



March 12, 2025

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# Animal Control

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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,

The University of Tennessee  
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Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
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# Animal Control

Reference Number: CTAS-573

The county legislative body, by resolution, may "license and regulate dogs and cats, establish and operate shelters and other animal control facilities, and regulate, capture, impound and dispose of stray dogs, stray cats and other stray animals." T.C.A. § 5-1-120.

It is unlawful to own, keep or harbor a dog or cat six months old or older that has not been vaccinated for rabies by or under the supervision of a veterinarian. Counties and municipalities are authorized to adopt local resolutions or ordinances to require registration of dogs or cats in their jurisdiction. Any such local laws must include methods for collecting registration fees and must require expenditure of the funds solely to establish and maintain a rabies control program, to conduct animal control activities, to ensure that dogs and cats are properly vaccinated and that biting animals or rabies suspects are observed or confined in accordance with state law and regulations. If the local law meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of the state law, the local law, not the state law, will apply in that jurisdiction. T.C.A. § 68-8-101, *et seq.*

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