

Sheriff

The office of sheriff is ancient in origin; its beginning can be traced back centuries to medieval England. The office of sheriff has been provided for in each of Tennessee's three constitutions (1796, 1835 and 1870) and was retained in the latest amendment in 1978. The sheriff is elected to a four-year term in the August general election in the same year in which the governor is elected. T.C.A. § 2-3-202.

Qualifications. The sheriff, in all counties except those with a metropolitan form of government in which law enforcement powers have been assigned to some other official, must have the following specific qualifications

1. Must be a United States citizen;
2. Must be 25 years of age prior to the qualifying date;
3. Must be a qualified voter of the county;
4. Must have obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent as recognized by the Tennessee State Board of Education;
5. Must not have been convicted, pled guilty or pled nolo contendere to any felony charge or any violation of any federal or state laws or city ordinances relating to force, violence, theft, dishonesty, gambling, liquor or controlled substances, so long as the violation involves an offense that consists of moral turpitude, or a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence;
6. Must be fingerprinted under the direction of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) and have the TBI make a search of local, state and federal fingerprint files for any criminal record;
7. Must not have been released from the armed forces of the United States with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge, or as a consequence of conviction at court martial for either state or federal offenses;
8. Must have been certified by a qualified professional in the psychiatric or psychological fields to be free of all apparent mental disorders as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition*, of the American Psychiatric Association or its successor;
9. Must possess a current and valid peace officer certification as issued by the Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission within 12 months of qualification for the election of the sheriff. However, this qualification is waived for first-time elected sheriffs who must enroll in a recruit training program within six months after taking office and be POST certified in order to qualify for re-election;
10. Must not be a member of the General Assembly, nor shall any practicing attorney be obligated to act as sheriff.

T.C.A. §§ 8-8-101, 8-8-102.