



## Essential vs. Marginal Function

---

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

The University of Tennessee  
Municipal Technical Advisory Service  
1610 University Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37921-6741  
865-974-0411 phone  
865-974-0423 fax  
[www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)

## Table of Contents

Essential vs. Marginal Function .....	3
---------------------------------------	---

## Essential vs. Marginal Function

**Reference Number:** MTAS-1063

When discussing ADA the term “essential function of the job” is used quite frequently. This is because all individuals are required to be able to perform the essential functions of their job either with or without accommodations.

It is important to be able to distinguish between an essential function and a marginal function. To determine this, employers should consider the following items:

- Does the job exist to do this function?
- Would taking this function from the job fundamentally change the job?
- Would there be significant consequences if this function were not performed?
- Can other employees do this function if necessary?
- What equipment is used to do this function? How frequently is the equipment used?
- How much time per week is spent doing this function?
- What are the minimum qualifications and job standards?
- Could this function be performed in another way?

---

*DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.*

**Source URL (retrieved on 10/25/2020 - 9:05pm):** <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/essential-vs-marginal-function>



**Municipal Technical Advisory Service**  
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE