



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

March 12, 2025

Other Actions

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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Other Actions

Reference Number: CTAS-770

There are numerous areas, including search and seizure, voting rights, improper arrest, discriminatory enforcement of statutes and the use of unlawful force, which may result in lawsuits against the county based on the actions of law enforcement and other court personnel. These claims can result in lawsuits in federal court under the federal civil rights act (42 U.S.C. § 1983) or in state court under the same federal statutes or as common law actions. *Poling v. Goins*, 713 S.W.2d 305 (Tenn.1986). A negligent action, unless it rises to the level of gross negligence, will not give rise to an action under (42 U.S.C. § 1983). *Daniels v. Williams*, 106 S.Ct.662 (1986); *Nishiyama v. Dickson County, Tennessee*, 814 F.2d 277 (6th Cir. 1987).

The federal antitrust laws (15 U.S.C. § 1 et seq.) provide that counties will not be held responsible for damages in antitrust actions, but the county can still be enjoined from doing, or mandated to do, certain acts. In general, county officials must take care in actions which restrict competition, such as granting of exclusive franchises, referring the public to particular attorneys or lending institutions, or giving different persons different access to records.

There is an extensive framework of other laws, both state and federal, applicable to counties. Consult your county attorney when you are uncertain about the legal implications of any action you are preparing to take.

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