



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

May 01, 2025

Workers' Compensation

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county 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 county 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 CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Workers' Compensation

Reference Number: CTAS-180

The Tennessee Workers' Compensation Law is a no-fault statutory scheme for compensating employees who suffer injuries in the scope of their employment.^[1] In private industry, on-the-job injuries are governed by these laws, but counties are not covered by the Workers' compensation laws unless they choose to be covered.^[2] A county's decision to come under these laws is effective 30 days after the county files written notice of exercising this option with the Workers' Compensation Division of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The county may cancel at any time by giving the same type of written notice. A county, through its legislative body, can choose to cover only designated departments and may also cancel coverage on a selective basis.

Elected officials do not fall within the definition of "employee" and therefore are not covered under the Workers' Compensation Law.^[3] While volunteers also generally are not considered covered employees, volunteer firefighters and rescue personnel are considered covered employees under a special provision in the law.^[4]

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Workers' Compensation Division is responsible for the administration of the state Workers' compensation program. From the Labor and Workforce Development Website the employer can download all of the necessary forms used in connection with Workers' compensation claims, as well as other useful information about the program. To request assistance by telephone, call 1 (800) 332-2667 or (615) 532-4812.

[1] T.C.A. § 50-6-101 *et seq.*

[2] T.C.A. § 50-6-106.

[3] Op. Tenn. Att'y Gen. 82-381 (July 29, 1982).

[4] T.C.A. § 50-6-401(a); Op. Tenn. Att'y Gen. 90-045 (March 28, 1990).

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