



November 07, 2024

Enforcement and Application

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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Any person or company who violates zoning regulations is guilty of a misdemeanor, and each day the violation continues constitutes a separate offense. In addition, the county legislative body, attorney general, district attorney general, county building commissioner, or neighboring property owner (who would be specially damaged) may initiate appropriate action to prevent or remove the unlawful construction or use. T.C.A. § 13-7-111. Also, under the 1995 County Powers Act, the county legislative body has the authority to establish monetary penalties for violation of lawful county regulations, including zoning regulations. T.C.A. § 5-1-121.

The provisions of T.C.A. § 13-7-101 *et seq.* specify that these zoning provisions do not repeal or modify any private act enacted before 1935 that relates to zoning regulations. T.C.A. § 13-7-115. However, whenever a private act imposes more rigorous standards than those required by statute, then the private act will govern. Conversely, whenever the statute is more stringent, then the provisions of the statute prevail over those of the private act. T.C.A. § 13-7-112.

Counties may not regulate, which includes the requirement of building permits, buildings or other structures that are incidental to the agricultural enterprise and are located on agricultural land, unless such buildings or structures are located on agricultural lands adjacent or in proximity to state federal-aid highways, public airports or public parks. Buildings used as residences by farmers and farm workers are considered to be "incidental to the agricultural enterprise". T.C.A. § 13-7-114. However, counties participating in the national flood insurance program are required to regulate buildings and development (including those related to agriculture) located within a special flood hazard area (one hundred-year floodplain) to the extent required to comply with the national flood insurance program. T.C.A. § 13-7-114(c).

Counties also may not mandate the allocation of affordable or workforce housing units in existing or newly constructed developments through zoning regulations or other land use regulations or decisions. T.C.A. § 66-35-102.

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