TITLE 15

MOTOR VEHICLES, TRAFFIC AND PARKING\(^1\)

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CHAPTER 1

MISCELLANEOUS\(^2\)

SECTION
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\(^1\)Municipal code reference
Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority: title 20.
Excavations and obstructions in streets, etc.: title 16.

\(^2\)State law references
Under Tennessee Code Annotated, § 55-10-307, the following offenses are exclusively state offenses and must be tried in a state court or a court having state jurisdiction: driving while intoxicated or drugged, as prohibited by Tennessee Code Annotated, § 55-10-401; failing to stop after a traffic accident, as prohibited by Tennessee Code Annotated, § 55-10-101, et seq.; driving while license is suspended or revoked, as prohibited by Tennessee Code Annotated, § 55-7-116; and drag racing, as prohibited by Tennessee Code Annotated, § 55-10-501.
15-101. **Motor vehicle requirements.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate any motor vehicle within the corporate limits unless such vehicle is equipped with properly operating muffler, lights, brakes, horn, and such other equipment as is prescribed and required by Tennessee Code Annotated, title 55, chapter 9. (1972 Code, § 9-101)

15-102. **Driving on streets closed for repairs, etc.** Except for necessary access to property abutting thereon, no motor vehicle shall be driven upon any street that is barricaded or closed for repairs or other lawful purpose. (1972 Code, § 9-106)

15-103. **Reckless driving.** Irrespective of the posted speed limit, no person, including operators of emergency vehicles, shall drive any vehicle in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property. (1972 Code, § 9-107)


15-105. **One-way streets.** On any street for one-way traffic with posted signs indicating the authorized direction of travel at all intersections offering access thereto, no person shall operate any vehicle except in the indicated direction. (1972 Code, § 9-109)

15-106. **Unlaned streets.** (1) Upon all unlaned streets of sufficient width, a vehicle shall be driven upon the right half of the street except:
   (a) When lawfully overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction.
   (b) When the right half of a roadway is closed to traffic while under construction or repair.
15-107. Laned streets. On streets marked with traffic lanes, it shall be unlawful for the operator of any vehicle to fail or refuse to keep his vehicle within the boundaries of the proper lane for his direction of travel except when lawfully passing another vehicle or preparatory to making a lawful turning movement.

On two (2) lane and three (3) lane streets, the proper lane for travel shall be the right hand lane unless otherwise clearly marked. On streets with four (4) or more lanes, either of the right hand lanes shall be available for use except that traffic moving at less than the normal rate of speed shall use the extreme right hand lane. On one-way streets either lane may be lawfully used in the absence of markings to the contrary. (1972 Code, § 9-111)

15-108. Yellow lines. On streets with a yellow line placed to the right of any lane line or center line, such yellow line shall designate a no-passing zone, and no operator shall drive his vehicle or any part thereof across or to the left of such yellow line except when necessary to make a lawful left turn from such street. (1972 Code, § 9-112)

15-109. Miscellaneous traffic control signs, etc. It shall be unlawful for any pedestrian or the operator of any vehicle to violate or fail to comply with any traffic control sign, signal, marking, or device placed or erected by the state or the city unless otherwise directed by a police officer.

It shall be unlawful for any pedestrian or the operator of any vehicle to willfully violate or fail to comply with the reasonable directions of any police officer. (1972 Code, § 9-113)

Municipal code references
Stop signs, yield signs, flashing signals, pedestrian control signs, traffic control signals generally: §§ 15-505--15-509.
15-110. **General requirements for traffic control signs, etc.** All traffic control signs, signals, markings, and devices shall conform to the latest revision of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*,\(^1\) published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and shall, so far as practicable, be uniform as to type and location throughout the city. This section shall not be construed as being mandatory but is merely directive. (1972 Code, § 9-114, modified)

15-111. **Unauthorized traffic control signs, etc.** No person shall place, maintain, or display upon or in view of any street, any unauthorized sign, signal, marking, or device which purports to be or is an imitation of or resembles an official traffic control sign, signal, marking, or device or railroad sign or signal, or which attempts to control the movement of traffic or parking of vehicles, or which hides from view or interferes with the effectiveness of any official traffic control sign, signal, marking, or device or any railroad sign or signal. (1972 Code, § 9-115)

15-112. **Presumption with respect to traffic control signs, etc.** When a traffic control sign, signal, marking, or device has been placed, the presumption shall be that it is official and that it has been lawfully placed by the proper city authority. (1972 Code, § 9-116)

15-113. **School safety patrols.** All motorists and pedestrians shall obey the directions or signals of school safety patrols when such patrols are assigned under the authority of the chief of police and are acting in accordance with instructions; provided, that such persons giving any order, signal, or direction shall at the time be wearing some insignia and/or using authorized flags for giving signals. (1972 Code, § 9-117)


15-115. **Clinging to vehicles in motion.** It shall be unlawful for any person traveling upon any bicycle, motorcycle, coaster, sled, roller skates, or any other vehicle to cling to, or attach himself or his vehicle to any other moving vehicle upon any street, alley, or other public way or place. (1972 Code, § 9-120)

\(^1\)This manual may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.
15-116. **Riding on outside of vehicles.** It shall be unlawful for any person to ride, or for the owner or operator of any motor vehicle being operated on a street, alley, or other public way or place, to permit any person to ride on any portion of such vehicle not designed or intended for the use of passengers. This section shall not apply to persons engaged in the necessary discharge of lawful duties nor to persons riding in the load-carrying space of trucks. (1972 Code, § 9-121)

15-117. **Backing vehicles.** The driver of a vehicle shall not back the same unless such movement can be made with reasonable safety and without interfering with other traffic. (1972 Code, § 9-122)

15-118. **Projections from the rear of vehicles.** Whenever the load or any projecting portion of any vehicle shall extend beyond the rear of the bed or body thereof, the operator shall display at the end of such load or projection, in such position as to be clearly visible from the rear of such vehicle, a red flag being not less than twelve (12) inches square. Between one-half (½) hour after sunset and one-half (½) hour before sunrise, there shall be displayed in place of the flag a red light plainly visible under normal atmospheric conditions at least two hundred (200) feet from the rear of such vehicle. (1972 Code, § 9-123)

15-119. **Causing unnecessary noise.** It shall be unlawful for any person to cause unnecessary noise by unnecessarily sounding the horn, "racing" the motor, or causing the "screeching" or "squealing" of the tires on any motor vehicle. (1972 Code, § 9-124)

15-120. **Vehicles and operators to be licensed.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a motor vehicle in violation of the "Tennessee Motor Vehicle Title and Registration Law" or the "Uniform Motor Vehicle Operators' and Chauffeurs' License Law." (1972 Code, § 9-125)

15-121. **Passing.** Except when overtaking and passing on the right is permitted, the driver of a vehicle passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction shall pass to the left thereof at a safe distance and shall not again drive to the right side of the street until safely clear of the overtaken vehicle. The driver of the overtaken vehicle shall give way to the right in favor of the overtaking vehicle on audible signal and shall not increase the speed of his vehicle until completely passed by the overtaking vehicle.

When the street is wide enough, the driver of a vehicle may overtake and pass upon the right of another vehicle which is making or about to make a left turn.

The driver of a vehicle may overtake and pass another vehicle proceeding in the same direction either upon the left or upon the right on a
street of sufficient width for four (4) or more lanes of moving traffic when such movement can be made in safety.

No person shall drive off the pavement or upon the shoulder of the street in overtaking or passing on the right. When any vehicle has stopped at a marked crosswalk or at an intersection to permit a pedestrian to cross the street, no operator of any other vehicle approaching from the rear shall overtake and pass such stopped vehicle.

No vehicle operator shall attempt to pass another vehicle proceeding in the same direction unless he can see that the way ahead is sufficiently clear and unobstructed to enable him to make the movement in safety. (1972 Code, § 9-126)

15-122. **Damaging pavements.** No person shall operate upon any street of the municipality any vehicle, motor propelled or otherwise, which by reason of its weight or the character of its wheels or track is likely to damage the surface or foundation of the street. (1972 Code, § 9-119)

15-123. **Bicycle riders, etc.** (1) Every person riding or operating a bicycle, motor cycle, or motor scooter shall be subject to the provisions of all traffic ordinances, rules, and regulations of the city applicable to the driver or operator of other vehicles except as to those provisions which by their nature can have no application to bicycles, motorcycles, or motor scooter.

(2) No person operating or riding a bicycle, motorcycle, or motor scooter shall ride other than upon or astride the permanent and regular seat attached thereto, nor shall the operator carry any other person upon such vehicle other than upon a firmly attached and regular seat thereon.

(3) No bicycle, motorcycle, or motor scooter shall be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed and equipped.

(4) No person operating a bicycle, motorcycle, or motor scooter shall carry any package, bundle, or article which prevents the rider from keeping both hands upon the handlebars.

(5) No person under the age of sixteen (16) years shall operate any motorcycle, motorbike, or motor scooter while any other person is a passenger upon said motor vehicle.

No person shall operate or ride upon any motorcycle, motorbike, or motor scooter unless such person is equipped with and wearing on the head a safety helmet with a secured chin strap and suspension lining, which said helmet shall conform to the type and design manufactured for the use of the operators and riders of such motor vehicles. (1972 Code, § 9-127)

15-124. **Operation of motor vehicles on parks and playgrounds prohibited.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate any motor driven vehicle of any kind upon any park, playground, or school-ground within the city. (Ord. #28, Aug. 1981)
15-201. **Authorized emergency vehicles defined.** Authorized emergency vehicles shall be fire department vehicles, police vehicles, and such ambulances and other emergency vehicles as are designated by the chief of police. (1972 Code, § 9-102)

15-202. **Operation of authorized emergency vehicles.**

(1) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, or when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, subject to the conditions herein stated.

(2) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of this title; proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down to ascertain that the intersection is clear; exceed the maximum speed limit and disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions so long as he does not endanger life or property.

(3) The exemptions herein granted for an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when the driver of any such vehicle while in motion sounds an audible signal by bell, siren, or exhaust whistle and when the vehicle is equipped with at least one (1) lighted lamp displaying a red light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred (500) feet to the front of such vehicle, except that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not be equipped with or display a red light visible from in front of the vehicle.

(4) The foregoing provisions shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his reckless disregard for the safety of others. (1972 Code, § 9-103)

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1 Municipal code reference

Operation of other vehicle upon the approach of emergency vehicles:

§ 15-501.
15-203. **Following emergency vehicles.** No driver of any vehicle shall follow any authorized emergency vehicle apparently travelling in response to an emergency call closer than five hundred (500) feet or drive or park such vehicle within the block where fire apparatus has stopped in answer to a fire alarm. (1972 Code, § 9-104)

15-204. **Running over fire hoses, etc.** It shall be unlawful for any person to drive over any hose lines or other equipment of the fire department except in obedience to the direction of a fireman or policeman. (1972 Code, § 9-105)
CHAPTER 3

SPEED LIMITS

SECTION
15-301. In general.
15-302. At intersections.
15-303. In school zones and near playgrounds.
15-304. In congested areas.

15-301. **In general.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate or drive a motor vehicle upon any highway or street at a rate of speed in excess of twenty-five (25) miles per hour except where official signs have been posted indicating other speed limits, in which cases the posted speed limit shall apply. (Ord. #29, Aug. 1981, modified)

15-302. **At intersections.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate or drive a motor vehicle through any intersection at a rate of speed in excess of fifteen (15) miles per hour unless such person is driving on a street regulated by traffic control signals or signs which require traffic to stop or yield on the intersecting streets. (1972 Code, § 9-202)

15-303. **In school zones and near playgrounds.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate or drive a motor vehicle through any school zone or near any playground at a rate of speed in excess of fifteen (15) miles per hour when official signs indicating such speed limit have been posted by authority of the municipality. This section shall not apply at times when children are not in the vicinity of a school and such posted signs have been covered by direction of the chief of police. (1972 Code, § 9-203)

15-304. **In congested areas.** It shall be unlawful for any person to operate or drive a motor vehicle through any congested area at a rate of speed in excess of any posted speed limit when such speed limit has been posted by authority of the municipality. (1972 Code, § 9-204)
CHAPTER 4

TURNING MOVEMENTS

SECTION

15-402. Right turns.
15-403. Left turns on two-way roadways.
15-404. Left turns on other than two-way roadways.

15-401. Generally. No person operating a motor vehicle shall make any turning movement which might affect any pedestrian or the operation of any other vehicle without first ascertaining that such movement can be made in safety and signaling his intention in accordance with the requirements of the state law.1 (1972 Code, § 9-301)

15-402. Right turns. Both the approach for a right turn and a right turn shall be made as close as practicable to the right hand curb or edge of the roadway. (1972 Code, § 9-302)

15-403. Left turns on two-way roadways. At any intersection where traffic is permitted to move in both directions on each roadway entering the intersection, an approach for a left turn shall be made in that portion of the right half of the roadway nearest the center line thereof and by passing to the right of the intersection of the center line of the two roadways. (1972 Code, § 9-303)

15-404. Left turns on other than two-way roadways. At any intersection where traffic is restricted to one direction on one or more of the roadways, the driver of a vehicle intending to turn left at any such intersection shall approach the intersection in the extreme left hand lane lawfully available to traffic moving in the direction of travel of such vehicle and after entering the intersection the left turn shall be made so as to leave the intersection, as nearly as practicable, in the left hand lane lawfully available to traffic moving in such direction upon the roadway being entered. (1972 Code, § 9-304)


1State law reference

Tennessee Code Annotated, § 55-8-143.
CHAPTER 5

STOPPING AND YIELDING

SECTION
15-502. When emerging from alleys, etc.
15-503. To prevent obstructing an intersection.
15-504. At "stop" signs.
15-505. At "yield" signs.

15-501. Upon approach of authorized emergency vehicles. Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle making use of audible and/or visual signals meeting the requirements of the laws of this state, or of a police vehicle properly and lawfully making use of an audible signal only, the driver of every other vehicle shall immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right hand edge of curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer. (1972 Code, § 9-401)

15-502. When emerging from alleys, etc. The drivers of all vehicles emerging from alleys, parking lots, driveways, or buildings shall stop such vehicles immediately prior to driving onto any sidewalk or street. They shall not proceed to drive onto the sidewalk or street until they can safely do so without colliding or interfering with approaching pedestrians or vehicles. (1972 Code, § 9-402)

15-503. To prevent obstructing an intersection. No driver shall enter any intersection or marked crosswalk unless there is sufficient space on the other side of such intersection or crosswalk to accommodate the vehicle he is operating without obstructing the passage of traffic in or on the intersecting street or crosswalk. This provision shall be effective notwithstanding any traffic control signal indication to proceed. (1972 Code, § 9-403)

15-504. At "stop" signs. The driver of a vehicle facing a "stop" sign shall bring his vehicle to a complete stop immediately before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection or, if there is no crosswalk, then immediately before entering the intersection, and shall remain standing until he can proceed through the intersection in safety. (1972 Code, § 9-405)

1 Municipal code reference
Special privileges of emergency vehicles: title 15, chapter 2.
15-505. At "yield" signs. The drivers of all vehicles shall yield the right of way to approaching vehicles before proceeding at all places where "yield" signs have been posted. (1972 Code, § 9-406)
CHAPTER 6

PARKING

SECTION

15-602. Where prohibited.
15-603. Presumption with respect to illegal parking.

15-601. Generally. No person shall leave any motor vehicle unattended on any street without first setting the brakes thereon, stopping the motor, removing the ignition key, and turning the front wheels of such vehicle toward the nearest curb or gutter of the street.

Except as hereinafter provided, every vehicle parked upon a street within this city shall be so parked that its right wheels are approximately parallel to and within eighteen (18) inches of the right edge or curb of the street. On one-way streets where the city has not placed signs prohibiting the same, vehicles may be permitted to park on the left side of the street, and in such cases the left wheels shall be required to be within eighteen (18) inches of the left edge or curb of the street.

Notwithstanding anything else in this code to the contrary, no person shall park or leave a vehicle parked on any public street or alley between the hours of 11:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M.

Furthermore, no person shall wash, grease, or work on any vehicle, except to make repairs necessitated by an emergency, while such vehicle is parked on a public street. (1972 Code, § 9-501, as amended by Ord. #166, Aug. 2006)

15-602. Where prohibited. No person shall park a vehicle in violation of any sign placed or erected by the state or city, nor:

(1) On a sidewalk;
(2) In front of a public or private driveway;
(3) Within an intersection or within fifteen (15) feet thereof;
(4) Within fifteen (15) feet of a fire hydrant;
(5) Within a pedestrian crosswalk;
(6) Within fifty (50) feet of a railroad crossing;
(7) Within twenty (20) feet of the driveway entrance to any fire station, and on the side of the street opposite the entrance to any fire station within seventy-five (75) feet of the entrance;
(8) Alongside or opposite any street excavation or obstruction when other traffic would be obstructed;
(9) On the roadway side of any vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street;
(10) Upon any bridge;
(11) Alongside any curb painted yellow or red by the city. (1972 Code, § 9-504)

15-603. Presumption with respect to illegal parking. When any unoccupied vehicle is found parked in violation of any provision of this chapter, there shall be a prima facie presumption that the registered owner of the vehicle is responsible for such illegal parking. (1972 Code, § 9-512)
CHAPTER 7
ENFORCEMENT

SECTION
15-701. Issuance of traffic citations.
15-702. Failure to obey citation.
15-703. Illegal parking.
15-704. Impoundment of vehicles.
15-705. Violation and penalty.
15-706. [Renumbered.]

15-701. **Issuance of traffic citations.** When a police officer halts a traffic violator other than for the purpose of giving a warning, and does not take such person into custody under arrest, he shall take the name, address, and operator's license number of said person, the license number of the motor vehicle involved, and such other pertinent information as may be necessary, and shall issue to him a written traffic citation containing a notice to answer to the charge against him in the city court at a specified time. The officer, upon receiving the written promise of the alleged violator to answer as specified in the citation, shall release such person from custody. It shall be unlawful for any alleged violator to give false or misleading information as to his name or address. (1972 Code, § 9-601)

15-702. **Failure to obey citation.** It shall be unlawful for any person to violate his written promise to appear in court after giving said promise to an officer upon the issuance of a traffic citation, regardless of the disposition of the charge for which the citation was originally issued. (1972 Code, § 9-602)

15-703. **Illegal parking.** Whenever any motor vehicle without a driver is found parked or stopped in violation of any of the restrictions imposed by this code, the officer finding such vehicle shall take its license number and may take any other information displayed on the vehicle which may identify its user, and shall conspicuously affix to such vehicle a citation for the driver and/or owner to answer for the violation within ten (10) days during the hours and at a place specified in the citation. (1972 Code, § 9-603, modified)

15-704. **Impoundment of vehicles.** Members of the police department are hereby authorized, when reasonably necessary to prevent obstruction of traffic, to remove from the streets and impound any vehicle whose operator is arrested,

\(^1\) State law reference
or any vehicle which is illegally parked, abandoned, or otherwise parked so as
to constitute an obstruction or hazard to normal traffic. Any vehicle left parked
on any street or alley for more than seventy-two (72) consecutive hours without
permission from the chief of police shall be presumed to have been abandoned
if the owner cannot be located after a reasonable investigation. Such an
impounded vehicle shall be stored until the owner claims it, gives satisfactory
evidence of ownership, and pays all applicable fines and costs. The fee for
impounding a vehicle shall be five dollars ($5.00) and a storage costs of one
dollar ($1.00) per day shall also be charged. (1972 Code, § 9-604)

15-705. Violation and penalty. Any violation of this title shall be a civil
offense punishable as follows: (1) Traffic citations. Traffic citations shall be
punishable by a civil penalty up to fifty dollars ($50.00) for each separate
offense.

(2) Parking citations. (a) Parking meter. If the offense is a parking
meter violation, the offender may, within thirty (30) days, have the
charge against him disposed of by paying to the city recorder a fine of
three dollars ($3.00) provided he waives his right to a judicial hearing.
If he appears and waives his right to a judicial hearing after thirty (30)
days but before a warrant for his arrest is issued, his fine shall be ten
dollars ($10.00).

(b) Other parking violations excluding handicapped parking. For other parking violations, excluding handicapped parking violations,
the offender may, within thirty (30) days, have the charge against him
disposed of by paying to the city recorder a fine of ten dollars ($10.00)
provided he waives his right to a judicial hearing. If he appears and
waives his right to a judicial hearing after thirty (30) days but before a
warrant is issued for his arrest, his civil penalty shall be twenty-five
dollars ($25.00).

(c) Handicapped parking. Parking in a handicapped parking
space shall be punished by a civil penalty of one hundred dollars
($100.00). (Ord. #66, May 1990, as deleted and replaced by Ord. #170,
Oct. 2006)

15-706. [Renumbered.] (as renumbered by Ord. #170, Oct. 2006)