



# County Technical Assistance Service

Published on e-Li (<https://eli.ctas.tennessee.edu>)

November 14, 2019

## Correspondence From Legal Organizations

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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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## Correspondence From Legal Organizations

**Reference Number:** CTAS-1407

Correspondence from an organization such as the American Bar Association may be opened pursuant to a prison's regular mail policy without violating the First Amendment rights of a prisoner when there is no specific indication that the envelope contains confidential, personal, or privileged material; that it was sent from a specific attorney at the organization; or that it relates to a currently pending legal matter in which the inmate is involved. *Sallier*, 343 F.3d at 875. *Compare Jensen v. Klecker*, 648 F.2d 1179, 1183 (8th Cir. 1981) (finding that a letter from the National Prison Project, bearing the name of an attorney and stamped "Lawyer Client Mail Do Not Open Except In Presence of Prisoner" appears to come well within the definition of protected attorney-client legal mail). *Cf. Boswell v. Mayer*, 169 F.3d 384, 388-89 (6th Cir. 1999) (upholding prison policy of treating mail from a state attorney general's office as protected legal mail only if (a) the envelope contains the return address of a licensed attorney and (b) the envelope has markings that warn of its privileged content); *Wolff v. McDonnell*, 418 U.S. 539, 576, 94 S.Ct. 2963, 41 L.Ed.2d 935 (1974) (finding it entirely appropriate for a state to require any communication from an attorney to be specially marked as originating from an attorney, including the attorney's name and address, if the communication is to be given special treatment).

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