§ 6609-a. Mandatory continuing education for dental hygienists. 1. (A) Each dental hygienist, licensed pursuant to this article and required to register triennially with the department to practice in this state shall comply with the provisions of the mandatory continuing education requirements, except as set forth in paragraphs (B) and (C) of this subdivision. Dental hygienists who do not satisfy the mandatory continuing education requirements shall not practice until they have met such requirements and have been issued a registration or conditional registration certificate.

(B) Dental hygienists shall be exempt from the mandatory continuing education requirement for the triennial registration period during which they are first licensed. In accordance with the intent of this section, adjustments to the mandatory continuing education requirement may be granted by the department for reasons of health, certified by a physician, for extended active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States, or for other good cause acceptable to the department which may prevent compliance.

(C) A licensed dental hygienist not engaged in the practice of dental hygiene shall be exempt from the mandatory continuing education requirement upon the filing of a statement with the department declaring such status. Any licensee who returns to the practice of dental hygiene during the triennial registration period shall notify the department prior to reentering the profession and shall meet such mandatory continuing education requirements as shall be prescribed by regulation of the commissioner.

2. During each triennial registration period an applicant for registration shall complete a minimum of twenty-four hours of acceptable formal continuing education including currently mandated child abuse reporting instruction and infection control training as approved by the department. Of these twenty-four hours a maximum of ten hours may be self-instructional coursework as approved by the department. Any dental hygienist whose first registration date following the effective date of this section occurs less than three years from such effective date, but on or after January first, nineteen hundred ninety-eight, shall complete continuing education hours on a prorated basis at the rate of one and one-quarter hours per month for the period beginning January first,

nineteen hundred ninety-seven up to the first registration date thereafter. A licensee who has not satisfied the mandatory continuing education requirements shall not be issued a triennial registration certificate by the department and shall not practice unless and until a conditional registration certificate is issued as provided in subdivision three of this section. The individual licensee shall determine the selection of courses or programs of study pursuant to subdivision four of this section.

3. The department, in its discretion, may issue a conditional registration to a licensee who fails to meet the continuing education requirements established in subdivision two of this section but who agrees to make up any deficiencies and take any additional education which the department may require. The fee for such a conditional registration shall be the same as, and in addition to, the fee for the triennial registration. The duration of such conditional registration shall be determined by the department. Any licensee who is notified of the denial of registration for failure to submit evidence, satisfactory to the department, of completion of required continuing education and who practices dental hygiene without such registration, may be subject to disciplinary proceedings pursuant to section sixty-five hundred ten of this title.

4. As used in this section, "acceptable formal continuing education" shall mean formal programs of learning which contribute to professional practice and which meet the standards prescribed by regulations of the commissioner. To fulfill the mandatory continuing education requirement, programs must be taken from sponsors approved by the department, pursuant to the regulations of the commissioner.

5. The mandatory continuing education fee of thirty dollars shall be payable on or before the first day of each triennial registration period, and shall be paid in addition to the triennial registration fee required by section sixty-six hundred nine of this article.