

Information from the Ohio State Dental Board regarding Infection Control Inspections

The Ohio State Dental Board (Board) has been conducting random infection control inspections for many years. These inspections are intended to be positive experiences for dental offices throughout the state. After an inspection takes place, the Board representative (inspector) conducting the inspection will first provide information to the dentist and the staff regarding any infection control concerns. The office is then allotted a reasonable amount of time to become compliant with the laws and rules governing infection control. The inspector will make him/herself available to assist in correcting any deficiencies, and will return sometime thereafter to ensure that the deficiencies have been corrected.

In order to assist you in ensuring you are prepared for an inspection, the checklist form used by the inspector is available on our website under *Forms* and listed under *Licensee Forms*.

The Board has received many positive responses as a result of these random infection control inspections.

As always, the Ohio State Dental Board is glad to assist and provide help to the dentists throughout the state of Ohio.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding infection control, you may contact:

Enforcement Supervisor
(614) 466-2580

Or

Barb Yehnert, Investigator Assistant
(614) 620-1112

How a Random Infection Control is performed and the tools used to complete them:

- There is a list of all licensed Dentists by county.
 - This list is grouped by Zip Code.
- The inspector advises the Enforcement Supervisor each morning what county will be inspected.

Introduction:

- Upon entering a dental office, the inspector presents a business card to the front office staff.
- The introduction made by the inspector can go as follows:

“Hi. My name is _____. I am in the area conducting random infection control inspections. I do not need to tie up the Dentist’s time, often a dental assistant or hygienist is best suited to answer my questions. However, if the Dentist is interested or would like to participate, he or she is more than welcome to do it or just walk along and see what I’ll be looking for. Please make sure when you let the Dentist know I am here, stress the word ‘Random’ since they often fear we stop as a result of a complaint. Also, before you have someone take me back, be sure the Dentist knows who I am, knows I do not require any of his/her time unless he/she wants to speak with me.”

“I know you are seeing patients and I do not want you to pull anyone away from chairside. I’m happy to wait until someone becomes available. May I have a business card with the names of all Dentists in the practice so I can complete some paperwork while I wait?”

- If there is a question about how the office was selected randomly, it is explained that the random selection method involves ensuring, to the best of our ability, that offices are visited every 3 to 5 years and according to records, there has not been one in the last 3 years.

- Once taken into the sterilization area, the standard form is used.
 - Take an opportunity to look around and see how clean the office itself appears to be. This can be an indication that there can be questions or concerns related to infection control standards, but this is not always the case. Offices that appear unclean can sometimes have the most detailed infection control standards met, and also, beautiful million dollar offices can be very lax in complying with the standards. Therefore, what is seen throughout the office does not impact or sway the overall inspection. All are checked the same.
- After a visual inspection of the sterilization area, the patient treatment area is inspected.
 - Standard request to see a treatment room "I don't care if it is clean or used, just as long as there is not a patient in it." We want to avoid patients being involved without knowledge of what is taking place.
 - If licenses are displayed, the license information is documented. If these are not apparent, the inspector will ask where they are displayed. All certified and licensed staff is documented. We also inquire about hepatitis B records.
 - If this documentation is not readily available, the inspector will provide a fax cover sheet which allows the office staff to fax the information once it is obtained. Once documented, all information sent is shredded.

Deficiencies

- Common problems are nose cones/hygiene handpieces not being autoclaved after each use.
 - Suggest that the ESA prophylaxis angles be considered.
- Disposable impression trays are being cleaned, cold sterilized, and reused. The staff is shown that the package states the trays are for single use only. Plastic trays may be permitted to be autoclaved. It is suggested that the staff ask a product representative for guidance.

- Surface disinfectant procedures sometimes lack the second step. The procedure is “spray, wipe, spray”. If the office only sprays and then returns and wipes, this is only the cleaning step and not the disinfection step. As set forth in rules, and as defined by the Manufacturer, the surface has to be cleaned before it can be disinfected.

Autoclave Testing

Problems include:

- Not testing at all.
- Not running a control (most often on Attest/in House)
- Buying a test from an independent source and not running it weekly: to draw out the term to save on cost.
- Failed test results not being addressed when notified by the independent service.

Timing of the Inspection

- It is not unusual that there is a full waiting room when an inspector might visit throughout the day.
 - When this happens, the inspector simply approaches the staff with a business card and an immediate offer to catch them on a less busy day. They are encouraged to let the dentist know about the visit and that the inspector would be willing to stop back at a less busy time.
 - On most occasions, the Dentist will make an effort to free up a staff member and “get it done”. However, the Dentist is again told that it is not a problem for the inspector to come back when in the area again. The Dentist is informed this will not reflect negatively against them.
 - When the Dentist is the only employee in the office, the inspector does not wish to interfere with patient care. In those instances, the Dentist is informed that the inspector will call again when in the area next and see if an opening in the schedule would allow time for the inspection.
 - The inspector makes notes on logs for that county and then calls to see when the most convenient time is to do the inspection. After several attempts, an appointment will be made.

Conclusion:

In the end, the purpose of the office inspection is to ensure compliance with the laws and rules governing infection control and educate the Dentist regarding any minor deficiencies in this area. This ensures public protection.