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Nashville Dental, Inc
Home Office
1229 Northgate Business Pkwy,
Madison, TN 37115
(615) 868.3911
800.251.2196 Customer service
800.263.4329 Ez-Fax Line

Branch Locations:

Knoxville, TN Office
10425 Cogdill Road, Suite 200
Knoxville, TN 37932
Phone: 865.675.5712
Toll free: 800.362.0737
Fax: 865.675.5714

Chattanooga, TN Office
6116 Shallowford Road, Ste 106
Chattanooga, TN 37421
Phone: 423.894.5352
Toll free: 800.539.5352
Fax: 423.894.6192

Jackson, TN Office
90 North Star Drive, Suite 4
Jackson, TN 38305
Phone: 731.664.4600
Toll free: 800.562.8499
Fax: 731.664.7005

Huntsville, AL Office
2809 Newby Road, SW, Ste 127
Huntsville, AL 35805
Phone: 256.536.5566
Toll free: 800.362.0743
Fax: 256.536.0280

Louisville, KY Office
11003 Bluegrass Pkwy, Ste 530
Louisville, KY 40299
Phone: 502.266.9130
Toll free: 800.600.9130
Fax: 502.266.5543

Lexington, KY Office
383 Codell Drive
Lexington, KY 40509
Phone: 859.268.1019
Toll free: 866.268.1019
Fax: 866.268.1059

Huntington, WV Office
Camp Creek Plaza
4388 5th Street Rd., Unit #6
Huntington, WV 25701
Phone: 304.522.0014
Toll free: 866.351.5001
Fax: 304.522.2443

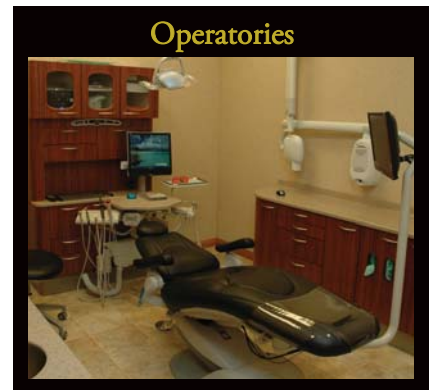
Office Maintenance:

What you need to know to reduce your operating costs.

Equipment Room



Operatories



Sterilization



Dark Room / Image Processors



Dental Office Lab



Computers



Office Maintenance

What You Should Know

It's the time of year to start fresh and get things going in the right direction. At this time of year, many offices set production goals, evaluate work schedules, fee schedules and many other areas in order to plan for a more successful year than last. One area that is often overlooked until it becomes a problem is the maintenance required on dental equipment.

Each dental practice invests in significant equipment expenses in order to provide proper and adequate diagnosis, treatment and care to their patients. In fact, when comparing to most medical practices, the start-up equipment expenses for dental practices is significantly greater. Since these equipment items are critical to the dentists' ability to carry out their day to day services, the care and maintenance of these items is critical. Most dental equipment is designed to provide years of trouble-free service when maintained properly. Learning the steps to proper maintenance is the key to protecting these investments and to prevent unexpected down times in the practice. In the following pages, we will look at critical items in the office that require routine maintenance. Then we will go over the basics that are needed to keep these items maintained and reliable.

Managing and Reducing Office Operating Costs:

The costs of operating a dental practice are numerous. However, when you categorize these costs and plan your office budget to account for them, they can be managed quite easily. Good management of expenses results in more money in your pocket at the end of the year. One office expense that is routinely overlooked and therefore tends to pop up at inopportune times is the cost of maintaining equipment. These costs need to be figured and planned for in the office operations budget. If these expenses are not planned for, these maintenance items generally don't get done. This leads to expensive unplanned equipment repairs or replacement. By planning for appropriate maintenance, your equipment investments will last much longer and your total operating expenses will be less.



Keys To Effective Maintenance:

- 1 Knowing what items require routine maintenance:** Working with your Nashville Dental account representative, you should take an inventory of the equipment items in your office that require routine maintenance. Also, several equipment items recommend annual maintenance that should be performed by a service technician. Make a note of which items need to be maintained by trained service technicians.
- 2 Develop a Maintenance Plan:** Once you have this list, you need to develop a maintenance plan. This would include schedules for routine maintenance, maintenance assignments, if this is part of your staff's job descriptions, and inventorying necessary supplies to perform routine maintenance. You may also pre-schedule with your service department for semi-annual and annual service calls to take care of items requiring professional maintenance.
- 3 Proper Staff Training:** Staff training is critical for maintenance to be performed correctly. This can be done by the doctor or this can be set up with your Nashville Dental account representative or service department. If your staff is required to maintain the equipment but they have no understanding of how to do it, maintenance will NOT get done.
- 4 Make Assignments:** Some offices hire cleaning crews to do certain maintenance items and have their staff take care of others. Many offices assign all equipment maintenance to staff. These assignments need to be clear so there is no misunderstanding about who is supposed to do what. Assignments are best rotated on a quarterly basis so those doing the maintenance will learn how to perform all maintenance items. This will help when someone is out for sickness or maternity leave and the others have to fill in.
- 5 Plan Time Into The Schedule For The Staff To Perform These Tasks:** The members of your staff expect to be paid for work done at the office. If the only time they have to do these items is at the end of the day on Thursday or Friday, then chances are, the maintenance will not happen. Staff generally don't mind doing maintenance if they know what to do and they are given the time to do it.

Maintenance Zones:

The dental office can be broken down into 6 zones for office maintenance:

Equipment Room:



Sterilization:



Laboratory:



Operatories:



Dark Room / X-ray Image Processors:



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Computer Hardware / Software:

