



Refuse Collection and Disposal

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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Reference Number: MTAS-822

Counties are authorized to provide refuse collection and disposal on a countywide basis. A county agency may be given this function, or contracts for the service may be made with "any municipality, any utility or other service district, any private organization, or any combination of such entities." Joint action with other counties and municipalities also is authorized.

As with fire protection, districts must be established where refuse collection and disposal service are to be provided. The full costs must be paid from a tax levy within the district or charges levied on service recipients or both. A countywide property tax levy may be used "only if all persons in the county are to be equally served." This is specifically prohibited if any city or special district within the county provides collection and disposal services to its residents. T.C.A. §§ 5-19-101–116.

Under the 1991 Solid Waste Management Act, counties are required to provide residents a collection system that consists, at a minimum, of convenience centers with certified operators and attendants. T.C.A. § 68-211-851.

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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