

# Forensic Odontology

Definition of Forensic = Having to do with courts of law

Definition of Odontology = From the Greek, the study of teeth. (The same meaning as dentistry, which is from Latin.)

Definition of Forensic Odontology = That part of forensic science that applies dental knowledge to criminal and civil law.

## The Scope of Forensic Odontology

- Dental Identification
- Age Estimation
- Bite Mark Evaluation
- Abuse Detection, Reporting and Intervention
- Civil Litigation

## Civil Litigation

Standard of Care = What any reasonable or prudent dentist would do in the same or similar circumstances.

- Use a rubber dam, as it is standard of care during root canal treatment.
- Take the number of hours of CEU required.
- Read your state legislation about dentistry.
- Update and review the medical history.
- Perform oral cancer screening exams.
- Take and record periodontal probings.
- Take FMX and BWX at app. intervals.
- Document well and neatly; this is how a jury will judge you.
- Do not change your records.
- Give patients their records when asked.

## Abuse and Neglect

- Dentists and Dental Hygienists are mandated reporters.
- Call DCSF if you have suspicions, it is their job to investigate.
- Illinois Department of DCSF = 1-800-25-ABUSE or dcfs.illinois.gov

## Age Assessment

The London Atlas of Tooth Development and Eruption is available at <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/dentistry/atlas/>

## Bitemarks

The American Board of Forensic Odontology (ABFO) Bitemark Analysis and Comparison Algorithm Flowchart is available at

[www.ABFO.org](http://www.ABFO.org) >

Resources>ABFO Reference Manual> Section IV Standards and Guidelines

## Dental Identification

What can you do to help forensic odontologists?

- Take good records.
- Keep your records (do not throw them out)
- Give your records to law enforcement, coroners or medical examiners when asked. (HIPAA is okay with that.)

## To Learn More or Get Involved

American Society of Forensic Odontology (ASFO) [www.asfo.org](http://www.asfo.org)

The Manual of Forensic Odontology, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition available at the ASFO website or Amazon

American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) [www.aafs.org](http://www.aafs.org)