



County Technical Assistance Service

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Common Law Marriages

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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Common Law Marriages

Reference Number: CTAS-423

Marriage is controlled by statute and not common law in Tennessee. Although Tennessee does not recognize common law marriages, Tennessee will recognize a valid common law marriage entered into in a jurisdiction which recognizes common law marriages. *In re Estate of Glover*, 882 S.W.2d 789 (Tenn. App. 1994); *Andrew v. Signal Auto Parts, Inc.*, 492 S.W.2d 222 (Tenn. 1972); *Lightsey v. Lightsey*, 407 S.W.2d 684, 56 Tenn. App. 394 (Tenn. App. 1966); *Troxel v. Jones*, 322 S.W.2d 251, 45 Tenn. App. 264 (Tenn. App. 1959). *But see Crawford v. Crawford*, 198 Tenn. 9, 277 S.W.2d 389 (1955) (under exceptional circumstances, parties may be estopped to deny their marriage under the doctrine of marriage by estoppel).

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