



March 31, 2025

Motor Vehicle Registration Records

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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Reference Number: CTAS-1171

Access to motor vehicle registration records held by the Department of Safety, the Department of Revenue, or in the office of the county clerk when acting as an agent of those departments is restricted by both state and federal law. The federal Drivers Privacy Protection Act places restrictions on access to these records.^[1] In addition, in 1996, our state legislature adopted the Uniform Motor Vehicle Records Disclosure Act that closely parallels the language of the federal act.^[2] Under the provisions of these laws, personal information obtained by those government offices in connection with a motor vehicle record can not be disclosed except for specific purposes to certain authorized individuals or with the consent of the driver.^[3] Personal information is defined to include information that identifies a person, including an individual's photograph, computerized image, social security number, driver identification number, name, address, telephone number, and medical or disability information.^[4] Use of the information is generally allowed for governmental agencies in carrying out their functions.^[5] Additionally, the statutes include about a dozen other authorized uses whereby certain private parties have rights to access the records for those specified purposes.^[6] If a county clerk is presented with a request for personal information from motor vehicle records from a private citizen or a company, he or she should compare the request to the restrictions and authorizations found in T.C.A. §§ 55-25-103 through 55-25-112 and 18 U.S.C. § 2721 through 18 U.S.C. § 2725 to determine whether the release of such information is lawful. The Tennessee Department of Safety, Division of Title and Registration may be able to provide county clerks with further guidance regarding these records if necessary.

[1] 18 U.S.C. § 2721 through § 2725.

[2] T.C.A. §§ 55-25-101, *et seq.*

[3] T.C.A. §§ 55-25-104 through 55-25-107 and 18 U.S.C.A. § 2721.

[4] T.C.A. § 55-25-103(6).

[5] 18 U.S.C. § 2721(b)(1) and T.C.A. § 55-25-107.

[6] 18 U.S.C. § 2721 and T.C.A. § 55-25-105 through 107.

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