

Article 31.

Tort Claims against State Departments and Agencies.

**§ 143-291. Industrial Commission constituted a court to hear and determine claims; damages; liability insurance in lieu of obligation under Article.**

(a) The North Carolina Industrial Commission is hereby constituted a court for the purpose of hearing and passing upon tort claims against the State Board of Education, the Board of Transportation, and all other departments, institutions and agencies of the State. The Industrial Commission shall determine whether or not each individual claim arose as a result of the negligence of any officer, employee, involuntary servant or agent of the State while acting within the scope of his office, employment, service, agency or authority, under circumstances where the State of North Carolina, if a private person, would be liable to the claimant in accordance with the laws of North Carolina. If the Commission finds that there was negligence on the part of an officer, employee, involuntary servant or agent of the State while acting within the scope of his office, employment, service, agency or authority that was the proximate cause of the injury and that there was no contributory negligence on the part of the claimant or the person in whose behalf the claim is asserted, the Commission shall determine the amount of damages that the claimant is entitled to be paid, including medical and other expenses, and by appropriate order direct the payment of damages as provided in subsection (a1) of this section, but in no event shall the amount of damages awarded exceed the amounts authorized in G.S. 143-299.2 cumulatively to all claimants on account of injury and damage to any one person arising out of a single occurrence. Community colleges and technical colleges shall be deemed State agencies for purposes of this Article. The fact that a claim may be brought under more than one Article under this Chapter shall not increase the foregoing maximum liability of the State.

(a1) The unit of State government that employed the employee at the time the cause of action arose shall pay the first one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) of liability, and the balance of any payment owed shall be paid in accordance with G.S. 143-299.4.

(b) If a State agency, otherwise authorized to purchase insurance, purchases a policy of commercial liability insurance providing coverage in an amount at least equal to the limits of the State Tort Claims Act, such insurance coverage shall be in lieu of the State's obligation for payment under this Article.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-184, s. 2(e), effective July 1, 2022.

(d) Liability in tort of the State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees for noncertifications as defined under G.S. 58-50-61 shall be only under this Article.

(e) This Article provides the sole and exclusive remedy for any claim that arises as a result of the negligence of any officer, employee, involuntary servant, or agent of the State while acting within the scope of his office, employment, service, agency, or authority, and the North Carolina Industrial Commission is the sole and exclusive forum for hearing any such claims. Any such claims filed in any other forum arising out of or relating to the same subject matter against the officer, employee, involuntary servant, or agent of the State is precluded. (1951, c. 1059, s. 1; 1953, c. 1314; 1955, c. 400, s. 1; c. 1102, s. 1; c. 1361; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; 1965, c. 256, s. 1; 1967, c. 1206, s. 1; 1971, c. 893, s. 1; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1225, s. 1; 1977, c. 464, s. 34; c. 529, ss. 1, 2; 1979, c. 1053, s. 1; 1987, c. 684, s. 1; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1087, s. 1; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 769, s. 19.33(a); c. 777, s. 5(a); 2000-67, ss. 7A(a), 7A(b); 2001-446, s. 5(f); 2007-323, s. 28.22A(o); 2007-345, s. 12; 2021-184, s. 2(e); 2023-134, s. 31.1(a).)