

Emergencies

Approved by	Council
Date approved	June 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by restricting oral health practitioners from performing health services outside of their scope of practise to situations where there is an emergency.

Scope

This policy applies to all registered practitioners, including New Zealand graduates.

Policy

1. No oral health practitioner should perform any health service not within his or her allowed scope unless there is a dental emergency.
2. Treatment should not go beyond that necessary to ensure the immediate safety or comfort of the patient and should routinely involve referral to an appropriate registered practitioner at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

Definition

A dental emergency: An emergency covered by the Health Practitioner Competence Assurance Act 2003 ("the Act"), must be an unplanned rare emergency situation where the immediate safety or comfort of the patient is at risk, and where a registered oral health practitioner practising within their scope of practice is not present on the premises or able to attend the premises within a reasonable or appropriate time to treat the patient.

The emergency would usually fall into one or two categories:

1. Management of life threatening emergencies
2. Management of oral emergencies involving:
 - a. trauma (e.g. broken/extruded/intruded teeth and other injury);
 - b. acute infection (e.g. abscess threatening general health);
 - c. uncontrolled bleeding (usually following an extraction on the same or previous day);
 - d. acute pain.