



March 12, 2025

---

# Debris Removal and Weed Control

---

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,

The University of Tennessee  
County Technical Assistance Service  
226 Anne Dallas Dudley Boulevard, Suite 400  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
615.532.3555 phone  
615.532.3699 fax  
[www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)

Table of Contents

<b>Debris Removal and Weed Control .....</b>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

# Debris Removal and Weed Control

Reference Number: CTAS-571

Counties are granted permissive authority regarding the removal of overgrown vegetation, accumulated debris, and vacant dilapidated buildings or structures in the county. Owner-occupied residences are not included, except in certain counties designated by narrow population class. T.C.A. § 5-1-115. Owners of the property are to be provided with notice to remedy the situation before the county may act. Counties are granted a lien on the property for the cost of remedying or removing the situation. This statute's enforcement mechanisms include the placing of lien on the property to reimburse the county for the cost of removing the garbage, litter or refuse and imposing a monetary penalty enforceable in general sessions court. T.C.A. § 5-1-121.

Additionally, counties are authorized to adopt regulations for litter control under T.C.A. § 39-14-508. The regulations promulgated by a county pursuant to this statute may require property owners to conform their property to the regulations by removal of garbage, litter, refuse or rubbish. The statute requires the county to send a statement to the owner itemizing the cost of the removal and provides that the statement shall constitute a lien upon the property if the owner fails to reimburse the county for the cost of the removal within sixty (60) days, sets out the priority of the lien when filed, and specifies that the lien shall be filed with the register of deeds of the county in which the property lies. The full resolution, or the caption and a complete summary of the resolution, must be published after its final passage in a newspaper of general circulation in the county and the resolution cannot take effect until it is published.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/eli/debris-removal-and-weed-control>