



County Technical Assistance Service

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Records and Notice of Assessment

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS electronic library known as e-Li. This online library is maintained daily 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 e-Li material.

Sincerely,

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Table of Contents

Records and Notice of Assessment	3
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Records and Notice of Assessment

Reference Number: CTAS-1476

Prior to May 20th each year, the assessor is required to note upon his/her records the current classification and valuation of all taxable property in the county.¹ The assessor must hold these records open for public inspection at his/her office during normal business hours. In addition, the assessor is required to publish at least once in a newspaper of general circulation within the assessor's jurisdiction a notice of when and where these records may be inspected. The required notice must be published not later than 10 calendar days before the local board of equalization begins its annual session.² The notice must be set forth in the publication within distinct and prominent borders, and must have a width of not less than two regular columns of such newspaper and a depth of at least four inches. The notice is required to state the day the county board of equalization will convene and the last day appeals will be accepted by the county board and must contain a warning that failure to appeal the assessment to the county board of equalization may result in the assessment becoming final without further right of appeal.³ In addition, at least 10 calendar days before the local board of equalization begins its annual session, the assessor or the assessor's deputy must notify each taxpayer of any change in the classification or assessed valuation of the taxpayer's property. The notification must be sent by United States mail to the last known address of the taxpayer. The notification must show the previous year's assessment and classification and the current year's assessment and classification. The notification is effective when mailed.⁴ The assessor is required to retain a notation of the date of any notification of a change in classification or assessed valuation, or a dated copy of such notification, in the records of the assessor. These records must be preserved by the assessor for not less than two years.⁵

An alternative notice is permissible for the year in which a reappraisal program is completed and the values to be used as the basis for making assessments are approved by the State Division of Property Assessments. In this instance any notice showing the appraised value of property sent to a property owner by a company employed to conduct the reappraisal program satisfies the notice requirement discussed above, provided that the assessor of property uses the appraised value as specified on the notice from the company and does not change the classification of the property from its former classification.⁶

Upon a consolidation of the municipal and other assessment offices within any county with the office of the county assessor of property (as provided in T.C.A. § 67-1-513), the county assessor of property is not required to notify each taxpayer within the municipality unless a change has been made by the county assessor of property from the former classification and assessed valuation which existed on the county tax roll for the preceding year. However, the assessor is required to hold his/her records open for public inspection at his/her office during normal business hours and must cause to be published at least once, in a newspaper of general circulation within the assessor's jurisdiction, a notice where and when such records may be inspected. The required notice must be published not later than 10 calendar days before the local board of equalization begins its annual session.⁷

If an assessor fails to complete and note upon the assessor's records the assessment of a taxpayer's property prior to the 20th day of May, or fails to notify a taxpayer, or the taxpayer's agent, of any change in the classification or assessed valuation of the taxpayer's property, the taxpayer has no legal basis for complaint, provided that the assessment against the property was completed, and a notice of any new or changed classification or assessed valuation was sent by United States mail to the last known address of the taxpayer at least 10 calendar days before the local board of equalization ends its annual session.⁸

In the event an assessor fails to complete any assessment, or notify a taxpayer of a change in the classification or assessed valuation of his or her property, at least 10 calendar days before the local board of equalization ends its annual session, this failure does not affect in any way the validity of the assessment, classification, or assessed valuation; however, an aggrieved property owner has the right to appeal directly to the State Board of Equalization at its next regular session, and no proceedings may be undertaken to collect any taxes based upon the assessment, and no penalty added, until 30 calendar days after the state board has rendered a final decision on the appeal or complaint. Upon written request of any party, or upon its own motion, the State Board of Equalization may remand any complaint or appeal to the local board of equalization.⁹

Any other irregularity or omission in the assessment procedure does not affect the validity of the assessment unless the defect results in a denial of minimum constitutional guarantees.¹⁰

¹T.C.A. § 67-5-508(a)(1).

²T.C.A. § 67-5-508(a)(2).

³T.C.A. §§ 67-5-508(a)(2), 67-5-1401.

⁴T.C.A. § 67-5-508(a)(3).

⁵T.C.A. § 67-5-508(a)(4).

⁶T.C.A. § 67-5-508(a)(5).

⁷T.C.A. § 67-5-508(a)(6).

⁸T.C.A. § 67-5-508(b)(1).

⁹T.C.A. § 67-5-508(b)(2).

¹⁰*State v. Delinquent Taxpayers*, 785 S.W.2d 819 (Tenn.Ct.App. 1989); T.C.A. § 67-5-509(b).

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