

Animal Control

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](http://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,

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Animal Control

Reference Number: MTAS-681

ANIMAL CONTROL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE		
Description of Record	Retention Period	Legal Authority/Rationale
A-1. Activity Reports. Monthly reports showing the activity of the animal control operations.	Retain 2 years, unless there is no annual report. If no annual report, retain as permanent record.	Keep to aid in planning.
A-2. Adoption Contracts. May include agreement to have animal spayed/neutered when it is 6 months old.	Retain 4 years.	Keep to show proof of ownership/patterns of behavior of animals or owners.
A-3. Annual Reports. Annual reports showing the activity of the animal control operations.	Permanent record.	Keep to aid in planning.
A-4. Bite Reports. Document investigations of dog bites.	Retain 4 years.	Retention period based on likely time of complaint or legal action.
A-5. Complaints, Record of. May contain date; time of complaint; complaint's name, address, and telephone number; owner's name and address; animal's license number; and details of problems.	Retain 4 years or until resolution of any litigation, whichever is later.	Record may be used in litigation. Retention period based on statute of limitations for actions for injuries to personal property plus 1 year. T.C.A. § 28-3-105.
A-6. Controlled Substances, Log of	Retain 3 years.	Tenn. Admin. Rule 1730-4-.09.
A-7. Dispatching Logs.	Retain 4 years, unless legal action is pending.	Retention period based on likely time of complaint or legal action.
A-8. Euthanasia Report. Must be kept for each animal euthanized; includes date, estimated age, breed, weight, sex, amount of euthanasia solution administered, and description of verification of death	*Retain for 3 years. May want to retain for 4 years if 4-year retention period adopted for other animal control records.	Tenn. Admin. Rule 1730-4-.09.
A-9. Field Reports (Daily). Report of officer's daily activities.	Retain 1 year.	Used to compile activity reports.
A-10 Impound Log. Log of all animals brought into the animal shelter and whether animal was adopted or euthanized.	Retain 4 years.	Keep as part of history of animals and owners and to track activity at shelter. Can be useful in returning lost animals to owners.
A-11. Rabies Certificate. Rabies vaccination is required by T.C.A. 68-8-104. Certificates are forwarded to animal control by veterinarians.	Retain 4 years.	Keep to provide proof of vaccination and to facilitate return of lost animals to

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		owners. Rabies vaccine lasts 3 years.
A-11. Rabies Certificate. Rabies vaccination is required by T.C.A. 68-8-104. Certificates are forwarded to animal control by veterinarians.	Retain 4 years.	Keep to provide proof of vaccination and to facilitate return of lost animals to owners. Rabies vaccine lasts 3 years.
A-12. Return to Owner, Record of.	Retain 4 years.	Keep to prove ownership and assign liability to owner if the animal is ever in violation of ordinances or statutes.
A-13. Spay/Neuter Deposit, Record of. Deposit is required by T.C.A. § 44-17-503 for every animal not already neutered that is adopted from an animal shelter.	Retain 4 years.	Keep as part of history of animals and owners.
A-14. Surrender of Animal, Record of.	Retain 4 years.	Keep to defend against liability for taking animal. Based on statute of limitations for offenses against property plus 1 year.

*Indicates a mandatory retention period based on state or federal law.

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.

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