



Municipal Technical Advisory Service  
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

Published on *MTAS* (<http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu>)

August 04, 2020

## Engineering

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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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# Table of Contents

Engineering .....	3
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# Engineering

Reference Number: MTAS-685

<b>ENGINEERING RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE</b>		
<b>Description of Record</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Legal Authority/Rationale</b>
<b>E-1. Aerial Photographs.</b> Aerial photographs of flyovers. Negatives may be available at the state Department of Transportation's photographic lab.	Permanent Record.	Keep for operational purposes through reappraisal appeals process and greenbelt recertification appeal period. This record series has high historical and archival value and should be preserved for those reasons.
<b>E-2. Bridge and Street Project Files, Federal, State and Local.</b> Project files, including contracts and invoices.	Retain 7 years after completion of project.	Based on statute of limitations for legal actions for breach of contract plus 1 year. T.C.A. § 28-3-109.
<b>E-3. Building Plans.</b> Blueprints and specifications for all municipal building including school buildings.	Retain for life of the building (plus additional time if litigation arise from building's early demise). Consider donating to archive.	Necessary for maintenance and operation of physical plant.
<b>E-4. City Street List.</b> Record of all streets under control of the city.	Permanent Record	Necessary for street regulation and maintenance and to protect street department from allegations of working on private property.
<b>E-5. Complaints.</b> Citizen service request for maintenance and repair issues.	Retain 5 years.	Could constitute notice of unsafe condition.
<b>E-6. Deeds, Easements, Highway Rights-of-way, etc.</b> Instruments of conveyance of interests in real property. Show signature of property owner, date, width of easement, and name of road.	Permanent record in city recorder's office.	Recorded copy is necessary to preserve city property rights, City should retain its own copy as record of its property rights.
<b>E-7. Maps and Map Books.</b> City and civil district maps as well as single parcel maps (not part of subdivision).	Permanent Record.	Keep for historical purposes.
<b>E-8. Ownership maps and index, Rural and Urban.</b> These maps reflect the status of real property as of January 1 of each year.	Retain only current and one previous generation of ownership maps and indexes. Older generations of photographs may be removed from the office	Useful in office for tracking property changes and as evidence in challenges to tax sales. This record series has a high historical and archival value and should be preserved for those reasons.

<b>ENGINEERING RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE</b>		
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	but if removed, should be transferred to an archive or library.	
<b>E-9. Plats, Plat Books, Surveyors' Books and Indexes.</b> Drawings of subdivisions, cemeteries, utilities, city lots and street improvements showing name of subject, date drawn, boundaries, scale used, location, name of engineer making survey, name of draftsman, and register's certificate of registration.	Permanent Record.	Necessary for maintenance and operation of city infrastructure. Eligible for recordation. T.C.A. § 13-3-402
<b>E-10. Sign Inventory.</b> List of all traffic signs and traffic signals in the city.	Retain a current copy at all times.	Necessary to track inventory and maintenance of signs.
<b>E-11. Underground Utilities, Location of.</b> Record of location of all underground utilities maintained by the city.	Permanent Record.	Necessary for maintenance and operation of city infrastructure. NOTE: Under T.C.A. § 65-31-105, the city must record location of utilities with county, listing where the facilities are located and the name, title, address and telephone number of the operator's representative. The county keeps this record permanently.
<b>E-12. Work Orders.</b> For repair and maintenance of streets, traffic signs, traffic signals, and utilities.	Retain 5 years.	Evidence in lawsuit.

*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 08/04/2020 - 6:55pm):** <http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/engineering>



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