



# DENTAL CLAIMS

## *Evaluation and Strategies*

**Action**

**Preventive**

**FPIC** has a long history of insuring Florida dentists and has compiled data on dentistry claims. Our goal is to improve identification of risk exposures in your dental practice and to offer strategies

aimed at reducing recurrent exposure. The evaluation of claims data is presented in the following table, along with risk management strategies aimed at preventing risks in your practice:

RISK	RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
Failure (or delay) to diagnose oral cancer.	Monitor patients carefully. Perform and document complete oral exam. Appropriately evaluate patient's symptoms. Do not ignore lesions that do not respond to treatment. Suspect cancer and investigate further. Schedule timely follow-up (2 weeks). Track all diagnostics to ensure results are received, reviewed and response initiated.
Failure to diagnose (or delay in treating) periodontal disease.	Monitor patients carefully. Perform and document complete oral exam. Refer patients whose disease is outside your scope of expertise for treatment.
Wrong tooth extractions.	Radiographic assessment prior to extractions. Careful review of referral information.
Nerve damage post dental extraction.	Careful examination of x-rays. Note proximity of nerves to tooth. Refer molar extractions to oral surgeon. Inform patient of nerve injury possibility. Document notification. Obtain informed consent outlining risks specific to the procedure.
Infections when sinus cavity entered.	Exercise caution in upper molar extractions where invasion of sinus cavity may occur. Do not attempt sinus lifting without proper training.
Anesthesia reactions.	Assure thorough training in administration of anesthetics appropriate to the scope of practice. Closely monitor patients' response to anesthetics. Maintain appropriate emergency equipment and medications. Provide emergency response training for clinical staff members. Obtain consent for anesthesia with associated risks for type of anesthesia planned.

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# Is Cash Missing From Your Practice?

Employee theft in dental practices occurs more frequently than you may realize because employees often have a ready opportunity to take money. Cash control efforts may prove helpful. The three major areas are:

## 1. Cash Received at the Front Desk.

Give every patient who makes a payment a receipt at the time of service. Number the forms sequentially so missing receipts can be traced. Many practices incorporate the receipt as part of the superbill.



Reconcile payments daily. Retain file payments and their receipts in a designated location.

At the end of the day, a different employee should verify the day's transactions, accounting for each receipt.

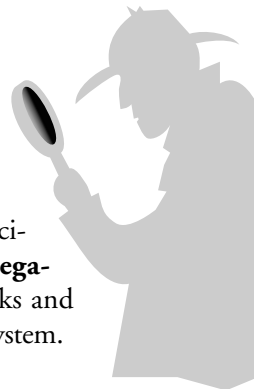
## 2. Mail Receipts.

Mailed payments should be posted at the time of receipt. Prepare a list of checks and other types of payments by recording the name of the payer and the amount received. This employee may also prepare the bank deposit.

## 3. Bank Deposits.

Ideally, a practice should deposit all money daily. If this is impractical, make deposits at least twice a week.

The key underlying principle in cash-control is **segregation of duties**. Build checks and balances into your control system.



*FPIC publishes Preventive Action on a quarterly basis as a service to its policyholders. Information in this publication does not establish a standard of care, nor is it a substitute for legal advice. The information and suggestions contained in this newsletter are generalized and may not apply to all practice situations. FPIC recommends you obtain legal advice from a qualified attorney for a specific application to your practice. This information should be used as a reference guide only.*

*Editor: Margaret Douglass*

## Risk Management Guides and Risk Management Practice Consultations Free to Policyholders

**FPIC** offers its dental risk management guide, *Office Guide: Dental Risk Management*, to its dentists free of charge. The guide contains Florida Administrative Codes affecting dentistry, sample dentistry forms for use in your office, and guidance in developing sound policies and procedures for your dental practice.



For more information or to obtain a guidebook, please call Sandra Strickland at 800-741-3742 (extension 3263).



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