

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

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**HOUSE BILL 1479**

Short Title: Fire Safety in Jails.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Representatives Thompson; Buchanan, Underhill, Walend, and M. Crawford.

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Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

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May 28, 2002

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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2 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DIVISION OF FACILITY SERVICES TO STUDY AND  
3 REEVALUATE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR LOCAL CONFINEMENT  
4 FACILITIES TO PROVIDE FOR IMPROVED FIRE PROTECTION FOR STAFF  
5 AND INMATES AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT THAT  
6 STUDY.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** The Division of Facility Services of the Department of Health  
9 and Human Services shall study and reevaluate the minimum standards for local  
10 confinement facilities developed by the Division pursuant to G.S. 153A-221 and make  
11 the necessary revisions to those standards to provide for improved fire protection for  
12 inmates housed in those facilities and the staff supervising them. The revised standards  
13 shall ensure that local confinement facilities meet modern fire safety standards,  
14 including:

- 15 (1) Properly operating smoke detectors that are checked on a sufficiently  
16 frequent basis;
- 17 (2) Fire evacuation plans and staffs that are well-trained in implementing  
18 those plans;
- 19 (3) Sprinkler systems and smoke ventilation systems sufficient to suppress  
20 the effects of a fire while inmates are being evacuated;
- 21 (4) Electronic doors that allow staff to release inmates from remote  
22 locations in the event of fire or other emergency; and
- 23 (5) Staffing standards sufficient to provide the continuous supervision  
24 necessary to respond in the event of a fire or other emergency.

25 **SECTION 2.** In designing a schedule for the enforcement of the revised  
26 minimum standards for local confinement facilities established pursuant to Section 1 of  
27 this act, the Division of Facility Services shall be sensitive to the time and costs  
28 involved in upgrading or retrofitting older facilities.

1           **SECTION 3.** It is the intent of the General Assembly to assist counties with  
2 the cost of upgrading or retrofitting local confinement facilities in compliance with the  
3 revised minimum standards for local confinement facilities established pursuant to this  
4 act.

5           **SECTION 4.** The Division of Facility Services shall report by March 1,  
6 2003, to the Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Health  
7 and Human Services and the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on  
8 Justice and Public Safety on the revisions to the minimum standards for local  
9 confinement facilities pursuant to Section 1 of this act and on any other actions taken by  
10 the Division to improve fire safety in local confinement facilities.

11           **SECTION 5.** There is appropriated to the Division of Facility Services of  
12 the Department of Health and Human Services the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars  
13 (\$25,000) for the 2002-2003 fiscal year to cover the costs of conducting the study  
14 mandated by this act.

15           **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2002.