



March 10, 2025

Measuring to Enforce Distance Rules

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-360

The Tennessee Supreme Court, in Jones v. Sullivan County Beer Board, 292 S.W.2d 185 (Tenn. 1956), held that the exclusive method for measuring distance requirements between beer establishments and schools, churches and other places of public gathering is the straight-line method, unless a different method is prescribed by statute. There is no statute in Tennessee prescribing a method for such measurements. The straight-line method of measuring requires that the distance be measured in a straight line between the properties, at their nearest points, rather than by driving distance or other method. The measurement is made from building to building with respect to distance, because T.C.A. § 57-5-105(b)(1) requires measurement from the "place of gathering," which would be the building. Ewin v. Richardson, 399 S.W.2d 318 (Tenn. 1966). According to the Attorney General, the measurement must be taken from the nearest portion of the entire building, and not just from the nearest portion of a structurally distinct portion of that building that houses the business engaged in the sale of beer. Attorney General Opinion 05-144 (9/27/05). A distance rule will be enforced even when the church, school, or other place of public gathering is located across the state line. Y & M v. Beer Board of Johnson County, 679 S.W.2d 446 (Tenn. 1984) .

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