

Minnesota Department of Health Radiation Control, X-ray Unit

Dental Technique Charts

Technique charts are tables that contain settings for selection on the x-ray control for a specific anatomical part. These factors control the amount of radiation delivered to the patient and to the film. When the technique chart has been developed properly and the film processing is optimized, the selection from the technique chart will ensure the least amount of radiation for the optimum film density and will produce a consistently good-quality radiograph.

In intraoral radiography, it is common to have a “fixed” kVp and mA, leaving only one variable, time. If the vendor who calibrated the x-ray unit lists a maximum technique, it does not mean it is universal. The maximum technique indicates that above that level will exceed the allowable amount for a bitewing. However, if the patient is very large or when exposing a posterior molar, exceeding that maximum may be necessary to produce a quality radiograph.



Minnesota Rules on Ionizing Radiation require that technique charts for all intraoral radiography list the bitewing technique, the patient size (small, medium, large for adults) and a setting for pediatrics. The speed of the film used must also be listed on the technique chart. The pan and ceph units must also have technique charts. Be sure to update your technique charts when you change to a different film, new unit, or new screens.

Digital radiography for dentistry is becoming more popular. You must have a technique chart for the digital units as well.



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