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Program Administration

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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While the county mayor and county commissioners are coming to grips with the problem of establishing a policy and formalizing a statement, they should decide who will administer the program. In larger, well-financed counties, the ideal administrator is an experienced, knowledgeable, and full-time risk manager. For smaller counties, an alternative method may be necessary.

One such alternative consists of formulating a joint powers agreement among the county government and any or all of the small municipalities within the county. Under the agreement, the services of a risk management-consulting firm could be obtained or a single risk manager could be hired for all the jurisdictions. A serious drawback of this method is that a considerable amount of time must be devoted to establishing the scheme. Officials must decide how such a person would be paid and what amount of his or her time would be necessary for each jurisdiction.

Another option is to use an existing employee to perform this function. The job of an employee already performing one or two risk management tasks can be expanded to include the full range of risk management functions, or an employee with the necessary skills and understanding may be trained for the position. For example, the county executive can identify an employee exceptionally good at purchasing insurance or in handling insurance claims. With some additional training, that person's duties can be expanded to include safety programs, then department inspection, then loss analysis, and so on. Through a well-planned course of study and self-training, in conjunction with salary increases and other incentives, such an employee can do well. Any person trained on-the-job must be carefully evaluated, and this type of risk manager would be no exception.

Officials must remember that an employee who gains a position of expanded responsibility or who is upgraded to the role of risk manager needs the requisite complementary increase in authority, in addition to salary boosts. The salary increase is necessary because this type of employee is more likely than most to leave employment once experience is obtained in the risk management field.

Successful risk management consultants generally disapprove of the committee approach to risk management. This approach involves imposing additional burdens on such officials as the county attorney, county executive, administrative heads and major staff employees as a group. They act as a committee, meeting and working out the details of program administration. Usually, each committee person assumes the responsibility for a single part of the program. These officials and employees normally are associated with any risk management program, but their working as a committee unfortunately results in a disjointed and unfocused effort. Although in the end the committee approach may be the only feasible one for a county, it should be avoided if possible. If not possible, then it should be temporary.

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