



November 22, 2024

Ethics Policies for Utilities

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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Ethics Policies for Utilities	3
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Reference Number: CTAS-518

Utility districts are considered separate governmental entities to be governed by ethical standards established by the board of commissioners of the utility district in conformity with T.C.A. § 8-17-105(b). T.C.A. § 8-17-102(c). Water, wastewater and gas authorities created by a private act or under the general law are considered separate governmental entities and shall be governed by ethical standards established by the governing board of the water, wastewater or gas authority in conformity with T.C.A. § 8-17-105(b). The Tennessee Association of Utility Districts (TAUD) must prepare a model of ethical standards for officials and employees of water, wastewater and gas authorities which must be submitted to the Utility Management Review Board for its approval, and the model must be approved by the board before it can be adopted by any water, wastewater or gas authority. T.C.A. § 8-17-105. After the board approves the model, it must be filed with the state ethics commission. The governing body of a water, wastewater or gas authority or utility district must adopt either the approved TAUD model of ethical standards or standards which are more stringent than the TAUD model. If a water, wastewater or gas authority or a utility district adopts ethical standards which are different from and more stringent than the TAUD model, those standards must be submitted to the board for a determination that the standards are more stringent than the TAUD model. Any water, wastewater or gas authority or any utility district that adopts the TAUD model is not required to file its ethical standards with the commission but must notify the commission in writing that the TAUD model was adopted and the date of adoption. Any water, wastewater or gas authority or any utility district which does not adopt the TAUD model of ethical standards or ethical standards more stringent than the TAUD model will be governed by the ethical standards established by the county legislative body of the county in which the water, wastewater or gas authority or the utility district has the largest number of customers.

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