



Municipal Technical Advisory Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

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Docket Book

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,

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Table of Contents

Docket Book	3
Maintaining the Docket	3
Docket Book and the Audit Process	3
Computerized Dockets	3
Software for Court Dockets.....	4

Docket Book

Reference Number: MTAS-320

Many court clerks use the term “docket” to refer to a variety of things. For the purposes of this content, the docket will refer to the permanent record of all cases brought before the court. In some cities the docket will be a large bound book; in others it may be computerized.

Maintaining the Docket

Reference Number: MTAS-321

The court may use bound docket books purchased from a vendor, and the book may have pre-printed docket numbers for each entry. Docket books without numbers also can be purchased. Pre-numbered docket books allow the court to order a new docket book with the first number beginning sequentially with the last number of the previous docket book.

Bound docket books require an alphabetical index of all defendants entered in the docket book.

Court clerks are required to keep a record of all judgments (dispositions) with each case numbered in sequential order (docket number). The disposition includes:

1. The date of the trial and any continuances;
2. The full name of the defendant;
3. The fine amount;
4. The court cost amount;
5. The name of the officer and/or prosecutor;
6. The disposition (plead guilty, found guilty, dismissed, etc.);
7. The citation number or warrant number if different from the docket number;
8. The receipt number of any payment; and
9. The actual offense (speeding, allowing animals to run at large, running a stop sign, etc.).

Note: These docket requirements are compiled from T.C.A. § 16-15-303, T.C.A. § 18-1-105, and regulations promulgated by the Division of Municipal Audit. See MTAS-323 for Computerized Dockets [1].

Docket Book and the Audit Process

Reference Number: MTAS-322

The docket book is an integral part of the municipal court audit process. The information included in the court docket should contain the original ticket number or warrant number and the receipt number for payments. The receipt for any payments should contain the ticket number or warrant number and the docket number. The original ticket or warrant should contain the docket number and the receipt number. This cross referencing of numbers helps ensure the integrity of the municipal court process (Internal Control and Compliance Manual for Tennessee Municipalities, Office of the Comptroller; Title 5, Chapter 15, §§ 13-28 (updated 6/30/10)).

Computerized Dockets

Reference Number: MTAS-323

Any information required to be kept as a public record by the court clerk may be maintained on a computer or computer storage media instead of in bound docket books provided the following standards are met:

1. The information must be available for public inspection unless it is confidential according to law;
2. Due care is taken to maintain the information as a public record during the time required by law for retention (dockets must be retained forever);

3. All data stored within the computer system shall be copied to computer storage media daily (computer disks, backup tapes, etc.), and newly created computer storage media more than one week old shall be stored at a location other than at the building where the original is maintained; and
4. The clerk can provide a paper copy of the information when needed or when requested by a member of the public. ^[1]

Computer programs allow for searches based on names, eliminating the need for alphabetical indexing of names.

[1] T.C.A. 10-7-121

Software for Court Dockets

Reference Number: MTAS-324

Court dockets can be developed using off-the-shelf database management software or spreadsheets. Commercial software also is available that meets all state court docket mandates.

Commercial software packages also prepare the Court Action Reports, including Failure to Appear notices. Some issue receipts as violators pay their fines. Commercial software also may prepare monthly litigation tax reports, department of revenue motor vehicle enforcement reports, and department of safety fines, fees and cost reports.

Links:

[1] <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/computerized-dockets>

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