



County Technical Assistance Service

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Temporary Vacancies

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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Temporary Vacancies

Reference Number: CTAS-581

Vacancies Due to Military Service

A temporary vacancy exists when a county official, except for a member of the county board of education, is inducted into military service such as the United States Army or any of its branches, the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, or any other military activity. T.C.A. § 8-48-202. Upon the official's return from military service, he or she is entitled to resume the office for the remainder of the term, if it has not already expired. T.C.A. § 8-48-202. If the official does not return from military service prior to the expiration of the term, a successor is elected in the regular manner prescribed by law. T.C.A. § 8-48-203.

When a county official, except for a member of the county board of education, is inducted into the United States military service, the office duties are discharged temporarily during the official's absence by another person legally qualified, and the office is to be filled temporarily by the legislative body. T.C.A. §§ 8-48-204, 8-48-205. However, if a clerk and master is inducted into military service, the chancellor appoints a qualified person to fill the office temporarily. T.C.A. § 8-48-205. Any person temporarily appointed or elected to an office must execute a bond and subscribe to an oath to discharge the duties of the office. T.C.A. § 8-48-207. The temporary official receives the salary and has the same power, authority, and privileges as the regular official. T.C.A. § 8-48-208. The temporary official may not remove assistants appointed by the regular official; that power remains with the regular official. T.C.A. § 8-48-209. All persons chosen to fill offices temporarily must satisfy all qualifications required to hold the office. T.C.A. § 8-48-206.

Temporary Absence of County Mayor

If the county mayor is absent or intends to be absent for more than 21 days, or is incapacitated or otherwise unable to perform the duties of the mayor's office, the legislative body appoints the chairperson to serve until the absence or disability is removed. Any contest of disability or its removal shall be adjudicated in chancery court. While the chairperson is serving as mayor, the chairperson pro tempore presides over legislative body sessions. T.C.A. § 5-5-103. Note that this statute applies to a temporary absence, not to a vacancy. An interim county mayor may serve from the time the office becomes vacant until the county legislative body can appoint a successor; the chairperson of the county legislative body (or the chairperson pro tempore in circumstances where the county mayor had been the chairperson) serves in the interim. T.C.A. § 5-5-103.

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