



March 10, 2025

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# Fire Department 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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# Fire Department Records

Reference Number: CTAS-2065

**Fire Department Records.** The records included in this schedule are only those specific to county fire departments and related offices. 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 County Fire Department

Description of Record	Retention Period	Legal Authority/Rationale
<b>18-001. Arson Investigation Reports</b>	Retain 30 years or until the convicted perpetrator is released from prison, whichever is longer.	Keep for use if there is a new trial.
<b>18-002. Bloodborne Pathogens/ Infectious Material Standard</b>		
Protects employees who may be occupationally exposed to blood or other infectious materials.		
•Written exposure plan.	No retention period specified. Must be available to workers and kept current.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1030(c).
•Medical records.	*Retain for duration of employment plus 30 years.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1020 and 1910.1030(h).
•Training records.	*Retain three years.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1030(h).
•Employee exposure records.	*Retain 30 years.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1020 and 1919.1030(h).
<b>18-003. Burn Permits</b> —Record of permission granted for open burning within the city limits.	Retain two years unless issued in conjunction with a building permit, in which case, retain until certificate of occupancy is granted.	General recommendation is based on statute of limitations for malicious burning plus one year. Recommendation for burn permits issued with building permits based on the increased likelihood of a lawsuit against the city before certificate of occupancy is granted. Keep to track history of property, loss claims, repeats. Retention term based on statutes of limitations for foreseeable causes of action.
<b>18-004. Fire Incident Reports</b>	Retain five years.	

**Retention Schedule for the County Fire Department**

Description of Record	Retention Period	Legal Authority/Rationale
<b>18-005. Fire Safety Inspection and Similar Reports</b> —Reports made by the Tennessee Department of Insurance, Division of Fire Prevention, or local fire department showing date, name of inspector, location inspected, etc.	Retain current inspection report until a new inspection report is received, as a minimum. Retaining three years is recommended.	Keep for enforcement purposes. Keeping one generation back allows the department to show a history of inspection (T.C.A. § 68-120-101(b)(3)(A)).
<b>18-006. Firefighter Annual Certification of Fitness to Perform Job Functions</b>	*Retain until next certification completed to comply with OSHA.	Required by OSHA. 29 CFR 1910.156(b)(2) and 29 CFR 1910.135(m). Department of Labor can request information going three years back. Retention allows the fire department to show a history of testing and compliance.
<b>18-007. Firefighter Annual Facemask Fit Test Records</b>	Retaining three years is recommended.	Required by OSHA. 29 CFR 1910.156(f) and 29 CFR 1910.135(m). Department of Labor can request information going three years back. Retention allows the fire department to show a history of testing and compliance.
<b>18-008. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)</b> •Employers must have MSDS on file for each hazardous chemical they use and ensure copies are readily accessible to employees in their work area.	No specific time— must be maintained in a current fashion.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1020(d)(1)(ii) (B).
•Employer must keep records of chemicals used, where they were used, when they were used and for how long.	*Retain for 30 years.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1020(d)(1)(ii) (B).
<b>18-009. Physical/Medical Records</b> —Complete and accurate records of all medical examinations required by OSHA law.	*Retain for duration of employment plus 30 years unless specific OSHA standard provides a different time period.	Occupational Safety and Health Act 29 CFR 1910.1020(d).
<b>18-010. Radio and Telephone Logs</b> — dispatching and telephone communications with outside agencies.	Retain five years.	Keep for use in defense of lawsuits. Retention term based on statutes of limitations for foreseeable causes of action. Fair Labor Standards Act 29 CFR 516.6.
<b>18-011. Time Worked Records</b> —All basic time and earnings cards or sheets and work production sheets of individuals where all or part of the employee’s earnings are determined.	*Retain two years.	Equal Pay Act 29 CFR 1620.32.
<b>18-012. Training Records</b>	Retain for duration of employment plus three years.	Proof of training for ISO and OSHA.
<b>18-013. Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Records</b>	Retain five years or life of vehicle or equipment, whichever is longer.	Determination of replacement, proof of maintenance.

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