



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

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Chapter X - Law Enforcement

Dear Reader:

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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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Chapter X - Law Enforcement

Civil Service Merit System

Private Acts of 1972 Chapter 332

SECTION 1. All counties having a population of not less than sixty-three thousand and seven hundred (63,700) nor more than sixty-three thousand eight hundred (63,800) inhabitants according to U. S. Census of population of 1970 or any subsequent U. S. Census of population may establish merit system for employees of the office of sheriff of such counties.

SECTION 2. The merit system to which this Act shall apply shall be the classified service which includes all positions and salaried employees in the office of sheriff except the sheriff, his chief deputy, jail cook, bookkeeper and his personal secretary, unless such secretary is deputized as a deputy sheriff.

SECTION 3. There is hereby created a merit service board composed of five (5) members selected by the Quarterly County Court to administer the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 4. The terms of the members shall be three (3) years; provided, however, that the initial appointment shall be as follows:

- (a) Two (2) members for one (1) year.
- (b) Two (2) members for two (2) years.
- (c) One (1) member for three (3) years.

All appointments thereafter shall be for three-year terms. A member shall be eligible to reappointment.

SECTION 5. All members of the board must be over twenty-one (21) years of age; of good moral character; a citizen of the United States and the State of Tennessee and must reside in the county.

SECTION 6. The members of the board shall receive such compensation as may be determined by the Quarterly County Court.

SECTION 7. The board shall designate one of its members to serve as chairman of the board. The sheriff shall appoint one of his employees to be personnel officer. The personnel officer shall be the keeper of the personnel records of employees under the provisions of this Act and shall serve as secretary of the merit service board.

SECTION 8. The merit service board as a body shall have the power:

- (a) To adopt and amend rules and regulations for the administration of this Act.
- (b) To make investigations concerning the enforcement and effect of this Act and to require observance of the rules and regulations.
- (c) To hear and determine appeals and complaints respecting the administration of this Act.
- (d) To establish and maintain a roster of all employees of the classified service in the office of the sheriff showing their positions, rank, compensation and places of residence.
- (e) To ascertain and record the duties and responsibilities pertaining to all positions in the classified service and to classify such positions in the manner hereinafter provided.
- (f) Except as otherwise provided in this Act to formulate and hold competitive tests to determine the qualifications of persons who seek employment in any position, and as a result of such tests, establish employment lists of eligibles for the various positions.
- (g) To establish records of the performance and a system of service ratings to be used to determine promotions, the order of lay-offs or reduction of force and the order or re-employment to assist in the determination of dismissal for cause and for other purposes.
- (h) To provide for part-time and temporary positions and appointments and to establish rules defining and governing such positions; provided, however, that no temporary position shall be more than three (3) months.
- (i) To keep any other records as may be necessary for the administration of this Act.

SECTION 9. The board shall, as soon as practical after this Act becomes operative, adopt a classification plan and make rules and regulations for its administration. The classification plan shall state for each class of positions, a class title, and the duties, authorities, responsibilities and character of work required

for each position. Each class of positions may be subdivided, and classes may be grouped and ranked in such manner as is deemed appropriate. The board shall determine the requirements of each position and class thereof as to education, experience, capabilities, knowledge and skill. As far as practical, the probable lines of promotion to and from the classes of position shall be indicated.

SECTION 10. The board may, upon request and advice of the sheriff, create new positions or combine, alter or abolish existing positions in such manner as the board, acting with the advice of the sheriff, deems necessary for the effective operation of the office of sheriff; provided, however, that no position in the classified service shall be abolished except upon approval of the board acting in good faith upon the advice of the sheriff.

SECTION 11. The board shall formulate reasonable rules governing the granting of leaves of absence to members of the classified service in good standing. The board shall request the recommendation of the sheriff upon any request of leave of absence before acting thereon and shall be guided by the requirements of the adequate law enforcement and operational efficiency of the office of sheriff when considering any such request for a leave.

Any person coming under the classified service who shall hereafter be inducted into the armed forces of the United States of America, or who shall hereafter enter said service voluntarily, by enlistment or otherwise in a time of war or other national emergency shall, upon application to the sheriff, receive a military leave of absence for the duration of the period of service required. Such employee shall retain all rights for seniority and shall be entitled to re-employment in the same capacity and position which he held at the time of entering said military service. The application for such rein-statement in position shall be made by or on behalf of such employee within three (3) months after termination of active service in the armed forces.

SECTION 12. The sheriff shall inform the board by periodic reports of the employment needs of the office of sheriff and the board shall, as often as required by the needs of the office of sheriff, hold tests for the purpose of establishing lists of eligibles for the various positions in the classified service. Such tests shall be public, competitive and open to all persons who may be lawfully appointed under the rules promulgated by the board and existing prior to the announcement of the examination. Such rules shall set limitations as to residence, age, health, habits, moral character and other necessary pre-requisites for the performance of the duties of the position for which examination is designated and such rules shall not be less than those provided in Section 38-1104 of the Tennessee Code Annotated.

Promotion tests shall be public, competitive and free to all persons examined and appointed under the provisions of this Act and who have held a classified position with the office of sheriff for at least one (1) year period of time. All tests shall be practical and shall consist only of subjects which will fairly determine the capacity of the person examined to perform the duties of the position in which the appointment is to be made. Tests may include examination for physical fitness and manual skill. No questions in any test shall relate to religious or political opinions or affiliations. The eligibles shall take rank upon a list which shall be compiled for each position, in the order of their relative excellence as determined by the tests without reference to the priority of the time from when the tests are given. No lists of eligible persons shall be valid after one (1) year except, however, the merit service board may extend an eligible period for not more than one (1) year. Notice of the time, place and general scope of each test and the duties, pay and experience required for all positions for which the test is to be held, shall be given by; the board to each applicant at least one (1) week preceding the test. The notice must be in writing and addressed to the last known address supplied by the applicant. Notice of promotional tests shall be given as the board may prescribe.

SECTION 13. Whenever a vacancy occurs in any position in the classified section of the office of sheriff, the sheriff shall make requisition to the board for the names and addresses of all persons eligible for appointment thereto. The board shall certify the names of all persons on the eligible list for position wherein the vacancy exists within thirty (30) days of the requisition to the board. The sheriff thereupon shall investigate each of the five (5) highest on the list of eligibles. In the event the investigations result in none of the five (5) eligible persons being acceptable to the sheriff, he shall investigate the next five (5) eligibles on the list, one after another until one of the eligibles investigated is acceptable to the sheriff. The sheriff shall appoint such person to the position wherein the vacancy exists and shall notify the board of his action. If the merit service board fails to provide a list, then the sheriff may make appointments to vacancies after having notified the board of his action or his intentions so to do.

No appointment or promotion for any position in the classified service, shall be deemed complete until after the expiration of six (6) months probationary service during which time the sheriff may determine the effectiveness of the employee. If in his judgment the employee does not meet the standards, he may terminate the employment of any person certified and appointed when he deems it to be in the best interest of the service. Whenever a position of the classified service is filled by promotion and the services

of the person promoted are terminated by the sheriff during the probationary period, such person shall forthwith be returned to duty in the previous position held by him in the classified service unless such person's conduct during the probationary period had given grounds for dismissal for cause under this Act. Any person dismissed during the probationary period shall not be eligible to a hearing before the board.

A person who is certified to the sheriff and does not report for duty at the time so designated and who does not explain such failure to report in writing within five (5) days, may be rejected by the sheriff who shall forthwith notify the board of the action taken and the reason therefor, and the person's name will then be removed from the eligible list.

SECTION 14. All employees in the classified service may be transferred from one position to another in the same class, and not otherwise. Transfers may be instituted only by the sheriff and shall be permitted only with the consent of the sheriff.

SECTION 15. The practice and procedure of the board with respect to any investigation by the board as authorized by this Act, shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations to be established by the board. Such rules and regulations shall provide for a reasonable notice to all persons affected by any order which the board may issue upon completion of such investigation. Such persons shall have the opportunity to be heard either in person or by counsel, and to introduce testimony in his behalf at a public hearing which shall be held for that purpose.

The board, when conducting any investigations or hearings authorized by this Act, shall have the power to administer oaths, take depositions, issue subpoenas, compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, accounts, papers, records, documents and testimony. In case of the obedience of any person to comply with the orders of the board or of a subpoena issued by the board or any of its members, or on the refusal of a witness to testify on any matter on which he may be lawfully interrogated, the judge in any court of record within the county on application of any member of the board, shall compel obedience by proceedings as for contempt. The sheriff or his legal deputy shall serve such subpoenas as issued by the board.

SECTION 16. The sheriff shall give an immediate report in writing of all appointments, reinstatements, vacancies, absences or other matter effecting the status of any member of the classified service or the performance of the duties of such members. The report shall be in the manner and form prescribed by the board.

The sheriff may suspend any employee for not more than ten (10) days for cause and there shall be no right of appeal for any suspension thereof. Provided, however, the sheriff shall not have the authority to suspend any employee for more than one suspension of ten (10) days within any given six (6) month period of time without a right of appeal. If the sheriff shall suspend any employee for a period longer than ten (10) days, the suspended employee shall be notified in writing of the charges which caused his suspension. He shall thereafter have ten (10) days to request a hearing before the merit service board, and upon his request the board shall set a hearing not more than thirty (30) days from the date of the receipt of his request for a hearing.

SECTION 17. The sheriff shall have the authority to dismiss any employee for ordinary cause with a right of appeal to the board assured the employee. The dismissed employee shall be notified in writing of the causes for dismissal. He shall have ten (10) days to request a hearing before the board and upon his request the council shall set a hearing not more than thirty (30) days from the date of the receipt of his request. The rules of procedure for the conduct of any investigation by the merit service board shall apply to this hearing. Upon a finding by the board that the sheriff has not complied with the procedures of board, the board may order the employee to be reinstated.

SECTION 18. No. employee holding a position in the classified service shall take an active part in any political campaign while on duty nor under any circumstance shall any employee of the office of sheriff solicit money for political campaigns or in any way use his position as a deputy sheriff so as to reflect his personal political feelings as those of the office of sheriff or to use his position as deputy sheriff to exert any pressure on any one person or group of people to sway that person's or persons' political views. Neither an employee while on duty nor any officer while in uniform shall display any political advertising or paraphernalia on his person or on his automobile. No employee of the office of sheriff shall make any public endorsement of any candidate in any campaign for elected office. However, nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit or prevent any such employee from becoming or continuing to be a member of a political club or organization and enjoying all the rights and privileges of such membership or from attending any political meetings, while not on duty, or in the course of his official business, nor shall he be denied from enjoying any freedom from interference in the casting of his vote. Any person violating the provisions of this Section shall be dismissed from the service of the office of the sheriff.

SECTION 19. The sheriff shall not require any employee in the classified service to participate in any

political activity as a condition of employment, continuation of employment, or promotion. If, upon an investigation by the board and its determination that such actions have taken place, the board shall issue an order to the sheriff to cease and desist such activity. If the sheriff fails to comply or persists in the activity, the council may apply to any court of record in the county for a citation of contempt.

SECTION 20. If any provision of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not effect other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provision of this Act are declared to [sic] severable.

SECTION 21. All laws or parts of laws in conflict with the provisions or [sic] this Act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 22. This Act shall become effective as to any county to which it may apply when the same shall have been approved by the Quarterly County Court of such county by vote of not less than two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the members thereof, such approval to be made by said Quarterly County Court within ninety (90) days after the sine die adjournment of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee for the year 1972, the public welfare requiring it becoming effective at the time. Its approval or non-approval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the Quarterly County Court and certified by him to the Secretary of State.

SECTION 23. For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this Act, as provided in Section 22, it shall be effective on becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes it shall become effective September 1, 1972 upon being approved as provided in Section 22.

PASSED: March 22, 1972.

Offenses

Refuse Dumping

Private Acts of 1970 Chapter 216

SECTION 1. It is unlawful for any person to dump any garbage, trash, animals, waste, or refuse of any nature into the Little River or the Little Tennessee River or their tributaries in Blount County.

SECTION 2. Violation of this Act shall be punishable, upon conviction thereof, by a fine of not less than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500) or by imprisonment in the County Jail or Workhouse, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

SECTION 3. This Act shall be enforced by all state and local law enforcement officers having jurisdiction in Blount County.

SECTION 4. This Act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote at the Quarterly County Court of Blount County. Its approval or non-approval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the Court and certified by him to the Secretary of State.

SECTION 5. For the purpose of approving this Act as provided in Section 4, it shall take effect on becoming a law, but the other provisions of the Act shall be effective only upon being so approved.

PASSED: February 3, 1970

Law Enforcement - Historical Notes

Jails and Prisoners

The following act once affected jails and prisoners in Blount County, but is no longer operative.

1. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 124, authorized the Blount County Court, if they deemed it appropriate, to pay James Glass, the former jailor of that county, the sum of \$130.00 which had been advanced by him for the recapture and surrender of two felons by the name of Estep who had escaped from the Blount County jail.

Militia

Those acts once affecting Blount County, which related to the militia and to other law enforcement agencies other than the sheriff, are mentioned below in chronological order. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1803, Chapter 1, set the date for the annual drill of the twelfth regiment, the county militia of Blount County, on the second Thursday in October of each year.

2. Acts of 1815, Chapter 119, was a general militia law for the state, and it specified that the Blount County militia would form the twelfth regiment.
3. Public Acts of 1819, Chapter 68, revised and amended the militia laws of the state. The militia of Blount County composed the thirty third regiment of the third brigade and held regimental musters on the fourth Saturday of October.
4. Private Acts of 1825, Chapter 175, authorized the citizens in Cade's Cove to form a company of militia, which would be excused from attending battalion and general musters of the Blount County militia for a period of two years, beginning January, 1826. This act was amended by Private Acts of 1827, Chapter 122, to excuse indefinitely the Cade's Cove militia company from attending musters.
5. Public Acts of 1825, Chapter 69, revised and amended the militia laws of the state. The militia of Blount County composed the twelfth regiment and held a regimental muster on the third Thursday of October as a member of the third brigade.
6. Private Acts of 1831, Chapter 269, ended the attendance of the East Tennessee Highlanders in Blount County from regimental and battalion musters and court martials.
7. Public Acts of 1835-36, Chapter 21, divided the militia of the state into companies, battalion, regiments, brigades and divisions. The militia of Blount County composed the twentieth and twenty first regiment.
8. Acts of 1837-38, Chapter 157, amended the militia laws of the state. Blount and Knox counties composed the fifth brigade, while the date for the annual militia drill was set on the Tuesday and Wednesday following the first Friday and Saturday in September of each year for the militia of Blount County.
9. Acts of 1839-40, Chapter 56, revised and amended the militia laws of the state. The militia of Blount County composed the twentieth and twenty-first regiments and was a member of the fifth brigade.
10. Acts of 1845-46, Chapter 142, authorized Montgomery McTeer to collect the public arms which were distributed to the East Tennessee Highlanders in Blount County, and to return and deposit said public arms with the proper authorities at Knoxville.
11. Public Acts of 1861, Chapter 1, revised the militia laws of the state. The militia of Blount County composed the twentieth and twenty-first regiments which were part of the fifth brigade.

Offenses

The following is a listing of acts which once had some effect upon offenses in Blount County, but which are no longer operative. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 589, relative to the possession, storage, use, manufacture and sale of pyrotechnics, was repealed by Private Acts of 2018, Chapter 53.

Sheriff

The following acts have no current effect but are included here for reference purposes since they once applied to the Blount County Sheriff's Office. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 25, provided that the sheriff of Blount County was to receive an annual salary of at least \$2,500, but after filing with the county court clerk a semi-annual statement of all the fees received by his office, he could retain any fees in excess of his salary. This act was first amended by Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 768, to provide that the sheriff could appoint four deputies, who were to be full-time employees. The first and second deputies were to be paid an annual salary of \$600 plus all the fees they collected, while the third and fourth deputies were to receive \$300 per year in addition to fees. Two years later, the 1937 amendment was itself amended by Private Acts of 1939, Chapter 331, to provide that all four deputies appointed by the Blount County Sheriff as provided above, were to be paid \$100 per month in addition to all their fees. Private Acts of 1947, Chapter 295, amended the 1925 act by providing that the sheriff could appoint six full-time deputies. The chief deputy was to be paid a monthly salary of \$200 in addition to all fees, while the other five deputies were to receive \$150 monthly in addition to fees. All of these acts were repealed by Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 378.
2. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 730, provided that all workhouse bond was to be received and collected by the criminal court clerk. This was amended by Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 720, which provided that every workhouse bond had to contain an agreement to pay a 15% attorney's

fee for its collection.

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