

# **CAREER GUIDE FOR ORAL SURGEONS**

SOC Code: 29-1022

Pay Band(s): 6 and 7 ([Salary Structure](#))

**Standard Occupational Description:** Perform surgery on mouth, jaws, and related head and neck structure to execute difficult and multiple extractions of teeth, to remove tumors and other abnormal growths, to correct abnormal jaw relations by mandibular or maxillary revision, to prepare mouth for insertion of dental prosthesis, or to treat fractured jaws.

**Oral Surgeon positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Dental Services Career Group](#):**

[Dentist I](#)

[Dentist II](#)

[Dental Manager](#)

While Oral Surgeons within the Commonwealth are all located within the Dental Services Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Physician Services](#)

[Health Care Compliance](#)

[General Administration](#)

[Program Administration](#)

## **SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS**

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

### **Skills**

***Note:** The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Oral Surgeons commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
2. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
3. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
4. Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.
5. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.
6. Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
7. Talking to others to convey information effectively.

8. Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.
9. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
10. Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

## **Knowledge**

**Note:** *The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Oral Surgeons commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

### The **Knowledge** of:

1. Information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
2. Plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
3. Chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.
4. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

## **Abilities**

**Note:** *The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Oral Surgeons commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

### The **Ability** to:

1. Keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.
2. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
3. Quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
4. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
5. Make precisely coordinated movements of the fingers of one or both hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble very small objects.
6. Imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.
7. Quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions.
8. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
9. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
10. Make fast, simple, repeated movements of the fingers, hands, and wrists.

## Tasks

**Note:** The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Oral Surgeons. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

1. Administer general and local anesthetics.
2. Collaborate with other professionals such as restorative dentists and orthodontists in order to plan treatment.
3. Perform surgery on the mouth and jaws in order to treat conditions such as cleft lip and palate and jaw growth problems.
4. Perform surgery to prepare the mouth for dental implants, and to aid in the regeneration of deficient bone and gum tissues.
5. Provide emergency treatment of facial injuries including facial lacerations, intra-oral lacerations, and fractured facial bones.
6. Remove impacted, damaged, and non-restorable teeth.
7. Remove tumors and other abnormal growths of the oral and facial regions, using surgical instruments.
8. Restore form and function by moving skin, bone, nerves, and other tissues from other parts of the body in order to reconstruct the jaws and face.
9. Evaluate the position of the wisdom teeth in order to determine whether problems exist currently or might occur in the future.
10. Perform minor cosmetic procedures such as chin and cheekbone enhancements, and minor facial rejuvenation procedures including the use of Botox and laser technology.

## INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

For those interested in the field of oral surgery the occupation has the following characteristics:

**Investigative** — Investigative occupations frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

**Realistic** — Realistic occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

**Social** — Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

**Artistic** — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

**Enterprising** — Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.

## **LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

It is nationally recognized that dental services is a health field career and is regulated to ensure competent delivery of health care services to citizens. Therefore professional standards and competencies including licensure are expected.

Licensure is required for Dentist positions in Virginia state government. All 50 States and the District of Columbia require dentists to be licensed. To qualify for a license in most States, a candidate must graduate from a dental school accredited by the ADA's Commission on Dental Accreditation and also must pass written and practical examinations. Candidates are required to pass the National Board Dental Examinations. Individual States and regional testing agencies administer the practical examinations that may also be required for licensure.

The Virginia Board of Dentistry provides requirements for licensure and continuing competency for this occupation. Licensing information for Dentist can be found on the Department of Health Professions web site at <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/>.

## **EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Oral Surgeons are Dentists that have specialized on operating on the mouth and jaw.

The U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov>) provides the following:

Oral Surgeons perform surgery on mouth, jaws, and related head and neck structure to execute difficult and multiple extractions of teeth, to remove tumors and other abnormal growths, to correct abnormal jaw relations by mandibular or maxillary revision, to prepare mouth for insertion of dental prosthesis, or to treat fractured jaws.

Oral Surgeons use a variety of equipment, including x-ray machines, drills, and instruments such as mouth mirrors, probes, forceps, brushes, and scalpels. They wear masks, gloves, and safety glasses to protect themselves and their patients from infectious diseases.

Dental schools require a minimum of 2 years of college-level pre-dental education, regardless of the major chosen. However, most dental students have at least a bachelor's degree. Pre-dental education emphasizes course work in science and many applicants to dental school major in a science such as biology or chemistry, while other applicants major in another subject and take many science courses as well. A small number of applicants are accepted to dental school after 2 or 3 years of college and complete their bachelor's degree while attending dental school. All dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). When selecting students, schools consider scores earned on the DAT, applicants' grade point averages, and information gathered through recommendations and interviews. Competition for admission to dental school is keen.

Dental school usually lasts 4 academic years. Studies begin with classroom instruction and laboratory work in basic sciences, including anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and

physiology. Beginning courses in clinical sciences, including laboratory techniques, also are provided at this time. During the last 2 years, students treat patients, usually in dental clinics, under the supervision of licensed dentists.

Most dental schools award the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS). The rest award an equivalent degree, Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD).

Oral Surgeons that practice in a specialty area must meet requirements that include 2 to 4 years of postgraduate education and, in some cases, the completion of a special State examination. Most State licenses permit dentists to engage in both general and specialized practice.

Dentistry requires diagnostic ability and manual skills. Dentists should have good visual memory, excellent judgment regarding space and shape, a high degree of manual dexterity, and scientific ability. Good business sense, self-discipline, and good communication skills are helpful for success in private practice. High school and college students who want to become dentists should take courses in biology, chemistry, physics, health, and mathematics.

Some dental school graduates work for established dentists as associates for a year or two in order to gain experience and save money to equip an office of their own. Most dental school graduates, however, purchase an established practice or open a new one immediately after graduation. According to the ADA, each year about 12 percent of new graduates enroll in postgraduate training programs to prepare for a dental specialty.

For additional information on educational opportunities the American Dental Association, (<http://www.ada.org/>) and American Dental Education Association (<http://www.adea.org/>) are good resources.

In Virginia the educational institution that offers dental programs and degrees is Virginia Commonwealth University (<http://www.vcu.edu/>).

## **COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES**

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

### **The Commonwealth Competencies are:**

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: [http://jobs.state.va.us/cc\\_planningctr.htm](http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm). For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

## **COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH**

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Oral Surgeons**

PAY BAND	PRACTITIONER ROLES
6	Dentist I
7	Dentist II

PAY BAND	MANAGER ROLES
7	Dental Manager

### **Sample Career Path**

#### **Dentist I**

The Dentist I role provides career tracks for dentists whose responsibilities range from entry level to first line supervision of others. Employees deliver direct dental care associated with: oral examinations; orthodontia; prosthodontia; periodontics; dental reconstruction; the administration of oral prophylactics; extractions and limited oral surgery; applying dental sealants; identifying sources of and treating infections; diagnosis and treatment planning; and taking and interpreting x-rays.

## **Dentist II**

The Dentist II role provides career tracks for oral surgeons who perform the most complex oral surgical procedures.

## **Dental Manager**

The Dental Manager role provides career tracks for dentists who serve as dental program administrators whose management and oversight responsibilities range from managing dental clinics to overseeing the delivery of a comprehensive array of statewide services associated with dental health.

## **ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:**

O\*NET (Occupational Information Network)

[http://online.onetcenter.org/gen\\_search\\_page](http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page)

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network <http://www.vacrn.net/>

Department of Health Professions

<http://www.dhp.state.virginia.us/>

The U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov>

## **Professional Organizations**

American Dental Association

<http://www.ada.org/>

Virginia Dental Association

<http://www.vadental.org/>