess. How do we solve this problem?

The first step is to take an inventory of all items in the lab and then begin procuring MSDSs for the items. Safelink offers an online MSDS service that can help you with this task. After you have the MSDS, then you should begin labeling all containers that do not contain sufficient information to provide warnings of the health, flammability, reactivity, and target organs. You must determine a system to use for quick reference to the hazards such as the National Fire Protection Agency's system (NFPA) or the Hazardous Materials Identification System (HMIS). These systems use numbers to indicate the severity of the hazard, which makes it much easier for workers to have immediate warnings at their work area.

OSHA Compliance

- OSHA regulates dental laboratories (some exemptions apply).
- An effective safety program helps you reduce worker's comp claims.
- OSHA has the right to conduct a random inspection.
- There were 30 dental labs inspected by OSHA in 2013.
- The most frequently cited standards for dentistry are hazard communication Standard, Bloodborne Pathogen Standard, Emergency Preparedness, Respiratory Protection, Lockout/Tagout.
- OSHA requires written documentation of your safety program.
- Your safety program must be evaluated for its effectiveness.
- In certain states, dental labs must still complete OSHA's injury logs.

Source: Safelink Consulting



Do You Know Florida Law?

FDLA has developed a manual defining the state laws affecting dental laboratories in Florida. This manual explains in detail the continuing education, data required on prescriptions, materials disclosure and point of origin requirements necessary with all communication and case work executed between the dentist and laboratory. You can order it online at <http://bit.ly/1LQrWw9>.



FDA Compliance

Did You Know:

- FDA regulates dental laboratories.
- Dental labs that outsource to foreign labs must register with FDA.
- FDA has a right to inspect all dental labs.
- All dental labs must have a documented quality system.
- CAPA (corrective action) is required and helps you reduce remakes.
- If you manufacture sleep apnea devices or snore guards, then you must register with FDA as a contract manufacturer.
- A contract manufacturer must pay an annual fee to FDA.
- You must formally evaluate your vendors and subcontractors.
- You must trace your patient contact materials in the event of recall.
- You must conduct an internal audit of your quality system at least annually.
- You must document all complaints from dental clients.
- You must implement an effective corrective action process for complaints.
- You must comply with FDA to become DAMAS certified.

Source: Safelink Consulting

Begin labeling with secondary containers, i.e. those products that have been removed from the original container and placed in a secondary container. You may want to begin with the hazardous items such as acids, porcelain, metals, cleaning agents, investment, gypsum, etc. If a drawer contains one product, then you could label the drawer. Don't forget to label the bins used for storing the plaster or gypsum or investment.

Does OSHA require lathes to have a guard or shield?

OSHA requires all rotary equipment to have guards or shields. Most eye injuries in dental labs seem to occur in the model department. Remember that you don't want to create a greater hazard by installing a shield, for instance, on the model trimmer if it impairs the worker from seeing well enough to perform the task. If you decide not to install the guard, then you need to have the workers wear close fitting safety eyewear or goggles.

What is the difference between lockout and tagout?

Lockout is the placement of an energy isolation device on a piece of equipment to render it inoperable. A lockout uses a lock to hold an energy isolation device in a safe position and prevents the energization of the machine or equipment. Tagout is when a tag is placed on a piece of equipment to indicate that the equipment being controlled may not be operated until the tagout device is removed.

We did some air monitoring and we were found to be in the acceptable range, therefore, we setup a voluntary system for wearing the dust mask or respirator. If the associate wishes to wear the mask, do we have to have a medical evaluation and fit test performed before they can wear it?

No, you don't have to do the fit testing and medical questionnaire when it's voluntary. You do need to give a copy of Appendix D to each of your employees who work with hazardous chemicals, but use of the respirator is optional.

What should be included in the First Aid kit?

You just need to have the items to treat whatever type of injury you are able to treat, such as a minor cut or burn or to stop a bleed prior to getting the employee to an emergency facility to treat them. Remember that you shouldn't provide any oral medications unless you have a nurse or doctor on staff.

What type of eyewash facility should I install?

We recommend a stand-alone model and one that is a single action. You would need to find a location central to everyone and a place where it can be plumbed to water or purchase one of the portable eyewash stations that is self-contained. The eyewash must deliver 15 minutes of continuous flushing, be within 10 second walking distance (approximately 55 feet) from the hazard and have an unobstructed path of movement.

Are personal eyewashes acceptable?

ANSI does not approve the personal eyewashes because they cannot deliver 15 minutes of continuous flow to both eyes. They are single use only and have a limited shelf life. They are not a substitute for plumbed or portable eyewashes.

Can employees eat or drink in work areas? Is it an OSHA requirement?

It is an OSHA requirement under the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard that no consumable products are allowed in risk areas. We have defined those areas in the dental lab as receiving, denture repair, die trim when clinically poured models are trimmed, and shade taking.

A Health and Safety Program Must Cover

- Chemical Hygiene - Hazard Communication Plan
- Infection Control - Exposure Control Plan
- Hazard Assessment and Safety Procedures
- Personal Protective Equipment Assessment
- Annual Safety Training
- Annual Evaluation of Safety Program
- Emergency Action Plan
- Investigation of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses
- Method of Enforcement of Safety Rules
- Compliance with State-specific OSHA plan as applicable

Source: Safelink Consulting

focus Needs Your Articles

What type of articles is FDLA's *focus* magazine looking for?

Technical Articles:

The 1,000 to 1,500-word article should be case specific and engage the intermediate- and advanced-level technicians. It should take an objective and critical look at cutting-edge technologies and new techniques. The article should not only give step-by-step information on how to do something, but provide insight on the why and the how a particular technique or product works.



Photo Technical Articles:

This case presentation article will feature before and after photos with several photos highlighting the work done to create the final restoration. The photos should be accompanied by a short (one or two sentence per photo) explanation of what is happening in each photo as well as an introduction setting up the case and conclusion explaining how the final results were accomplished.


Interested? Contact *focus* Editor Cassandra Corcoran at cassie@thewritemessage.net for more information or to submit your article.

It is also a requirement under the Hazard Communication Standard that the employer provide a Material Safety Data Sheet to employees for hazardous chemicals used in the workplace. If the MSDS indicates that ingestion is a route of entry, then no consumable products can be allowed in the areas where the chemical is used. Remember that eye drops, lip balm, etc. are consumable items, too.

We have found the best practice to be not to allow any consumable products in risk areas and production areas unless the employer can determine that there are no hazardous chemicals used in a particular area. To make it consistent throughout the work areas, we recommend eating, drinking, or use of consumable products be limited to the break room. Depending on the tasks performed in the administrative area, consumable products may be allowed in that area.

How long do we need to keep our training records, employee files and medical records once an employee stops working for our laboratory?

OSHA requires that you retain training records for employees for three years. We recommend that you keep employee training records for the length of employment plus a minimum of five years. Check federal and state employment laws for retention of employee records.

Stay safe out there! 

About the Author:

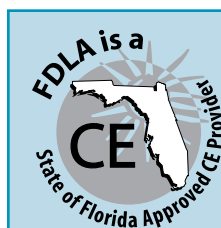
Mary Borg-Bartlett is the co-founder and president of SafeLink Consulting Inc. Since 1991, she has actively participated as a presenter and on-site instructor to audiences of dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and dental laboratory technicians throughout the US. Prior to founding SafeLink Consulting, Borg-Bartlett held senior level management positions in mortgage banking, banking and the family entertainment business. Her positions included responsibility for facilities management, human resources, risk management, crisis and disaster recovery and health and safety.



A Quality System Must Cover:

- Review of Non-conforming Product
- Assignment of Management Responsibility
- Corrective and Prevention Action Procedures
- Defining of Purchasing Controls
- Control of Labeling and Packaging
- Identification and Traceability of Patient Contact Materials
- Handling, Storage, Distribution and Installation of Materials and Finished Items
- Production and Process Controls
- Records Retention and Control
- Acceptance of Final Product

Source: Safelink Consulting



Earn continuing education credits for this article and quiz!

Receive .5 hours CDT/RG Regulatory Standards credit and .5 hours Prevention of Medical Errors credit towards your state of Florida dental laboratory renewal by reading this article and passing the quiz. To get your credit, complete the quiz located on the FDLA website at www.fdma.net using the *focus* Magazine link. Once you have completed the quiz, fax it to FDLA at 850-222-3019. This quiz is provided to test the technician's comprehension of the article's content and does not necessarily serve as an endorsement of the content by FDLA.



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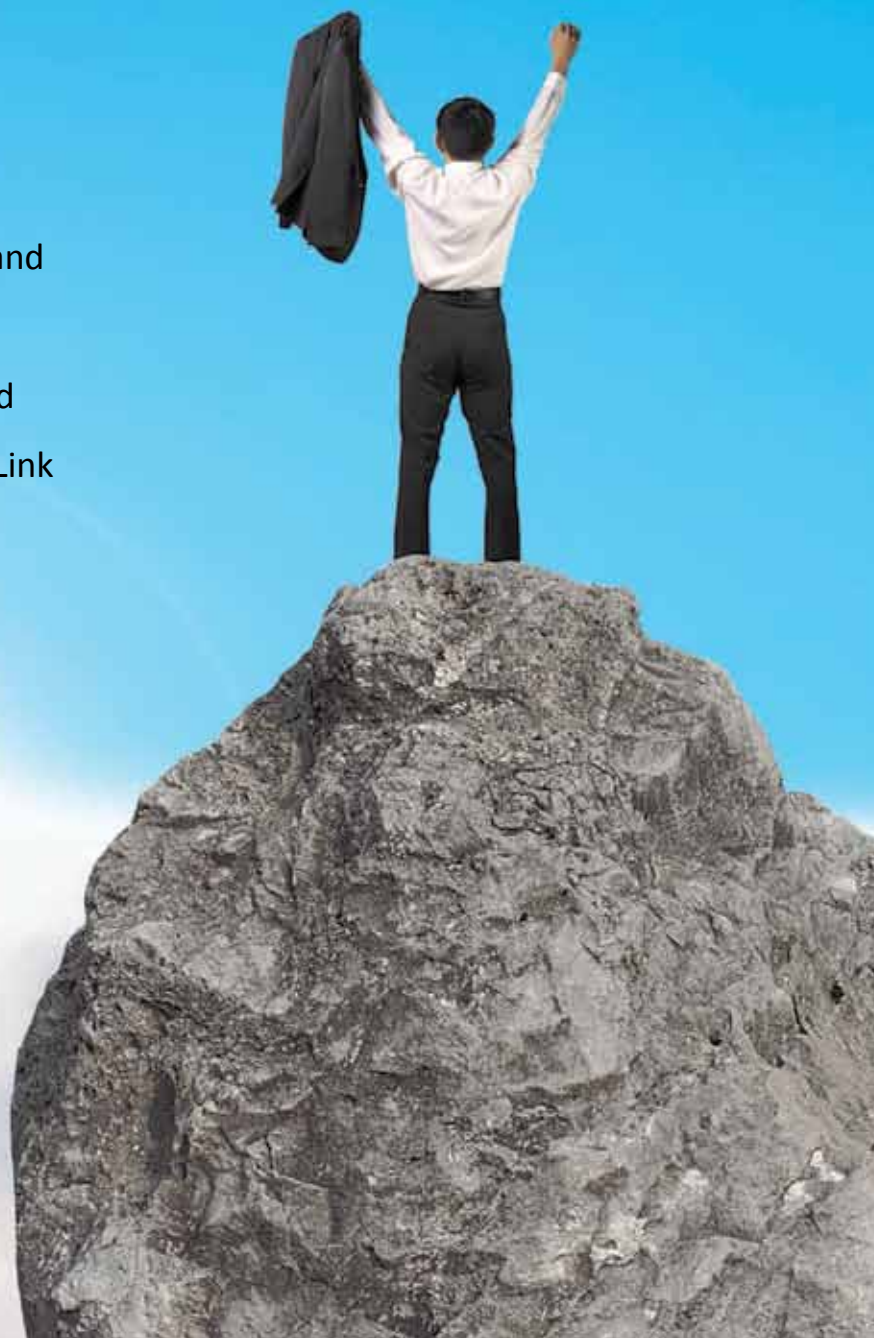
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"We appreciate the assistance we have received from SafeLink Consulting in helping us to understand the complexities of our regulatory systems. Beyond the effort of creating a comprehensive quality management system is the opportunity to work on overall efficiency within the organization and the peace of mind that comes with it." Udell Dental Lab, MN



THE WINNING HAND



Above: Friday Night Reception



Above: FDLA board installation

The 2015 Southern States Symposium & Expo was held May 7-9 at the Renaissance Orlando SeaWorld. This year's theme was *A Winning Hand with FDLA*. The schedule was packed with a variety of presenters and topics covering every sector of our industry as well as hands-on workshops and excellent exhibitors. More than 450 people discovered their winning hand at the event. We hope to see you next year for the 2016 Southern States Symposium & Expo.



Above: Harold Burdette, Jr., CDT, NADL President (right) presents Jeffrey Kocher, CDT with his 40 year CDT milestone



Above: Harold Burdette, Jr., CDT, NADL President (right) presents 45 year CDT milestones to Jaime Serrato, CDT and Klaus Lampmann, CDT



Above: Gail Perricone, incoming FDLA President presents 2014-2015 FDLA President Kristen Brown with the gavel plaque for her service



Left: Outstanding Students Oscar Bellamio, McFatter Technical College and Tom Sherry, Indian River State College

Right: Harold Burdette, Jr., CDT, NADL President (right) presents 35 year CDT milestones to Scott Pincus, CDT; Douglas Jackson, CDT and Kenneth Chickey, CDT





Above: Hands-on workshop



Above: Hands-on workshop



Above: Hands-on workshop



Above: 2014-2015 FDIA President Kristen Brown, Sundee Rawal, DMD and incoming President Gail Perricone (from left to right)



Above: Argen table clinic in expo hall



Above: Trade Show buzz



Above: Chris Bormes, PREAT Corporation with FDIA member



Above: Best of Show – Accurate Metals & Refining



Left: Lori Umstead, Lori Solomon and Kristen Brown (front row), Tryron Lloyd and Gus Meier from Knight Dental Group, CDL, DAMAS, ISO



Above: Friday Night Reception

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FDLA's District Workshop a Success

On June 12, the Implant Esthetics Center of Excellence in Sarasota, Fla. hosted FDLA's district workshop, Smile Design Clinical Communication to Laboratory Diagnostics for Complete Denture Fabrication presented by Donald J. Yancey, CDT and Richard Rought, CDT.



Welcome New Board Members

During the 2015 Southern States Symposium & Expo, the Florida Dental Laboratory Association's newest board members took office. In addition to Gail Perricone becoming president, the board welcomed three new members into its ranks.

Please join us in welcoming directors at large Tim Stevenson, CDT, and Dory Sartoris; and supplier representative Nancy Franceschi, CDT.



Tim Stevenson, CDT



Dory Sartoris



Nancy Franceschi, CDT

Look very close

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Meet FDLA Member Tim Stevenson, CDT

Recently, *focus* chatted with new Florida Dental Laboratory Association board member Tim Stevenson, CDT, to find out why he decided to become more involved with FDLA and what the state of dental laboratory technology looks like from his perspective as an owner of Stevenson Dental Technology, CDL, in Beverly Hills, Fla.

You're a new FDLA board member and are active in other ways in the dental laboratory industry. Why do you think it's important to be involved?

Throughout the years, our office has participated in many educational and informational meetings sponsored by the FDLA. They have always proven to be helpful in many ways. As a member of the board, I can help shape some of these opportunities for other technicians to expand their knowledge base, and that will be very fulfilling.

The department heads at Stevenson Dental Technology, CDL, and you yourself are all CDTs. Why does that designation matter to you and your dentist clients?

My CDT certification is my personal way of lifting my chosen profession to a higher level, always striving for excellence. As far as my clients go, I am not sure they even know about the CDT program. As the What's in your Mouth campaign (www.dentallabs.org) expands, I hope that my commitment to the CDT and CDL program will become more and more valued by our clients.

What does being an FDLA member mean to you and how has it helped your laboratory?

We have our FDLA, NADL and CDL memberships and certificates at the door

as you come into the lab. For us, it's a statement of quality and concern for always doing things the right way.

What are the three biggest issues facing dental laboratory technology in Florida and how can FDLA help its members find success in today's professional climate?


1. Finding well trained employees, the applicant pool is shrinking.
2. Low cost restorations, just how much lower can we go?
3. Low morale of technicians. We really need to turn that frown upside down and get involved instead of complaining about the industry.

What can the FDLA do about these challenges?

Public education. We need to get more vocal, let the citizens of state know who we are, what we do, and why it's important for the public to educate themselves as to what is going into their mouths.

What is the best advice you could give about how to be a successful dental laboratory owner?



1. All clients are valuable, don't take them for granted. They pay for your vacations.
2. Always leave the door of communication open, you learn more when you open your mind to other ideas.
3. Leave the door to your lab open, invite clients over, they can learn from us also.
4. Treat your employees well, that way you can leave and take a vacation.
5. Lastly, take time for your family, it's easy to get over involved in your business, don't forget who really matters in the end. 



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