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# Hotel/Motel Tax

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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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# Hotel/Motel Tax

## Private Acts of 1992 Chapter 148

**SECTION 1.** As used in this act unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) "Clerk" means the county clerk of Rhea County, Tennessee.
- (2) "Consideration" means the consideration charged, whether or not received, for the occupancy in a hotel valued in money whether to be received in money, goods, labor or otherwise, including all receipts, cash, credits, property and services of any kind or nature without any deduction therefrom whatsoever. Nothing in this definition shall be construed to imply that consideration is charged when the space provided to the person is complimentary from the operator and no consideration is charged to or received from any person.
- (3) "County" means Rhea County, Tennessee.
- (4) "Hotel" means any structure or space, or any portion thereof, which is occupied or intended or designed for occupancy by transients for dwelling, lodging or sleeping purposes, and includes any hotel, inn, tourist camp, tourist court, tourist cabin, motel or any place in which rooms, lodgings or accommodations are furnished to transients for a consideration.
- (5) "Occupancy" means the use or possession, or the right to the use or possession, of any room, lodgings or accommodations in any hotel.
- (6) "Operator" means the person operating the hotel whether as owner, lessee or otherwise.
- (7) "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, joint venture, association, social club, fraternal organization, joint stock company, corporation, estate, trust, business trust, receiver, trustee, syndicate, governmental entity other than the United States or any of its agencies, or any other group or combination acting as a unit.
- (8) "Transient" means any person who exercises occupancy or is entitled to occupancy for any rooms, lodgings or accommodations in a hotel for a period of less than thirty (30) continuous days.
- (9) "Not-for-profit corporation, association or organization" means a corporation, association or organization which is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (26 U.S.C. Section 501(c)(3)), as amended, and which is organized and operated purely for religious or charitable purposes.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1995, Chapter 69

**SECTION 2.** The legislative body of Rhea County is authorized to levy a privilege tax upon the privilege of occupancy in any hotel of each transient in the amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the rate charged by the operator; provided, however, the initial rate of such tax on the effective date of this act shall be two percent (2%). Such tax is a privilege tax upon the transient occupying such room and is to be collected as provided in this act.

**SECTION 3.** The proceeds received by the county from the tax shall be retained by the county and designated and used for the following purposes: sixty percent (60%) for tourism development; forty percent (40%) for economic development, or for such purposes and in such amounts as may be designated by resolution of the county legislative body of Rhea County.

**SECTION 4.** (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, such tax shall be added by each and every operator to each invoice prepared by the operator for the occupancy of the hotel and given directly or transmitted to the transient. Such tax shall be collected by such operator from the transient and remitted to the county clerk as provided in Section 5.

When a person has maintained occupancy for thirty (30) continuous days, that person shall receive from the operator a refund or credit for the tax previously collected or charged and the operator shall receive credit for the amount of such tax if previously paid or reported to the county.

- (b) No tax shall be imposed under this act or be added by an operator if reservations for occupancy of the hotel is for the purpose of conducting official affairs of a not-for-profit corporation, association or organization as defined in Section 1 (9) and not for recreational purposes, and reservations are made by, through, or in the name of such corporation, association or organization which presents a federal or state tax exemption number at the time such reservations are made and completes necessary paperwork establishing its eligibility.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1995, Chapter 69

**SECTION 5.**

(a) The tax levied shall be remitted by all operators who lease, rent or charge for any rooms, lodgings, spaces or accommodations in hotels within the county to the clerk or such other officer as may by resolution be charged with the duty of collection thereof, such tax to be remitted to such officer not later than the twentieth (20th) day of each month for the preceding month. The operator is required to collect the tax from the transient at the time of the presentation of the invoice for such occupancy as may be the custom of the operator, and if credit is granted by the operator to the transient, then the obligation to the county entitled to such tax shall be that of the operator.

(b) For the purpose of compensating the operator for remitting the tax levied by this act, the operator shall be allowed two percent (2%) of the amount of the tax due and remitted to the clerk in the form of a deduction in submitting the report and paying the amount due by such operator, provided the amount due was not delinquent at the time of payment.

**SECTION 6.** The clerk, or other authorized collector of the tax, shall be responsible for the collection of such tax and shall place the proceeds of such tax in accounts for the purposes stated herein. A monthly tax return shall be filed under oath with the clerk by the operator with such number of copies thereof as the clerk may reasonably require for the collection of such tax.

The report of the operator shall include such facts and information as may be deemed reasonable for the verification of the tax due. The form, including provisions for insuring compliance with subsection (b) of Section 4 of this act, is to be developed by the clerk and approved by the county legislative body prior to use. The clerk shall audit each operator in the county at least once a year and shall report on the audits made on a quarterly basis to the county legislative body.

The county legislative body is authorized to adopt resolutions to provide reasonable rules and regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this act, including the form for such reports.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1995, Chapter 69

**SECTION 7.** No operator of a hotel shall advertise or state in any manner, whether directly or indirectly, that the tax or any part thereof will be assumed or absorbed by the operator or that it will not be added to the rent, or that if added, any part will be refunded.

**SECTION 8.** Taxes collected by an operator which are not remitted to the clerk on or before the due dates are delinquent. An operator is liable for interest on such delinquent taxes from the due date at the rate of twelve percent (12%) per annum, and is liable for an additional penalty of one percent (1%) for each month or fraction thereof such taxes are delinquent. Such interest and penalty shall become a part of the tax herein required to be remitted. Each occurrence of willful refusal of an operator to collect or remit the tax or willful refusal of a transient, to pay the tax imposed is unlawful and shall be punishable by a civil penalty not in excess of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

**SECTION 9.** It is the duty of every operator liable for the collection and payment to the county of any tax imposed by this act to keep and preserve for a period of three (3) years all records as may be necessary to determine the amount of tax due and payable to the county. The clerk has the right to inspect such records at all reasonable times.

**SECTION 10.** The clerk in administering and enforcing the provisions of this act has as additional powers, those powers and duties with respect to collecting taxes as provided in Title 67 of Tennessee Code Annotated or otherwise provided by law.

For services in administering and enforcing the provisions of this act, the clerk is entitled to retain as a commission five percent (5%) of the taxes collected.

Upon any claim of illegal assessment and collection, the taxpayer has the remedies provided in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 67. It is the intent of this act that the provisions of law which apply to the recovery of state taxes illegally assessed and collected shall also apply to the tax levied under the authority of this act. The provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 67-1-707, shall be applicable to adjustments and refunds of such tax.

With respect to the adjustment and settlement with taxpayers, all errors of county taxes collected by the clerk under authority of this act shall be refunded by the clerk.

Notice of any tax paid under protest shall be given to the clerk and the resolution authorizing levy of the tax shall designate a county officer against whom suit may be brought for recovery.

**SECTION 11.** The tax levied pursuant to the provisions of this act shall only apply in accordance with the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 67-4-1425.

**SECTION 12.** The proceeds of the tax authorized by this act shall be allocated to and placed in the general fund, or other fund, of Rhea County to be used for the purposes stated in Section 3 of this act.

**SECTION 13.** If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held

invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

**SECTION 14.** This act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body of Rhea County. Its approval or nonapproval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the county legislative body and shall be certified by such presiding officer to the Secretary of State.

**SECTION 15.** For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this act, it shall be effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect upon being approved as provided in Section 14.

Passed: February 24, 1992.

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