

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is intended to help both the new and experienced municipal official by providing them with information on municipal government in general and their powers and duties in particular. Although studying and consulting this guide cannot be a complete substitute for learning the law through on-the-job training, it can greatly help a new municipal official shortcut this lengthy learning process and thereby “get up to speed” much sooner. It can help the more experienced municipal official fill in the gaps in his knowledge of the laws and practices relating to municipal government.

You should be aware that the handbook does not address all provisions of the many sections upon which it is based. Since the purpose of this handbook is not to replace the law books, but to provide city elected officials with their most important provisions on municipal government, much had to be left out. This means that the municipal official who consults this handbook to find information to help decide an important or controversial matter should also refer to the statutes or other sources of law.

Finally, the handbook is not meant to be a substitute for advice on difficult and complex matters from your city or town attorney. Much of what complex statutes mean in practice depends on interpretation and input that should be obtained from an attorney knowledgeable of the law pertaining to municipal government. Attorneys are also trained to more readily recognize factual differences which could easily change an answer to what seems to be a simple question.

Herein are 20 chapters on many topics of general interest, as well as a copy of the Lawrason Act and a model personnel policy. The chapter numbers are included as part of the page number at the bottom of each page so that revisions can be easily inserted as needed. Should you need more information than is provided here, the Louisiana Municipal Association offers many other publications on topics of concern to municipal officials. Copies of Technical Assistance Bulletins on various topics, model codes, and our monthly *Louisiana Municipal Review* are available on request from the LMA office.