



County Technical Assistance Service

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On Call Time

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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On Call Time

Reference Number: CTAS-983

Whether or not the time an employee is on call must be counted as compensable working time depends upon the employee's freedom while on call. If an employee is required to remain on call on the employer's premises or so close that he or she cannot use the time effectively for personal purposes, the employee is working while "on call." An employee who is not required to remain on the employer's premises and is free to engage in his or her own pursuits, subject only to the understanding that the employee leave word at his or her home or with the employer where he or she can be reached by the employer, is not working while "on call." When an employee is called out on the job assignment, only the time spent making the call is counted as hours worked. Of course, if calls are so frequent or the readiness conditions are so restrictive that the employee is not really free to use the intervening periods effectively for his or her own benefit, the employee may be considered as "engaged to wait" rather than "waiting to be engaged."

An employee who is "on call" may be required to remain at home to receive telephone calls when the employer's office is closed. If the employee is uninterrupted for long periods of time, any reasonable agreement of the parties for determining the number of hours worked will be accepted. The agreement should take into account not only actual time spent in answering the calls, but also some allowance for the restriction on the employee's freedom to engage in personal activities resulting from the duty of answering the telephone.

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