



January 4, 2021

CRDTS Candidates, Test Site Personnel and Examiners,

Thank you for your dedication and patience during this past year as we've all had to help each other manage and deal with the many disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we enter the 2021 testing season, we want to reassure everyone that safety continues to be our number one priority and this applies to all candidates, patients, school site personnel and examiners.

CRDTS will continue to administer clinical testing in dental and dental hygiene schools across the country by following guidance issued by the CDC, State/Local Health Departments and testing sites. Per CDC guidance, all dental healthcare personnel should regularly consult their state dental boards and [state or local health departments](#) for current local information for requirements specific to their jurisdictions, including recognizing the degree of community transmission and impact, and their region-specific recommendations. CRDTS will be communicating and working with each testing site to determine State and Local requirements prior to each exam.

With requirements changing almost daily in some areas, CRDTS intends to be flexible, yet safe, when it comes to specific guidelines surrounding dental treatment, specifically; proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and the use of ultrasonics.

In addition to practicing Standard Precautions, at a minimum, the following policies and procedures will be followed at all testing sites:

- Hand Hygiene:
  - Hand sanitizer products will be located at the entrance to all facilities.
  - All persons entering the building must perform proper hand hygiene (20 seconds).
  - Hand sanitizer products will also be available throughout the facility for use when needed.
- Temperature Checks:
  - Temperature checks will be required of all:
    - Candidates and patients prior to their scheduled exam time.
    - Site personnel and examiners each morning and again mid-day.
    - Anyone displaying a confirmed temperature over 100.4°F will not be allowed to participate.
  - Candidates are encouraged to telephone screen their patient for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 the day prior to their scheduled exam.
  - CRDTS will be providing a non-contact infrared thermometer for all site personnel and examiners to use.
  - The testing site will be providing a non-contact infrared thermometer that will be used to take all candidate and patient temperatures.
  - CRDTS will work with each testing site to establish a candidate and patient temperature station at or near the entrance to the building which will be staffed by a CRDTS trained testing site assistant.

- Social Distancing:
  - CRDTS will be following all State and Local Public Health Rules with regard to maximum occupancy limits and social distancing requirements.
  - All candidates, patients, site personnel and examiners will be required to:
    - Practice social distancing by standing/sitting at least six feet apart from each other at all times.
    - Wear a face covering prior to entering the building and while in the building.
      - Per the CDC, non-medical cloth masks are encouraged and acceptable.
      - Candidates should instruct their patients to bring and provide their own face covering to wear when not being treated.
      - Candidates, test site personnel and examiners should bring their own face covering to wear when not wearing the required exam PPE.
  - A 'virtual waiting room' will be used as reception and waiting rooms will be closed to all but authorized personnel.
    - Candidates will be given exact times that they are allowed to enter the building (as listed in their CRDTS exam confirmation email) and will wait in their car until that time.
      - Candidates, upon entering the building will receive their temperature check and will be instructed to proceed directly to their assigned clinic cubicle/operator where they will wait for further instruction from the CRDTS Coordinator.
    - Patients will be instructed to wait in their cars until called/instructed to enter the building by their candidate.
      - Patients, upon entering the building will receive their temperature check and will be instructed to proceed directly to their candidate's assigned clinic cubicle/operator.
    - Interpreters and/or legal guardians of patients under 18 years of age will be allowed to enter with the candidate's patient and will be asked to sit in the reception area which will have proper social distancing seating.
    - Back-up patients will need to wait in their cars and/or outside areas until their candidate uses or releases them.
  
- Administrative, Engineering and Work Practice Controls:
  - Pre-procedural mouth rinses (PPMRs) for patients are encouraged.
    - Although COVID-19 was not studied, PPMRs with an antimicrobial product (1% - 1.5% hydrogen peroxide, essential oils, or cetylpyridinium chloride) have been shown to reduce the level of oral microorganisms in aerosols and spatter generated during dental procedures and are therefore encouraged.
    - Testing sites are encouraged to provide PPMR products for patients to use prior to treatment and/or candidates can bring/provide their own PPMR product.
  - High-Volume Evacuation (HVE) as an engineering control will be required while performing aerosol generating procedures (i.e.; while using ultrasonics [when allowed by the State and the testing site], slow-speed handpieces for polishing and/or the A/W syringe when both the air and water are used simultaneously. *Note: using just the water or just the air separately in a low and controlled manner is not considered an AGP.*)
    - All testing sites will be providing candidates with disposable HVE tips.
    - If a candidate prefers to use a different HVE engineering control (i.e.; Isolite, DryShield, NuBird mirror, etc.), they will need to bring that with them.)

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Appropriate PPE, as mandated by State and Local Health Departments, will be required.
  - Candidates must provide their own N95/KN95 respirator masks, face shield, knee length isolation gown or lab coat, and high-volume evacuation (HVE).
  - Testing sites will provide gloves but candidates should work with their own school/program to secure the rest of their required PPE.
  - CRDTS examiners will not need N95 respirator masks as they will not be performing aerosol generating procedures.
    - Testing sites, as always, will be providing examiners with Level 2 and/or Level 3 masks and lab coats.
    - Examiners who would like to use an N95 respirator and/or face shield must bring/provide those items themselves.
  
- Use of Ultrasonics:
  - Ultrasonics will be allowed in those States and testing sites that allow it.
  - In states and testing sites where the use of ultrasonics is prohibited, the candidate will need to hand scale.
    - In these instances, the exam content, criteria and scoring will remain the same.
    - The candidate will still be assigned the 2.5 hours start/stop treatment time, but will be given a 30-minute grace period to complete the exam.
  
- Environmental Infection Control:
  - Candidates will follow the CDC and testing site's protocol for cleaning and disinfection of operatories after patient treatment is complete.
  - After the patient has been submitted for final evaluation, the candidate can return to their operatory to begin the operatory turn-around process (i.e.; disassemble equipment, package/pack instruments, etc.) but should wait at least 15 minutes to begin the disinfection process (i.e.; enough time allow droplets to sufficiently settle before starting to remove barriers, sanitize/disinfect, and place new barriers for the next patient.)
  
- Miscellaneous Other:
  - Exam participants who are traveling to an exam should be reminded to check in advance for any applicable air travel, hotel and/or restaurant guidelines where many and/or most:
    - Airlines now require passengers to wear face coverings during travel.
    - Hotel lobbies and dining areas are closed for group gatherings.
    - Restaurants are closed (or at lower occupancy rates) for dine-in eating.
  - Cell phones:
    - CRDTS will allow candidates to keep and use their cell phone in their operatory to make initial contact with their patient prior to the exam so the patient knows when it is time to enter the building. After the patient is seated, the 'no cell phone policy' will go back into effect.

Again, a special thanks to all exam participants as we work together to make safety our number one priority.