



Municipal Technical Advisory Service
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

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Emergency Purchases (Sample)

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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Emergency Purchases (Sample)

Reference Number: MTAS-1732

Purpose

Emergency purchases are to be made by departments only when normal functions and operations of the department would be hampered by submitting a requisition in the regular manner, or when property, equipment, or life are endangered through unexpected circumstances and materials, services, etc., and are needed immediately.

Who Makes Emergency Purchases

Emergency purchases, either verbal or written, may be made directly by the using department without competitive bids, provided sufficient funds are available and necessary approvals have been secured.

Who Authorizes Emergency Purchases

The purchasing agent or the department head, if the purchasing agent is unavailable, may authorize an emergency purchase.

How to Make Emergency Purchases

After determining a true emergency exists, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Notify the purchasing department of the need and nature of the emergency. The department will give verbal approval and issue a purchase order number. This number will be put on the requisition referred to in number 4 below.
2. Using department must use sound judgment about prices when making emergency purchases of materials and supplies and for labor or equipment. Orders should be placed with vendors who have a good track record with the department.
3. Suppliers shall furnish sales tickets, delivery slips, invoices, etc., for the supplies or services rendered. Terms of the transactions, indicating price and other data, shall be shown.
4. As soon as the purchase is complete, on the same or following business day, the using department must:
 - Give the purchasing department a complete requisition with a description of the emergency and approval by the department head. "Confirming Emergency Purchase" must be marked plainly on the requisition, along with the purchase order number.
 - The sales ticket, delivery slips, invoices, and material receiving report confirming the purchase must be attached to the emergency requisition form.
 - The purchasing department will issue the vendor a purchase order marked "Confirmation."
5. If an emergency should occur during a time when the purchasing department normally is closed, the using department will follow the above procedure with the exception of the first step. The evidence of purchase, such as sales slip, counter receipt, delivery slip, invoice, etc., that the supplier normally furnishes, shall be attached to the completed and approved requisition form and be forwarded to the purchasing department, along with a material receiving report.
6. As soon as possible, the person authorizing the emergency purchase must prepare a report to the chief executive officer and the governing body specifying the amount paid, the item(s) purchased, from whom the purchase(s) was made, and the nature of the emergency.

General Information

Emergency purchases are costly and should be kept to a minimum. Avoiding emergency orders will save the city money.

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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