



March 10, 2025

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# Animal Control Records

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Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website ([ctas.tennessee.edu](http://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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# Animal Control Records

Reference Number: CTAS-2064

**Animal Control Records.** The records included in this schedule are only those specific to a county operation related to animal control. Not all counties provide such services. Records that may be kept in the same format by several county offices (such as employment records, purchasing records, etc.) will be found listed under topical retention schedules elsewhere in this manual. If you have records in your office that are not listed in this schedule by name, check the descriptions of the records to see if we may have called it by a different term. If you still cannot locate any entry relative to the record, contact us at the County Technical Assistance Service for guidance in determining the proper disposition of the record and so that we can make note of that record’s existence to include it in future revisions of this manual.

## Retention Schedule for the Animal Control Records

Description of Record	Retention Period	Legal Authority/Rationale
<b>17-001. Activity Reports</b> —Monthly reports showing the activity of the animal control operations.	Retain two years, unless there is no annual report. If no annual report, retain as permanent record.	Keep to aid in planning.
<b>17-002. Adoption Contracts</b> —May include agreement to have animal spayed/neutered when it is 6 months old.	Retain four years.	Keep to show proof of ownership/patterns of behavior on part of animal or owners.
<b>17-003. Annual Reports</b> —Annual reports showing the activity of the animal control operations.	Retain seven years.	Keep in case of need as evidence in litigation and for planning purposes.
<b>17-004. Bite Reports</b> —Documents investigations of dog bites.	Retain four years.	Retention period based on likely time of complaint or legal action.
<b>17-005. Complaints, Record of</b> —May contain date; time of complaint; complainant’s name, address and telephone number; owner’s name and address; animal’s license number and details of problem.	Retain four years or until resolution of any litigation whichever is later.	Record may be used in litigation. Retention period based on statute of limitations for actions for injuries to personal property plus one year ( T.C.A. § 28-3-105).
<b>17-006. Controlled Substances, Log of</b>	Retain three years.	TN Admin. Rule 1730-4-.09.
<b>17-007. Dispatching Logs</b>	Retain four years, unless legal action is pending. *Retain three years.	Retention period based on likely time of complaint or legal action.
<b>17-008. Euthanasia Report</b> —Must be kept for each animal euthanized; includes date, estimated age, breed, weight, sex, amount of euthanasia solution administered, and description of verification of death.	May want to retain four years if four year retention period adopted for other animal control records.	TN Admin. Rule 1730-4-.09.
<b>17-009. Field Reports (Daily)</b> —Report of officer’s daily activities.	Retain one year.	Used to compile activity reports.
<b>17-010. Impound Log</b> —Log of all animals brought into the animal shelter and whether animal was adopted or euthanized.	Retain four years.	Keep as part of history of animals and owners and to track activity at shelter. Can be useful in returning lost animals to owners.
<b>17-011. Rabies Certificate</b> —Rabies vaccination is required by T.C.A. § 68-8-104. Certificates are forwarded to animal control by veterinarians.	Retain four years.	Keep to provide proof of vaccination and to facilitate return of lost animals to owners. Rabies vaccine lasts three years.
<b>17-012. Return to Owner, Record of</b>	Retain four years.	Keep to prove ownership of

**Retention Schedule for the Animal Control Records**

<b>Description of Record</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Legal Authority/Rationale</b>
<p><b>17-013. Spay/Neuter Deposit, Record of—</b>                      Deposit is required by T.C.A. 44-17-503 for every animal not already spayed or neutered that is adopted from an animal shelter.</p>	<p>Retain four years.</p>	<p>animal and assign liability to owner if the animal is ever in violation of ordinances or statutes.                       Keep as part of history of animals and owners.</p>
<p><b>17-014. Surrender of Animal, Record of</b></p>	<p>Retain four years.</p>	<p>Keep to defend against liability for taking animal. Based on statute of limitations for offenses against property plus one year.</p>

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**Source URL:** <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/eli/animal-control-records>