

## **SUBCHAPTER VI. CRIMINAL TRESPASS.**

### Article 22.

#### Damages and Other Offenses to Land and Fixtures.

#### **§ 14-126: Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 700, s. 2.**

#### **§ 14-127. Willful and wanton injury to real property.**

If any person shall willfully and wantonly damage, injure or destroy any real property whatsoever, either of a public or private nature, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (R.C., c. 34, s. 111; 1873-4, c. 176, s. 5; Code, s. 1081; Rev., s. 3677; C.S., s. 4301; 1967, c. 1083; 1993, c. 539, s. 67; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

#### **§ 14-127.1. Graffiti vandalism.**

(a) As used in this section, "graffiti vandalism" means to unlawfully write or scribble on, mark, paint, deface, or besmear the walls of (i) any real property, whether public or private, including cemetery tombstones and monuments, (ii) any public building or facility as defined in G.S. 14-132, or (iii) any statue or monument situated in any public place, by any type of pen, paint, or marker regardless of whether the pen or marker contains permanent ink, paint, or spray paint.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this section, any person who engages in graffiti vandalism is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A person convicted of a Class 1 misdemeanor under this subsection shall be fined a minimum of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) and, if community or intermediate punishment is imposed, shall be required to perform 24 hours of community service.

(c) Any person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall be guilty of a Class H felony if all of the following apply:

- (1) The person has two or more prior convictions for violation of this section.
- (2) The current violation was committed after the second conviction for violation of this section.
- (3) The violation resulting in the second conviction was committed after the first conviction for violation of this section. (2015-72, s. 1.)

#### **§ 14-128. Injury to trees, crops, lands, etc., of another.**

Any person, not being on his own lands, who shall without the consent of the owner thereof, willfully commit any damage, injury, or spoliation to or upon any tree, wood, underwood, timber, garden, crops, vegetables, plants, lands, springs, or any other matter or thing growing or being thereon, or who cuts, breaks, injures, or removes any tree, plant, or flower, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor: Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to the officers, agents, and employees of the Department of Transportation while in the discharge of their duties within the right-of-way or easement of the Department of Transportation. (Ex. Sess. 1924, c. 54; 1957, c. 65, s. 11, c. 754; 1965, c. 300, s. 1; 1969, c. 22, s. 1; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 34; 1993, c. 539, s. 68; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

#### **§ 14-128.1. Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 964, s. 2.**

#### **§ 14-129. Taking, etc., of certain wild plants from land of another.**

No person, firm or corporation shall dig up, pull up or take from the land of another or from any public domain, the whole or any part of any trailing arbutus, Aaron's Rod (*Thermopsis caroliniana*), Bird-foot Violet (*Viola pedata*), Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Blue Dogbane

(*Amsonia tabernaemontana*), Cardinal-flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), Walking Fern (*Camptosorus rhizophyllus*), Gentians (*Gentiana*), Ground Cedar, Running Cedar, Hepatica (*Hepatica americana* and *acutiloba*), Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), Lily (*Lilium*), Lupine (*Lupinus*), Monkshood (*Aconitum uncinatum* and *reclinatum*), May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Orchids (all species), Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia*), Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), Oconee Bells (*Shortia galacifolia*), Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum*), Trailing Christmas (*Greens-Lycopodium*), Trillium (*Trillium*), Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), and Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), American holly, white pine, red cedar, hemlock or other coniferous trees, or any flowering dogwood, any mountain laurel, any rhododendron, or any ground pine, or any Christmas greens, or any Judas tree, or any leucothea, or any azalea, without having in his possession a permit to dig up, pull up or take such plants, signed by the owner of such land, or by his duly authorized agent. Any person convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor only punished by a fine of not less than seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) nor more than one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) for each offense, with each plant taken in violation of this section constituting a separate offense. The Clerk of Court for the jurisdiction in which a conviction occurs under this section involving any species listed in this section that also appears on the North Carolina Protected Plants list created under the authority granted by Article 19B of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes shall report the conviction to the Plant Conservation Board so the Board may consider a civil penalty under the authority of that Article. (1941, c. 253; 1951, c. 367, s. 1; 1955, cc. 251, 962; 1961, c. 1021; 1967, c. 355; 1971, c. 951; 1993, c. 539, s. 69; c. 553, s. 9; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-93, s. 1; 2001-487, s. 43(a); 2014-120, s. 52(b).)

**§ 14-129.1. Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 964, s. 2.**

**§ 14-129.2. Unlawful to take sea oats.**

(a) It is unlawful to dig up, pull up, or take from the land of another or from any public domain the whole or any part of any Sea Oats (*Uniola paniculata*) without the consent of the owner of that land.

(b) Any person convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) nor more than two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for each offense. (2001-93, s. 2.)

**§ 14-129.3. Felony taking of Venus flytrap.**

(a) Any person, firm, or corporation who digs up, pulls up, takes, or carries away, or aids in taking or carrying away, any Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) plant or the seed of any Venus flytrap plant growing upon the lands of another person, or from the public domain, with the intent to steal the Venus flytrap plant or seed is guilty of a Class H felony.

(b) This section shall not apply to any person, firm, or corporation that has a permit to dig up, pull up, take, or carry away the plant or seed, signed by the owner of the land, or the owner's duly authorized agent. At the time of the digging, pulling, taking, or carrying away, the permit shall be in the possession of the person, firm, or corporation on the land. (2014-120, s. 52(a).)

**§ 14-130. Trespass on public lands.**

If any person shall erect a building on any state-owned lands, or cultivate or remove timber from any such lands, without the permission of the State, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Moreover, the State can recover from any person cutting timber on its land three times the value of the timber which is cut. (1823, c. 1190, P.R.; 1842, c. 36, s. 4; R.C., c. 34, s. 42; Code, s. 1121; Rev., s. 3746; 1909, c. 891; C.S., s. 4302; 1979, c. 15; 1993, c. 539, s. 70; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-131. Trespass on land under option by the federal government.**

On lands under option which have formally or informally been offered to and accepted by either the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources or the Department of Environmental Quality by the acquiring federal agency and tentatively accepted by a Department for administration as State forests, State parks, State game refuges or for other public purposes, it shall be unlawful to cut, dig, break, injure or remove any timber, lumber, firewood, trees, shrubs or other plants; or any fence, house, barn or other structure; or to pursue, trap, hunt or kill any bird or other wild animals or take fish from streams or lakes within the boundaries of such areas without the written consent of the local official of the United States having charge of the acquisition of such lands.

Any person, firm or corporation convicted of the violation of this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

The Department of Environmental Quality through its legally appointed forestry, fish and game wardens is hereby authorized and empowered to assist the county law-enforcement officers in the enforcement of this section. (1935, c. 317; 1973, c. 1262, s. 86; 1977, c. 771, s. 4; 1989, c. 727, s. 218(2); 1993, c. 539, s. 71; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1997-443, s. 11A.119(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(bb).)

**§ 14-132. Disorderly conduct in and injuries to public buildings and facilities.**

(a) It is a misdemeanor if any person shall:

- (1) Make any rude or riotous noise, or be guilty of any disorderly conduct, in or near any public building or facility; or
- (2) Unlawfully write or scribble on, mark, deface, besmear, or injure the walls of any public building or facility, or any statue or monument situated in any public place; or
- (3) Commit any nuisance in or near any public building or facility.

(b) Any person in charge of any public building or facility owned or controlled by the State, any subdivision of the State, or any other public agency shall have authority to arrest summarily and without warrant for a violation of this section.

(c) The term "public building or facility" as used in this section includes any building or facility which is:

- (1) One to which the public or a portion of the public has access and is owned or controlled by the State, any subdivision of the State, any other public agency, or any private institution or agency of a charitable, educational, or eleemosynary nature; or
- (2) Dedicated to the use of the general public for a purpose which is primarily concerned with public recreation, cultural activities, and other events of a public nature or character.

- (3) Designated by the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation in accordance with G.S. 143B-987.

The term "building or facility" as used in this section also includes the surrounding grounds and premises of any building or facility used in connection with the operation or functioning of such building or facility.

(d) Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, any person who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1829, c. 29, ss. 1, 2; 1842, c. 47; R.C., c. 103, ss. 7, 8; Code, s. 2308; Rev., s. 3742; 1915, c. 269; C.S., s. 4303; 1969, c. 869, s. 7½; c. 1224, s. 2; 1981, c. 499, s. 2; 1993, c. 539, s. 72; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2014-100, s. 17.1(w); 2015-72, s. 2.)

**§ 14-132.1. Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 700, s. 2.**

**§ 14-132.2. Willfully trespassing upon, damaging, or impeding the progress of a public school bus.**

(a) Any person who shall unlawfully and willfully demolish, destroy, deface, injure, burn or damage any public school bus or public school activity bus shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) Any person who shall enter a public school bus or public school activity bus after being forbidden to do so by the authorized school bus driver in charge thereof, or the school principal to whom the public school bus or public school activity bus is assigned, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Any occupant of a public school bus or public school activity bus who shall refuse to leave said bus upon demand of the authorized driver in charge thereof, or upon demand of the principal of the school to which said bus is assigned, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c1) Any person who shall unlawfully and willfully stop, impede, delay, or detain any public school bus or public school activity bus being operated for public school purposes shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(d) Subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall not apply to a child less than 12 years of age, or authorized professional school personnel. (1975, c. 191, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 73; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-26, s. 1.)

**§ 14-133: Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 767, s. 30(2).**

**§ 14-134. Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 700, s. 2.**

**§ 14-134.1. Repealed by Session Laws 1977, c. 887, s. 2.**

**§ 14-134.2. Operating motor vehicle upon utility easements after being forbidden to do so.**

If any person, without permission, shall ride, drive or operate a minibike, motorbike, motorcycle, jeep, dune buggy, automobile, truck or any other motor vehicle, other than a motorized all-terrain vehicle as defined in G.S. 14-159.3, upon a utility easement upon which the owner or holder of the easement or agent of the owner or holder of the easement has posted on the easement a "no trespassing" sign or has otherwise given oral or written notice to the person not to so ride, drive or operate such a vehicle upon the said easement, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor, provided, however, neither the owner of the property nor the holder of the easement or their agents,

employees, guests, invitees or permittees shall be guilty of a violation under this section. (1975, c. 636, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 75; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1997-487, s. 2; 2015-26, s. 2.1.)

**§ 14-134.3. Domestic criminal trespass.**

(a) Any person who enters after being forbidden to do so or remains after being ordered to leave by the lawful occupant, upon the premises occupied by a present or former spouse or by a person with whom the person charged has lived as if married, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor if the complainant and the person charged are living apart; provided, however, that no person shall be guilty if said person enters upon the premises pursuant to a judicial order or written separation agreement which gives the person the right to enter upon said premises for the purpose of visiting with minor children. Evidence that the parties are living apart shall include but is not necessarily limited to:

- (1) A judicial order of separation;
- (2) A court order directing the person charged to stay away from the premises occupied by the complainant;
- (3) An agreement, whether verbal or written, between the complainant and the person charged that they shall live separate and apart, and such parties are in fact living separate and apart; or
- (4) Separate places of residence for the complainant and the person charged.

Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, upon conviction, said person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) A person convicted of a violation of this section is guilty of a Class G felony if the person is trespassing upon property operated as a safe house or haven for victims of domestic violence and the person is armed with a deadly weapon at the time of the offense. (1979, c. 561, s. 2; 1993, c. 539, s. 76; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1998-212, s. 17.19(a).)

**§ 14-135. Larceny of timber.**

(a) Offense. – Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, a person commits the offense of larceny of timber if the person does any of the following:

- (1) Knowingly and willfully cuts down, injures, or removes any timber owned by another person, without the consent of the owner of the land or the owner of the timber, or without a lawful easement running with the land.
- (2) Buys timber directly from the owner of the timber and fails to make payment in full to the owner by (i) the date specified in the written timber sales agreement or (ii) if there is no such agreement, 60 days from the date that the buyer removes the timber from the property.
- (3) Knowingly and willfully aids, hires, or counsels an individual to cut down, injure, or remove any timber owned by another person without the consent of the owner of the land or the owner of the timber, or without a lawful easement running with the land.
- (4) Knowingly and willfully transports forest products that have been cut down, removed, obtained, or acquired from the property of a landowner without the consent of the owner of the land or the owner of the timber, or without a lawful easement running with the land.

(b) Exceptions. – The following are exceptions to the offense set forth in subsection (a) of this section:

- (1) A person is not guilty of an offense under subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section if the person is an employee or agent of an electric power supplier, as defined in G.S. 62-133.8, and either of the following conditions is met:
  - a. The person believed in good faith that consent of the owner had been obtained prior to cutting down, injuring, or removing the timber.
  - b. The person believed in good faith that the cutting down, injuring, or removing of the timber was permitted by a utility easement or was necessary to remove a tree hazard. For purposes of this subsection, the term "tree hazard" includes a dead or dying tree, dead parts of a living tree, or an unstable living tree that is within striking distance of an electric transmission line, electric distribution line, or electric equipment and constitutes a hazard to the line or equipment in the event of a tree failure.
- (2) A person is not guilty of an offense under subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section if either of the following conditions is met:
  - a. The person remitted payment in full within the time period set in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section to a person he or she believed in good faith to be the rightful owner of the timber.
  - b. The person remitted payment in full to the owner of the timber within the 10-day period set forth in subsection (c) of this section.
- (3) A person is not guilty of an offense under subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of this section if the person is an electric power supplier, as defined in G.S. 62-133.8, and either of the following conditions is met:
  - a. The person believed in good faith that consent of the owner had been obtained prior to aiding, hiring, or counseling the individual to cut down, injure, or remove the timber.
  - b. The person believed in good faith that the cutting down, injuring, or removing of the timber was permitted by a utility easement or was necessary to remove a tree hazard.

(c) Prima Facie Evidence. – An owner of timber who does not receive payment in full within the time period set in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section may notify the timber buyer in writing of the owner's demand for payment at the timber buyer's last known address by certified mail or by personal delivery. The timber buyer's failure to make payment in full within 10 days after the mailing or personal delivery authorized under this subsection shall constitute prima facie evidence of the timber buyer's intent to commit an offense under subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section.

(d) Penalty; Restitution. – A person who commits an offense under subsection (a) of this section is guilty of a Class G felony. Additionally, a defendant convicted of an offense under subsection (a) of this section shall be ordered to make restitution to the timber owner in an amount equal to either of the following:

- (1) Three times the value of the timber cut down, injured, or removed in violation of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section.
- (2) Three times the value of the timber bought but not paid for in violation of subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section.

Restitution shall also include the cost incurred by the owner to determine the value of the timber. For purposes of subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, "value of the timber" shall be based on the stumpage rate of the timber.

(e) Civil Remedies. – Nothing in this section shall affect any civil remedies available for a violation of subsection (a) of this section.

(f) For purposes of this section, "person" means any individual, association, consortium, corporation, partnership, unit of State or local government, or other group, entity, or organization. (1889, c. 168; Rev., s. 3687; C.S., s. 4306; 1957, c. 1437, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 77; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2009-508, s. 1; 2021-78, s. 5(a); 2023-63, s. 11(a).)

**§ 14-135.1. Wood load tickets required for certain wood product sales; exceptions; penalties.**

(a) Definition. – For purposes of this section, the term "wood product" means trees, timber, wood, or any combination thereof.

(b) Requirement. – Except as provided in this section, whenever a timber buyer or timber operator purchases wood product by the load directly from a timber grower or seller and the load is sold by weight, cord, or measure of board feet, the timber buyer or operator shall furnish the timber grower or seller, within 30 days of the completion of the wood product harvest, a separate, true, and accurate wood load ticket for each load of wood product removed from the timber grower's or seller's property. At a minimum, each wood load ticket shall include all of the following information provided by the timber grower or seller who sold the wood product:

- (1) The name of the timber grower or seller.
- (2) The county from which the wood product was severed.
- (3) The amount of wood product severed.
- (4) The date the wood product was delivered to the timber buyer or timber operator.

(c) Applicability. – The provisions of this section do not apply to the following:

- (1) The sale of wood for firewood only.
- (2) A landowner harvesting and processing their own timber.
- (3) Bulk or lump sum sales for an agreed total price for all timber purchased and sold in one transaction.

(d) Punishment. – Any person who violates this section is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (2021-78, s. 6(a).)

**§ 14-136. Setting fire to grass and brushlands and woodlands.**

If any person shall intentionally set fire to any grassland, brushland or woodland, except it be his own property, or in that case without first giving notice to all persons owning or in charge of lands adjoining the land intended to be fired, and without also taking care to watch such fire while burning and to extinguish it before it shall reach any lands near to or adjoining the lands so fired, he shall for every such offense be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor for the first offense, and for a second or any subsequent similar offense shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. If intent to damage the property of another shall be shown, said person shall be punished as a Class I felon. This section shall not prevent an action for the damages sustained by the owner of any property from such fires. For the purposes of this section, the term "woodland" is to be taken to include all forest areas, both timber and cutover land, and all second-growth stands on areas that have at one time been cultivated. Any person who shall furnish to the State, evidence sufficient for the conviction of a violation of this section shall receive the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to be paid from the State Fire Suppression Fund. (1777, c. 123, ss. 1, 2, P.R.; R.C., c. 16, ss. 1, 2; Code,

ss. 52, 53; Rev., s. 3346; 1915, c. 243, ss. 8, 11; 1919, c. 318; C.S., s. 4309; 1925, c. 61, s. 1; 1943, c. 661; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 47; 1981, c. 63, s. 1, c. 179, s. 14, c. 892; 1993, c. 539, ss. 78, 1188; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-137. Willfully or negligently setting fire to woods and fields.**

If any person, firm or corporation shall willfully or negligently set on fire, or cause to be set on fire, any woods, lands or fields, whatsoever, every such offender shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. This section shall apply only in those counties under the protection of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in its work of forest fire control. It shall not apply in the case of a landowner firing, or causing to be fired, his own open, nonwooded lands, or fields in connection with farming or building operations at the time and in the manner now provided by law: Provided, he shall have confined the fire at his own expense to said open lands or fields. (1907, c. 320, ss. 4, 5; C.S., s. 4310; 1925, c. 61, s. 2; 1941, c. 258; 1973, c. 1262, s. 86; 1977, c. 771, s. 4; 1989, c. 727, s. 218(3); 1993, c. 539, s. 79; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1997-443, s. 11A.119(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(u); 2015-263, s. 36(a).)

**§ 14-138: Repealed by Session Laws 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 72(6).**

**§ 14-138.1. Setting fire to grassland, brushland, or woodland.**

Any person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity who shall in any manner whatsoever start any fire upon any grassland, brushland, or woodland without fully extinguishing the same, shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor which may include a fine of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) or more than fifty dollars (\$50.00). For the purpose of this section, the term "woodland" includes timber and cutover land and all second growth stands on areas that were once cultivated. (1995, c. 210, s. 1.)

**§ 14-139. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 1100, s. 1.**

**§ 14-140: Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 767, s. 30(3).**

**§ 14-140.1. Certain fire to be guarded by watchman.**

Any person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity who shall burn any brush, grass, or other material whereby any property may be endangered or destroyed, without keeping and maintaining a careful watchman in charge of the burning, shall be guilty of an infraction which may include a fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00). Fire escaping from the brush, grass, or other material while burning shall be prima facie evidence of violation of this provision. (1995, c. 210, s. 2; 2015-263, s. 27.)

**§ 14-141. Burning or otherwise destroying crops in the field.**

Any person who shall willfully burn or destroy any other person's lawfully grown crop, pasture, or provender shall be punished as follows:

- (1) If the damage is two thousand dollars (\$2,000) or less, the person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- (2) If the damage is more than two thousand dollars (\$2,000), the person is guilty of a Class I felony. (1874-5, c. 133; Code, s. 985, subsec. 2; 1885, c. 42; Rev., s. 3339; C.S., s. 4313; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 47; 1981, c.



63, s. 1, c. 179, s. 14; 1991, c. 534; 1993, c. 539, s. 81; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-142. Injuries to dams and water channels of mills and factories.**

If any person shall cut away, destroy or otherwise injure any dam, or part thereof, or shall obstruct or damage any race, canal or other water channel erected, opened, used or constructed for the purpose of furnishing water for the operation of any mill, factory or machine works, or for the escape of water therefrom, he shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1866, c. 48; Code, s. 1087; Rev., s. 3678; C.S., s. 4315; 1969, c. 1224, s. 13; 1993, c. 539, s. 82; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-143. Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 700, s. 2.**

**§ 14-144. Injuring houses, churches, fences and walls.**

If any person shall, by any other means than burning or attempting to burn, unlawfully and willfully demolish, destroy, deface, injure or damage any of the houses or other buildings mentioned in Article 15 (Arson and Other Burnings) of this Chapter; or shall by any other means than burning or attempting to burn unlawfully and willfully demolish, pull down, destroy, deface, damage or injure any church, uninhabited house, outhouse or other house or building not mentioned in such article; or shall unlawfully and willfully burn, destroy, pull down, injure or remove any fence, wall or other enclosure, or any part thereof, surrounding or about any yard, garden, cultivated field or pasture, or about any church or graveyard, or about any factory or other house in which machinery is used, every person so offending shall be punished as follows:

- (1) If the damage is five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or less, the person is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.
- (2) If the damage is more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), the person is guilty of a Class I felony. (R.C., c. 34, s. 103; Code, s. 1062; Rev., s. 3673; C.S., s. 4317; 1957, c. 250, s. 2; 1969, c. 1224, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 83; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2008-15, s. 1; 2009-570, s. 3.)

**§ 14-145. Unlawful posting of advertisements.**

Any person who in any manner paints, prints, places, or affixes, or causes to be painted, printed, placed, or affixed, any business or commercial advertisement on or to any stone, tree, fence, stump, pole, automobile, building, or other object, which is the property of another without first obtaining the written consent of such owner thereof, or who in any manner paints, prints, places, puts, or affixes, or causes to be painted, printed, placed, or affixed, such an advertisement on or to any stone, tree, fence, stump, pole, mile-board, milestone, danger-sign, danger-signal, guide-sign, guide-post, automobile, building or other object within the limits of a public highway, shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (Ex. Sess. 1924, c. 109; 1993, c. 539, s. 84; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-146. Injuring bridges.**

If any person shall unlawfully and willfully demolish, destroy, break, tear down, injure or damage any bridge across any of the creeks or rivers or other streams in the State, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1883, c. 271; Code, s. 993; Rev., s. 3771; C.S., s. 4318; 1993, c. 539, s. 85; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-147. Removing, altering or defacing landmarks.**

If any person, firm or corporation shall knowingly remove, alter or deface any landmark in anywise whatsoever, or shall knowingly cause such removal, alteration or defacement to be done, such person, firm or corporation shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. This section shall not apply to landmarks, such as creeks and other small streams, which the interest of agriculture may require to be altered or turned from their channels, nor to such persons, firms or corporations as own the fee simple in the lands on both sides of the lines designated by the landmarks removed, altered or defaced. Nor shall this section apply to those adjoining landowners who may by agreement remove, alter or deface landmarks in which they alone are interested. (1858-9, c. 17; Code, s. 1063; Rev., s. 3674; 1915, c. 248; C.S., s. 4319; 1993, c. 539, s. 86; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-148. Defacing or desecrating grave sites.**

(a) It is unlawful to willfully:

- (1) Throw, place or put any refuse, garbage or trash in or on any cemetery.
- (2) Take away, disturb, vandalize, destroy or change the location of any stone, brick, iron or other material or fence enclosing a cemetery without authorization of law or consent of the surviving spouse or next of kin of the deceased.
- (3) Take away, disturb, vandalize, destroy, or tamper with any shrubbery, flowers, plants or other articles planted or placed within any cemetery to designate where human remains are interred or to preserve and perpetuate the memory and name of any person, without authorization of law or the consent of the surviving spouse or next of kin.

(b) The provisions of this section shall not apply to:

- (1) Ordinary maintenance and care of a cemetery by the owner, caretaker, or other person acting to facilitate cemetery operations by keeping the cemetery free from accumulated debris or other signs of neglect.
- (2) Conduct that is punishable under G.S. 14-149.
- (3) A professional archaeologist as defined in G.S. 70-28(4) acting pursuant to the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 70 of the General Statutes.

(c) Violation of this section is a Class I felony if the damage caused by the violation is one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more. Any other violation of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor. In passing sentence, the court shall consider the appropriateness of restitution or reparation as a condition of probation under G.S. 15A-1343(b)(9) as an alternative to actual imposition of a fine, jail term, or both. (1840, c. 6; R.C., c. 34, s. 102; Code, s. 1088; Rev., s. 3680; C.S., s. 4320; 1969, c. 987; 1981, c. 752, s. 1; c. 853, s. 4; 1993, c. 539, s. 87; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2007-122, s. 1.)

**§ 14-149. Desecrating, plowing over or covering up graves; desecrating human remains.**

(a) It is a Class I felony, without authorization of law or the consent of the surviving spouse or next of kin of the deceased, to knowingly and willfully:

- (1) Open, disturb, destroy, remove, vandalize or desecrate any casket or other repository of any human remains, by any means including plowing under, tearing up, covering over or otherwise obliterating or removing any grave or any portion thereof.

- (2) Take away, disturb, vandalize, destroy, tamper with, or deface any tombstone, headstone, monument, grave marker, grave ornamentation, or grave artifacts erected or placed within any cemetery to designate the place where human remains are interred or to preserve and perpetuate the memory and the name of any person. This subdivision shall not apply to the ordinary maintenance and care of a cemetery.
- (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2007-122, s. 2, effective December 1, 2007, and applicable to offenses committed on or after that date.

(a1) It is a Class H felony, without authorization of law or the consent of the surviving spouse or next of kin of the deceased, to knowingly and willfully disturb, destroy, remove, vandalize, or desecrate any human remains that have been interred in a cemetery.

(b) The provisions of this section shall not apply to a professional archaeologist as defined in G.S. 70-28(4) acting pursuant to the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 70 of the General Statutes. (1889, c. 130; Rev., s. 3681; 1919, c. 218; C.S., s. 4321; 1981, c. 752, s. 2; c. 853, s. 5; 2007-122, s. 2.)

**§§ 14-150 through 14-150.1. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 752, s. 3, effective October 1, 1981.**

**§ 14-150.2. Injuring energy facility.**

(a) Definition. – For purposes of this section, the term "energy facility" means any facility involved in (i) the production, storage, transmission, or distribution of electricity, fuel, or another form or source of energy or (ii) research, development, or demonstration related to the production, storage, transmission, or distribution of electricity, fuel, or another form or source of energy. This term includes any:

- (1) Facility in operation, under construction, or otherwise not functioning;
- (2) Line, wire, pipe, or other property or equipment used as part of the normal operation of the facility; and
- (3) Hardware, software, or other digital infrastructure necessary for the operations of a facility.

(b) Offense. – It is unlawful to knowingly and willfully (i) destroy, injure, or otherwise damage, or attempt to destroy, injure, or otherwise damage, an energy facility or (ii) obstruct, impede, or impair the services or transmissions of an energy facility, or attempt to obstruct, impede, or impair the services or transmissions of an energy facility.

(c) Punishment. – A person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of a Class C felony, except that a violation that results in the death of another is a Class B2 felony. Additionally, a person who violates subsection (b) of this section shall be ordered to pay a fine of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000).

(d) Merger. – Each violation of this section constitutes a separate offense and shall not merge with any other offense.

(e) Civil Remedies. – Any person whose property or person is injured by reason of a violation of subsection (b) of this section shall have a right of action on account of such injury done against the person who committed the violation and any person who acts as an accessory before or after the fact, aids or abets, solicits, conspires, or lends material support to the violation of this section. If damages are assessed in such case the plaintiff shall be entitled to recover treble the amount of damages fixed by the verdict or punitive damages pursuant to Chapter 1D of the General

Statutes, together with costs, including attorneys' fees. A violation of this subsection (b) of this section shall constitute willful or wanton conduct within the meaning of G.S. 1D-5(7) in any civil action filed as a result of the violation. The rights and remedies provided by this subsection are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law. For purposes of this subsection, the term "damages" includes actual and consequential damages.

(f) Nothing in this section shall apply to demolition work and other activity that is performed at or on an energy facility by the owner or operator of the facility, or an agent of the owner or operator authorized to perform such work or activity by the owner or operator.

(g) The provisions of subsection (e) of this section relating to treble damages shall not be made known to the trier of fact through any means, including voir dire, the introduction into evidence, argument, or instructions to the jury. (2023-47, s. 1.)

**§ 14-151. Interfering with gas, electric, and steam appliances or meters; penalties.**

(a) It is unlawful for any person to willfully, with intent to injure or defraud, commit any of the following acts:

- (1) Connect a tube, pipe, wire, or other instrument or contrivance with a pipe or wire used for conducting or supplying illuminating gas, fuel, natural gas, or electricity in such a manner as to supply the gas or electricity to any burner, orifice, lamp, or motor where the gas or electricity is or can be burned or used without passing through the meter or other instrument provided for registering the quantity consumed.
- (2) Obstruct, alter, bypass, tamper with, injure, or prevent the action of a meter or other instrument used to measure or register the quantity of illuminating fuel, natural gas, water, or electricity passing through the meter by a person other than an employee of the company owning or supplying any gas, water, or electric meter, who willfully detaches or disconnects the meter, or makes or reports any test of, or examines for the purpose of testing any meter so detached or disconnected.
- (3) In any manner whatever change, extend, or alter any service or other pipe, wire, or attachment of any kind, connecting with or through which natural or artificial gas or electricity is furnished from the gas mains or pipes of any person, without first procuring from the person written permission to make the change, extension, or alterations.
- (4) Make any connection or reconnection with the gas mains, water pipes, service pipes, or wires of any person, furnishing to consumers natural or artificial gas, water, or electricity, or turn on or off or in any manner interfere with any valve or stopcock or other appliance belonging to that person, and connected with the person's service or other pipes or wires, or enlarge the orifices of mixers, or use natural gas for heating purposes except through mixers, or electricity for any purpose without first procuring from the person a written permit to turn on or off the stopcock or valve, or to make the connection or reconnections, or to enlarge the orifice of mixers, or to use for heating purposes without mixers, or to interfere with the valves, stopcocks, wires, or other appliances of them, as the case may be.
- (5) Retain possession of or refuse to deliver any mixer, meter, lamp, or other appliance which may be leased or rented by any person, for the purpose of

furnishing gas, water, electricity, or power through the appliance, or sell, lend, or in any other manner dispose of the appliance to any person other than the person entitled to the possession of the appliance.

- (6) Set on fire any gas escaping from wells, broken or leaking mains, pipes, valves, or other appliances used by any person in conveying gas to consumers, or interfere in any manner with the wells, pipes, mains, gateboxes, valves, stopcocks, wires, cables, conduits, or any other appliances, machinery, or property of any person engaged in furnishing gas to consumers unless employed by or acting under the authority and direction of that person.
- (7) Open or cause to be opened, or reconnect or cause to be reconnected any valve lawfully closed or disconnected by a district steam corporation.
- (8) Turn on steam or cause it to be turned on or to reenter any premises when the steam has been lawfully stopped from entering the premises.
- (9) Reconnect electricity, gas, or water connections or otherwise turn back on one or more of those utilities when they have been lawfully disconnected or turned off by the provider of the utility.
- (10) Alter, bypass, interfere with, or cut off any load management device, equipment, or system which has been installed by the electricity supplier for the purpose of limiting the use of electricity at peak-load periods. However, if there has been a written request to remove the load management device, equipment, or system to the electric supplier and the electric supplier has not removed the device within two working days, there is no violation of this section.

(b) Any meter or service entrance facility found to have been altered, tampered with, or bypassed in a manner that would cause the meter to inaccurately measure and register the electricity, gas, or water consumed or which would cause the electricity, gas, or water to be diverted from the recording apparatus of the meter is prima facie evidence of intent to violate and of the violation of this section by the person in whose name the meter is installed or the person or persons so using or receiving the benefits of the unmeasured, unregistered, or diverted electricity, gas, or water.

(c) For the purposes of this section, the term "gas" means all types and forms of gas, including, but not limited to, natural gas.

(d) Criminal violations of this section are punishable as follows:

- (1) A violation of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- (2) A second or subsequent violation of this section is a Class H felony.
- (3) A violation of this section that results in significant property damage or public endangerment is a Class F felony.
- (4) Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation that results in the death of another is a Class D felony.

(e) Whoever is found in a civil action to have violated any provision of this section is liable to the electric, gas, or water supplier in triple the amount of losses and damages sustained or five thousand dollars (\$5,000), whichever is greater.

(f) Nothing in this section applies to licensed contractors while performing usual and ordinary services in accordance with recognized customs and standards. (1901, c. 735; Rev., s. 3666; C.S., s. 4323; 1993, c. 539, s. 88; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2013-88, s. 1; 2018-142, s. 2(a).)

**§ 14-151.1: Repealed by Session Laws 2013-88, s. 2, effective December 1, 2013, and applicable to offenses committed on or after that date.**

**§ 14-152. Repealed by Session Laws 2023-47, s. 4, effective December 1, 2023.**

**§ 14-153. Tampering with engines and boilers.**

If any person shall willfully turn out water from any boiler or turn the bolts of any engine or boiler, or meddle or tamper with such boiler or engine, or any other machinery in connection with any boiler or engine, causing loss, damage, danger or delay to the owner in the prosecution of his work, he shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1901, c. 733; Rev., s. 3667; C.S., s. 4325; 1993, c. 539, s. 91; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-154. Injuring wires and other fixtures of telephone, broadband, broadcast, or cable telecommunications companies.**

If any person shall willfully injure, destroy, or pull down any telephone, broadband, broadcast, or cable telecommunications pedestal or pole, or any apparatus, equipment, or fixture used in the transmission of telephone, broadband, broadcast, or cable telecommunications, or any apparatus, equipment, or fixture related to broadcast or wireless communications regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, that person shall be guilty of a Class C felony. (1881, c. 4; 1883, c. 103; Code, s. 1118; Rev., s. 3847; 1907, c. 827, s. 1; C.S., s. 4326; 1993, c. 539, s. 92; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2007-301, s. 2; 2023-47, s. 3.)

**§ 14-155. Unauthorized connections with telephone or telegraph.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to tap or make any connection with any wire or apparatus of any telephone or telegraph company operating in this State, except such connection as may be authorized by the person or corporation operating such wire or apparatus. Any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. Each day's continuance of such unlawful connection shall be a separate offense. No connection approved by the Federal Communications Commission or the North Carolina Utilities Commission shall be a violation of this section. (1911, c. 113; C.S., s. 4327; 1973, c. 648; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1185, s. 2; 1993, c. 539, s. 93; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-156. Repealed by Session Laws 2023-47, s. 4, effective December 1, 2023.**

**§ 14-157. Felling trees on telephone and electric-power wires.**

If any person shall negligently and carelessly cut or fell any tree, or any limb or branch therefrom, in such a manner as to cause the same to fall upon and across any telephone, electric light or electric-power-transmission wire, from which any injury to such wire shall be occasioned, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor, and shall also be liable to penalty of fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each and every offense. (1903, c. 616; Rev., s. 3849; 1907, c. 827, s. 2; C.S., s. 4329; 1969, c. 1224, s. 9; 1993, c. 539, s. 95; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-158. Interfering with telephone lines.**

If any person shall unnecessarily disconnect the wire or in any other way render any telephone line, or any part of such line, unfit for use in transmitting messages, or shall unnecessarily cut, tear

down, destroy or in any way render unfit for the transmission of messages any part of the wire of a telephone line, he shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1901, c. 318; Rev., s. 3845; C.S., s. 4330; 1969, c. 1224, s. 3; 1993, c. 539, s. 96; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-159. Injuring buildings or fences; taking possession of house without consent.**

If any person shall deface, injure or damage any house, uninhabited house or other building belonging to another; or deface, damage, pull down, injure, remove or destroy any fence or wall enclosing, in whole or in part, the premises belonging to another; or shall move into, take possession of and/or occupy any house, uninhabited house or other building situated on the premises belonging to another, without having first obtained authority so to do and consent of the owner or agent thereof, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1929, c. 192, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 97; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-159.1. Contaminating a public water system.**

(a) A person commits the offense of contaminating a public water system, as defined in G.S. 130A-313(10), if he willfully or wantonly:

- (1) Contaminates, adulterates or otherwise impurifies or attempts to contaminate, adulterate or otherwise impurify the water in a public water system, including the water source, with any toxic chemical, biological agent or radiological substance that is harmful to human health, except those added in approved concentrations for water treatment operations; or
- (2) Damages or tampers with the property or equipment of a public water system with the intent to impair the services of the public water system.

(b) Any person who commits the offense defined in this section is guilty of a Class C felony. (1983, c. 507, s. 1; 1985, c. 509, s. 4, c. 689, s. 5; 1993, c. 539, s. 1189; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-159.2. Interference with animal research.**

(a) It is unlawful for a person willfully to commit any of the following acts:

- (1) The unauthorized entry into any research facility where animals are kept within the facility for research in the advancement of medical, veterinary, dental, or biological sciences, with the intent to (i) disrupt the normal operation of the research facility, or (ii) damage the research facility or any personal property located thereon, or (iii) release from any enclosure or restraining device any animal kept within the research facility, or (iv) interfere with the care of any animal kept within the research facility;
- (2) The damaging of any such research facility or any personal property located thereon;
- (3) The unauthorized release from any enclosure or restraining device of any animal kept within any research facility; or
- (4) The interference with the care of any animal kept within any research facility.

(b) Any person who commits an offense under subsection (a) of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Any person who commits an offense under subsection (a) of this section that involves the release from any enclosure or restraining device of any animal having an infectious disease shall be guilty of a Class I felony.

(d) As a condition of probation, the court may order a person convicted under this section to make restitution to the owner of the animal for damages, including the cost of restoring the animal to confinement and of restoring the animal to its health condition prior to any release, and for damages to personal property, including materials, equipment, data, and records, and real property caused by the interference. If the interference causes the failure of an experiment, the restitution may include all costs of repeating the experiment, including replacement of the animals, labor, and materials.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any rights or causes of action of a person damaged through interference with animal research. (1991, c. 203; 1993, c. 539, ss. 98, 1190; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-159.3. Trespass to land on motorized all-terrain vehicle.**

(a) No person shall operate any motorized all-terrain vehicle:

- (1) On any private property not owned by the operator, without the written consent of the owner; or
- (2) Within the banks of any stream or waterway, but excluding a sound or the Atlantic Ocean, the adjacent lands of which are not owned by the operator, without the consent of the owner or outside the restrictions imposed by the owner.

(a1) A landowner who gives a person written consent to operate an all-terrain vehicle on the landowner's property owes the person the same duty of care that the landowner owes a trespasser.

(b) A "motorized all-terrain vehicle", as used in this section, is a two or more wheeled vehicle designed for recreational off-road use.

(c) A violation of this section shall be a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1997-456, s. 56.8; 1997-487, s. 1; 2014-103, s. 11(a); 2015-26, s. 2.1; 2017-102, s. 4.)

**§ 14-159.4. Cutting, mutilating, defacing, or otherwise injuring property to obtain nonferrous metals.**

(a) Definition of Nonferrous Metals. – For purposes of this section, the term "nonferrous metals" means metals not containing significant quantities of iron or steel, including, but not limited to, copper wire, copper clad steel wire, copper pipe, copper bars, copper sheeting, aluminum other than aluminum cans, a product that is a mixture of aluminum and copper, catalytic converters, lead-acid batteries, and stainless steel beer kegs or containers.

(b) Prohibited Act. – It is unlawful for a person to willfully and wantonly cut, mutilate, deface, or otherwise injure any personal or real property of another, including any fixtures or improvements, for the purpose of obtaining nonferrous metals in any amount.

(c) Punishment. – Violations of this section are punishable as follows:

- (1) Default. – If the direct injury is to property, and the amount of loss in value to the property, the amount of repairs necessary to return the property to its condition before the act, or the property loss (including fixtures or improvements) is less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), a violation shall be punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. If the applicable amount is one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more, but less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), a violation shall be punishable as a Class H felony. If the applicable amount is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more, a violation shall be deemed an aggravated offense and shall be punishable as a Class F felony.



- (2) When person suffers serious injury. – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in a serious injury to another person is punishable as a Class A1 misdemeanor.
  - (3) When person suffers a serious bodily injury. – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in serious bodily injury to another person is punishable as a Class F felony. For purposes of this subdivision, "serious bodily injury" is as defined in G.S. 14-32.4.
  - (4) When person is killed. – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in the death of another person is punishable as a Class D felony.
  - (5) When critical infrastructure affected. – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in the disruption of communication or electrical service to critical infrastructure or to more than 10 customers of the communication or electrical service is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- (d) Liability. – This section does not create or impose a duty of care upon the owner of personal or real property that would not otherwise exist under common law. A public or private owner of personal or real property shall not be civilly liable:
- (1) To a person who is injured while committing or attempting to commit a violation of this section.
  - (2) To a person who is injured while a third party is committing or attempting to commit a violation of this section.
  - (3) For a person's injuries caused by a dangerous condition created as a result of a violation of this section, when the owner does not know and could not have reasonably known of the dangerous condition. (2012-46, s. 31.)

**§ 14-159.5: Reserved for future codification purposes.**