



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES



Healthy &
Respectful
Workplace



Negotiating a Compensation Package as an Employee

You've been offered a new position. Congratulations! The next step is negotiating your contract in order to clarify and secure your terms of employment. When starting at a new place of employment, you want to begin on the best possible terms...for you! Only 51% of dental hygienists report having a contract.⁰ If you don't have a contract you risk leaving money and benefits on the table.

Here are some guidelines for negotiating the best contract:



- 1. Do your homework.** Know what the hourly, salary or commission rate is in your area. Use CDHA's *Job Market and Employment Survey Report*, found at www.cdha.ca/jobsurvey as a guideline. Know what your average billing was at your last place of employment. Review the provincial dental fee guide if moving from another province so you can calculate your potential average daily billing.
- 2. Be prepared to negotiate.** Be confident in your specific expectations to maximize your wage and benefits package.
- 3. Know your value.** Be able to confidently articulate how you will add value to the office. Illustrate your experience, education, and areas of specialty. Highlight your work ethic, your wonderful way of connecting with clients, your positive energy, your previous roles in ordering supplies or implementing new infection control protocols.

⁰See CDHA's Job Market and Employment Survey Full Report, page 6



4. Negotiate a comprehensive package that includes:

- Autonomy to determine client appointment times
- Opportunity to order preferred dental hygiene instruments and supplies
- Annual uniform allowance
- Annual professional development allowance
- Sick days (if the office does not have a benefits package)
- Professional association or regulatory body dues paid by the office
- Vacation weeks and pay, based on experience (e.g., 6% vacation pay versus 4%)
- Health and wellness benefits (e.g., gym membership, yoga classes)
- Retirement plan
- Purchase of loupes
- Compensation for parking or transit costs
- Ergonomic workstation/chair

5. Set the specific working hours for which you will be compensated (e.g., Monday: 8 am–4 pm, Tuesday: 10 am–6 pm, Wednesday: 2 pm–8 pm). This is to avoid schedule compression (shortening of workdays), moving a client from one dental hygiene provider to another, or lack of compensation for openings in the schedule.

6. Before signing, review all details in the contract and items such as:

- Non-competition or solicitation clauses
- The amount of notice required when leaving your place of employment (normally 2 to 4 weeks)
- Whether severance/termination pay is in line with provincial guidelines and legislation



CDHA recommends that its members obtain legal advice from a specialist in employment law before signing a contract.

Always follow-up with a thank you letter even if you are unable to negotiate everything on your wish list. Professionalism throughout the process is key!