

SUBCHAPTER X. EXECUTION.

Article 28.

Execution.

§ 1-302. Judgment enforced by execution.

Where a judgment requires the payment of money or the delivery of real or personal property it may be enforced in those respects by execution, as provided in this Article. Where it requires the performance of any other act a certified copy of the judgment may be served upon the party against whom it is given, or upon the person or officer who is required thereby or by law to obey the same, and his obedience thereto enforced. If he refuses, he may be punished by the court as for contempt. (C.C.P., s. 257; Code, s. 441; Rev., s. 615; C.S., s. 663.)

§ 1-303. Kinds of; signed by clerk; when sealed.

There are three kinds of execution: one against the property of the judgment debtor, another against his person, and the third for the delivery of the possession of real or personal property, or such delivery with damages for withholding the same. They shall be deemed the process of the court, and shall be subscribed by the clerk, and when to run out of his county, must be sealed with the seal of his court. (C.C.P., s. 258; Code, s. 442; Rev., s. 616; C.S., s. 664.)

§ 1-304. Against married woman.

An execution may issue against a married woman, and it must direct the levy and collection of the amount of the judgment against her from her separate property, and not otherwise. (C.C.P., s. 259; Code, s. 443; Rev., s. 617; C.S., s. 665.)

§ 1-305. Clerk to issue, in six weeks; limitations on issuance.

(a) Subject to the provisions of G.S. 1A-1 (Rule 62) and subsection (b) below, the clerk of superior court shall issue executions on all unsatisfied judgments entered in the clerk's court, which are in full force and effect, upon the request of any party or person entitled thereto and upon payment of the necessary fees; provided, however, that the clerks of the superior court shall issue executions on all judgments entered in their respective courts on forfeiture of bonds in criminal cases within six weeks of the entry of the judgment, without any request or any advance payment of fees. Every clerk who fails to comply with the requirements of this section is liable to be amerced in the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for the benefit of the party aggrieved, under the same rules that are provided by law for amercing sheriffs.

(b) The clerk may not issue an execution unless

- (1) The judgment debtor's exemptions have been designated, or
- (2) The judgment debtor has waived his exemptions as provided in G.S. 1C-1601(c), or
- (3) The clerk determines that the exemptions are inapplicable to the particular claim as authorized by G.S. 1C-1603(a)(3). (1850, c. 17, ss. 1, 2, 3; R.C., c. 45, s. 29; Code, s. 470; Rev., s. 618; C.S., s. 666; 1953, c. 470; 1959, c. 1295; 1973, c. 1070, s. 1; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1224, s. 15; 2010-96, s. 24(a); 2024-33, s. 20.)

§ 1-306. Enforcement as of course.

The party in whose favor judgment is given, and in case of the party's death, the party's personal representatives duly appointed, may at any time after the entry of judgment proceed to enforce it by

execution, as provided in this Article. However, no execution upon any judgment which requires the payment of money may be issued at any time after ten years from the date of the entry thereof; but this proviso shall not apply to any execution issued solely for the purpose of enforcing the lien of a judgment upon any homestead, which has or shall hereafter be allotted within the ten years from the date of entry of the judgment, or any judgment directing the payment of alimony. Further, no execution upon any judgment which requires the recovery of personal property may be issued at any time after 10 years from the date of the entry of the judgment. (C.C.P., s. 255; Code, s. 437; Rev., s. 619; C.S., s. 667; 1927, c. 24; 1935, c. 98; 2010-96, s. 24(b).)

§ 1-307. Issued from and returned to court of rendition.

Executions and other process for the enforcement of judgments can issue only from the court in which the judgment for the enforcement of the execution or other final process was rendered; and the returns of executions or other final process shall be made to the court of the county from which it issued. In all cases prior to the first day of March, 1945, where a judgment has been rendered in the superior court of one county and the transcript thereof has been docketed in the office of the clerk of the superior court of some other county or counties, all executions heretofore issued on such docketed transcript of judgment and all homestead proceedings, execution sales, judicial sales and assignments related thereto and based thereon are hereby declared to be lawful, legal and binding upon all purchasers, judgment debtors, judgment creditors, assignors and assignees, and on all parties to the original action and on all parties to or affected by any proceedings related to or based upon such execution, and all such sales, purchases, proceedings and assignments are hereby validated. (1871-2, c. 74; 1881, c. 75; Code, s. 444; Rev., s. 623; C.S., s. 669; 1945, c. 773.)

§ 1-308. To what counties issued.

When the execution is against the property of the judgment debtor, it may be issued to the sheriff of any county where the judgment is docketed. No execution may issue from the superior court upon any judgment until such judgment shall be docketed in the county to which the execution is to be issued. When it requires the delivery of real or personal property, it must be issued to the sheriff of the county where the property, or some part thereof, is situated. Execution may be issued at the same time to different counties. (C.C.P., s. 259; 1871-2, c. 74; 1881, c. 75; Code, s. 443; 1905, c. 412; Rev., s. 622; C.S., s. 670; 1953, c. 884.)

§ 1-309. Sale of land under execution.

Real property adjudged to be sold must be sold in the county where it lies, by the sheriff of the county or by a referee appointed by the court for that purpose; and thereupon the sheriff or referee must execute a conveyance to the purchaser, which conveyance shall be effectual to pass the rights and interests of the parties adjudged to be sold. (C.C.P., s. 259; Code, s. 443; Rev., s. 622; C.S., s. 671.)

§ 1-310. When dated and returnable.

(a) Executions shall issue in accordance with G.S. 1A-1, Rule 62. In no case shall an execution against property issue until 10 days after entry of judgment. Executions shall be dated as of the day on which they were issued and are returnable to the court from which they were issued not more than 90 days from that date. If an execution sale is postponed pursuant to G.S. 1-339.58, the 90-day period to return the execution to the court is extended by the number of days the sale is postponed.

(b) The sheriff shall separately notate on the return of execution for a judgment requiring the payment of money (i) any amount collected without an execution sale and the date of collection and, if multiple payments to the sheriff are collected on different dates pursuant to a single writ of execution, the individual dates of collection and the amount collected on each date and (ii) the date of levy and description of property levied and sold through an execution sale pursuant to Article 29B of this Chapter. (1870-1, c. 42, s. 7; 1873-4, c. 7; Code, s. 449; 1903, c. 544; Rev., s. 624; C.S., s. 672; 1927, c. 110; 1931, c. 172; 1953, c. 697; 1971, c. 381, s. 12; 1973, c. 1070, s. 2; 1977, c. 74, s. 1; 2021-47, s. 14(b); 2022-60, s. 2(a).)

§ 1-311. Against the person.

If the action is one in which the defendant might have been arrested, an execution against the person of the judgment debtor may be issued to any county within the State, after the return of an execution against his property wholly or partly unsatisfied. But no execution shall issue against the person of a judgment debtor, unless an order of arrest has been served, as provided in the Article Arrest and Bail, or unless the complaint contains a statement of facts showing one or more of the causes of arrest required by law, whether such statement of facts is necessary to the cause of action or not. Provided, that where the facts are found by a jury, the verdict shall contain a finding of facts establishing the right to execution against the person; and where jury trial is waived and the court finds the facts, the court shall find facts establishing the right to execution against the person. Such findings of fact shall include a finding that the defendant either (i) is about to flee the jurisdiction to avoid paying his creditors, (ii) has concealed or diverted assets in fraud of his creditors, or (iii) will do so unless immediately detained. If defendant appears at the hearing on the debt and the judge has reason to believe that the defendant is indigent, he shall inform the defendant that if he is an indigent person he is entitled to services of counsel under G.S. 7A-451, that he may petition for preliminary release on the basis of his indigency, that if he does so he will have an opportunity within 72 hours to suggest to a judge his indigency for purposes of appointment of counsel and provisional release, and that the judge will thereupon immediately appoint counsel for him if it is adjudged that he is unable to pay a lawyer. If defendant appears at the hearing on the debt and the judge provisionally concludes he is indigent, counsel should be appointed immediately pursuant to rules adopted by the Office of Indigent Defense Services. (C.C.P., s. 260; Code, s. 447; 1891, c. 541, s. 2; Rev., s. 625; C.S., s. 673; 1947, c. 781; 1977, c. 649, s. 1; 2000-144, s. 14.)

§ 1-312. Rights against property of defendant dying in execution.

Parties at whose suit the body of a person is taken in execution for a judgment recovered, their executors or administrators, may after the death of the person so taken and dying in execution, have the same rights against the property of the person deceased, as they might have had if that person had never been in execution. (21 James I, s. 24; R.C., c. 45, s. 28; Code, s. 469; Rev., s. 626; C.S., s. 674.)

§ 1-313. Form of execution.

The execution must be directed to the sheriff, or to the coroner when the sheriff is a party to or interested in the action. In those counties where the office of coroner is abolished, or is vacant, and in which process is required to be executed on the sheriff, the authority to execute such process shall be vested in the clerk of court; however, the clerk of court is hereby empowered to designate and direct by appropriate order some person to act in the clerk of court's stead to execute the same. The execution must also be subscribed by the clerk of the court, and must refer to the judgment,

stating the county where the judgment roll or transcript is filed, the names of the parties, the amount of the judgment, if it is for money, the amount actually due thereon, and the time of docketing in the county to which the execution is issued, and shall require the officer substantially as follows:

- (1) Against Property – No Lien on Personal Property until Levy. – If it is against the property of the judgment debtor, it shall require the officer to satisfy the judgment out of his personal property; and if sufficient personal property cannot be found, out of the real property belonging to him on the day when the judgment was docketed in the county, or at any time thereafter; but no execution against the property of a judgment debtor is a lien on his personal property, as against any bona fide purchaser from him for value, or as against any other execution, except from the levy thereof.
- (2) Against Property in Hands of Personal Representative. – If it is against real or personal property in the hands of personal representatives, heirs, devisees, tenants of real property or trustees it shall require the officer to satisfy the judgment out of such property.
- (3) Against the Person. – If it is against the person of the judgment debtor, it shall require the officer to arrest him, and commit him to the jail of the county until he pays the judgment or is released or discharged according to law. The execution shall include a statement that if the defendant is an indigent person he is entitled to services of counsel, that he may petition for preliminary release on the basis of his indigency, that if he does so he will have an opportunity within 72 hours to suggest to a judge his indigency for purposes of appointment of counsel and provisional release, and that the judge will thereupon immediately appoint counsel for him if it is adjudged that he is unable to pay a lawyer.
- (4) For Delivery of Specific Property. – If it is for the delivery of the possession of real or personal property, it shall require the officer to deliver the possession of the same, particularly describing it, to the party entitled thereto, and may at the same time require the officer to satisfy any costs, damages, rents, or profits recovered by the same judgment, out of the personal property of the party against whom it was rendered, and the value of the property for which the judgment was recovered, to be specified therein, if a delivery cannot be had; and if sufficient personal property cannot be found, then out of the real property belonging to him on the day when the judgment was docketed, or at any time thereafter, and in that respect is deemed an execution against property.
- (5) For Purchase Money of Land. – If the answer in an action for recovery of a debt contracted for the purchase of land does not deny, or if the jury finds, that the debt was so contracted, it is the duty of the court to have embodied in the judgment that the debt sued on was contracted for the purchase money of the land, describing it briefly; and it is also the duty of the clerk to set forth in the execution that the said debt was contracted for the purchase of the land, the description of which must be set out briefly as in the complaint. (C.C.P., s. 261; 1868-9, c. 148; 1879, c. 217; Code, ss. 234-236, 448; Rev., s. 627; C.S., s. 675; 1971, c. 653, s. 2; 1977, c. 649, s. 2; 2011-284, s. 3.)

§ 1-314. Variance between judgment and execution.

When property has been sold by an officer by virtue of an execution or other process commanding sale, no variance between the execution and the judgment whereon it was issued, in the sum due, in the manner in which it is due, or in the time when it is due, invalidates or affects the title of the purchaser of such property. (1848, c. 53; R.C., c. 44, s. 13; Code, s. 1347; Rev., s. 628; C.S., s. 676.)

§ 1-315. Property liable to sale under execution; bill of sale.

(a) The following property of the judgment debtor, not exempted from sale under the Constitution and laws of this State, may be levied on and sold under execution:

- (1) Goods, chattels, and real property belonging to him.
- (2) Leasehold estates of three years duration or more owned by him.
- (3) Equitable and legal rights of redemption in personal and real property pledged or mortgaged by him, or transferred to a trustee for security by him.
- (4) Real property or goods and chattels of which any person is seized or possessed in trust for him.
- (5) Choses in action represented by instruments which are indispensable to the chose in action.
- (6) Choses in action represented by indispensable instruments, which are secured by any interest in property, together with the security interest in property.
- (7) Interests as vendee under conditional sales contracts of personal property.

(b) Upon the sale under execution of any property or interest for which no provision is otherwise made under this article for the furnishing of a deed or other instrument of title, the officer holding the sale shall execute and deliver to the purchaser a bill of sale.

(c) No execution shall be levied on growing crops until they are matured. (5 Geo. II, c. 7, s. 4; 1777, c. 115, s. 29, P.R.; 1812, c. 830, ss. 1, 2, P.R.; 1822, c. 1172, P.R.; 1844, c. 35; R.C., c. 45, ss. 1-5, 11; Code, ss. 450, 453; Rev., ss. 629, 632; 1919, c. 30; C.S., s. 677; 1961, c. 81.)

§ 1-316. Sale of trust estates; purchaser's title.

Upon the sale under execution of trust estates whereof the judgment debtor is beneficiary the sheriff shall execute a deed to the purchaser, and the purchaser thereof shall hold and enjoy the same freed and discharged from all encumbrances of the trustee. (1812, c. 830, P.R.; R.C., c. 45, s. 4; Code, s. 452; Rev., s. 630; C.S., s. 678.)

§ 1-317. Sheriff's deed on sale of equity of redemption.

The sheriff selling equitable and legal rights of redemption shall set forth in the deed to the purchaser thereof that the said estates were under mortgage at the time of judgment, or levy in the case of personal property and sale. (1812, c. 830, s. 2, P.R.; 1822, c. 1172, P.R.; R.C., c. 45, s. 5; Code, s. 451; Rev., s. 631; C.S., s. 679.)

§ 1-318. Forthcoming bond for personal property.

If a sheriff or other officer who has levied an execution or other process upon personal property permits it to remain with the possessor, the officer may take a bond, attested by a credible witness, for the forthcoming thereof to answer the execution or process; but the officer remains, nevertheless, in all respects liable as heretofore to the plaintiff's claim. (1807, c. 731, s. 3, P.R.; 1828, c. 12, s. 2; R.C., c. 45, s. 21; Code, s. 463; Rev., s. 633; C.S., s. 680.)

§ 1-319. Procedure on giving bond; subsequent levies.

When the forthcoming bond is taken the officer must specify therein the property levied upon and furnished to the surety a list of the property in writing under his hand, attested by at least one credible witness, and stating therein the day of sale. The property levied upon is deemed in the custody of the surety, as the bailee of the officer. All other executions thereafter levied on this property create a lien on the same from and after the respective levies, and shall be satisfied accordingly out of the proceeds of the sale of the property; but the officer thereafter levying shall not take the property out of the custody of the surety. But in all such cases sales of chattels shall take place within thirty days after the first levy; and if sale is not made within that time any other officer who has levied upon the property may seize and sell it. (1844, c. 34; 1846, c. 50; R.C., c. 45, s. 22; Code, s. 464; Rev., s. 634; C.S., s. 682.)

§ 1-320. Summary remedy on forthcoming bond.

If the condition of such bond be broken, the sheriff or other officer, on giving 10 days' previous notice in writing to any obligor therein, may on motion have judgment against him in a summary manner, before the superior court or before the district court, as the case may be, of the county in which the officer resides, for all damages which the officer has sustained, or may be adjudged liable to sustain, not exceeding the penalty of the bond, to be ascertained by a jury, under the direction of the court. (1822, c. 1141, P.R.; R.C., c. 45, s. 23; Code, s. 465; Rev., s. 635; C.S., s. 681; 1971, c. 268, s. 14.)

§ 1-321. Entry of returns on judgment docket; penalty.

When an execution is returned, the return of the sheriff or other officer must be noted by the clerk on the judgment docket; and when it is returned wholly or partially satisfied, it is the duty of the clerk of the court to which it is returned to send a copy of such last-mentioned return, under his hand, to the clerk of the superior court of each county in which such judgment is docketed, who must note such copy in his judgment docket, opposite the judgment, and file the copy with the transcript of the docket of the judgment in his office. A clerk failing to send a copy of the payments on the execution or judgment to the clerks of the superior court of the counties wherein a transcript of the judgment has been docketed, and a clerk failing to note said payment on the judgment docket of his court, shall, on motion, be fined one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nisi, and the judgment shall be made absolute upon notice to show cause at the succeeding session of the superior court of his county. (1871-2, c. 74, s. 2; 1881, c. 75; Code, s. 445; Rev., s. 636; C.S., s. 683; 1971, c. 381, s. 12.)

§ 1-322. Cost of keeping livestock; officer's account.

The court shall make a reasonable allowance to officers for keeping and maintaining horses, cattle, hogs, or sheep, and all other property taken into their custody under legal process, the keeping of which is chargeable to them; and this allowance may be retained by the officers out of the sales of the property, in preference to the satisfaction of the process under which the property was seized or sold. The officer must make out his account and, if required, give the debtor or his agent a copy of it, signed by his own hand, and must return the account with the execution or other process, under which the property has been seized or sold, to the court to whom the execution or process is returnable, and shall swear to the correctness of the several items set forth; otherwise he shall not be permitted to retain the allowance. (1807, c. 731, P.R.; R.C., c. 45, ss. 25, 26; Code, ss. 466, 467; Rev., ss. 637, 638; C.S., s. 684; 1971, c. 268, s. 15.)

§ 1-323. Purchaser of defective title; remedy against defendant.

Where real or personal property is sold on any execution or decree, by any officer authorized to make the sale, and the sale is made legally and in good faith, and the property did not belong to the person against whose estate the execution or decree was issued, by reason of which the purchaser has been deprived of the property, or been compelled to pay damages in lieu thereof to the owner, the purchaser, his executors or administrators, may sue the person against whom such execution or decree was issued, or the person legally representing him, in a civil action, and recover such sum as he may have paid for the property, with interest from the time of payment; but the property, if personal, must be present at the sale and actually delivered to the purchaser. (1807, c. 723, P.R.; R.C., c. 45, s. 27; Code, s. 468; Rev., s. 639; C.S., s. 685.)

§ 1-324. Repealed by Session Laws 1949, c. 719, s. 2.

§ 1-324.1. Judgment against corporation; property subject to execution.

If a judgment is rendered against a corporation, the plaintiff may sue out such executions against its property as is provided by law to be issued against the property of natural persons, which executions may be levied as well on the current money as on the goods, chattels, lands and tenements of such corporation. (1901, c. 2, s. 66; Rev., s. 1212; C.S., s. 1201; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2.)

§ 1-324.2. Agent must furnish information as to corporate officers and property.

Every agent or person having charge or control of any property of the corporation, on request of a public officer having for service a writ of execution against it, shall furnish to him the names of the directors and officers thereof, and a schedule of all its property, including debts due or to become due, so far as he has knowledge of the same. (1901, c. 2, s. 67; Rev., s. 1213; C.S., s. 1202; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2.)

§ 1-324.3. Shares subject to execution; agent must furnish information.

Any share or interest in any bank, insurance company, or other joint stock company, that is or may be incorporated under the authority of this State, or incorporated or established under the authority of the United States, belonging to the defendant in execution, may be taken and sold by virtue of such execution in the same manner as goods and chattels. The clerk, cashier, or other officer of such company who has at the time the custody of the books of the company shall, upon being shown the writ of execution, give to the officer having it a certificate of the number of shares or amount of the interest held by the defendant in the company; and if he neglects or refuses to do so, or if he willfully gives a false certificate, he shall be liable to the plaintiff for the amount due on the execution, with costs. (1901, c. 2, ss. 69, 70; Rev., ss. 1214, 1215; C.S., s. 1203; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2.)

§ 1-324.4. Debts due corporation subject to execution; duty, etc., of agent.

If an officer holding an execution is unable to find other property belonging to the corporation liable to execution, he or the judgment creditor may elect to satisfy such execution in whole or in part out of any debts due the corporation, and it is the duty of any agent or person having custody of any evidence of such debt to deliver it to the officer, for the use of the creditor and such delivery, with a transfer to the officer in writing, for the use of the creditor and notice to the debtor, shall be a valid assignment thereof, and the creditor may sue for and collect the same in the name of the corporation, subject to such equitable set-offs on the part of the debtor as in other assignments.

Every agent or person who neglects or refuses to comply with the provisions of this section and G.S. 1-324.2 is liable to pay to the execution creditor the amount due on the execution, with costs. (1901, c. 2, s. 68; Rev., s. 1216; C.S., s. 1204; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2.)

§ 1-324.5. Violations of three preceding sections misdemeanor.

If any agent or person having charge or control of any property of a corporation, or any clerk, cashier, or other officer of a corporation, who has at the time the custody of the books of the company, or if any agent or person having custody of any evidence of debt due to a corporation, shall, on request of a public officer having in his hands for service an execution against the said corporation, willfully refuse to give to such officer the names of the directors and officers thereof, and a schedule of all its property, including debts due or to become due, or shall willfully refuse to give to such officer a certificate of the number of shares, or amount of interest held by such corporation in any other corporation, or shall willfully refuse to deliver to such officer any evidence of indebtedness due or to become due to such corporation, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1901, c. 2, ss. 67, 68, 70; Rev., s. 3690; C.S., s. 1205; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2; 1993, c. 539, s. 1; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 1-324.6. Proceedings when custodian of corporate books is a nonresident.

When the clerk, cashier, or other officer of any corporation incorporated under the laws of this State, who has the custody of the stock-registry books, is a nonresident of the State, it is the duty of the sheriff receiving a writ of execution issued out of any court of this State against the goods and chattels of a defendant in execution holding stock in such company to send by mail a notice in writing, directed to the nonresident clerk, cashier, or other officer at the post office nearest his reputed place of residence, stating in the notice that he, the sheriff, holds the writ of execution, and out of what court, at whose suit, for what amount, and against whose goods and chattels the writ has been issued, and that by virtue of such writ he seizes and levies upon all the shares of stock of the company held by the defendant in execution on the day of the date of such written notice. It is also the duty of the sheriff on the day of mailing the notice to affix and set upon any office or place of business of such company, within his county, a like notice in writing, and on the same day to serve like notice in writing upon the president and directors of the company, or upon such of them as reside in his county, either personally or by leaving the same at their respective places of abode. The sending, setting up, and serving of such notices in the manner aforesaid constitute a valid levy of the writ upon all shares of stock in such company held by the defendant in execution, which have not at the time of the receipt of the notice by the clerk, cashier, or other officer, who has custody of the stock-registry books, been actually transferred by the defendant, and thereafter any transfer or sale of such shares by the defendant in execution is void as against the plaintiff in the execution, or any purchaser of such stock at any sale thereunder. (1901, c. 2, s. 71; Rev., s. 1217; C.S., s. 1206; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2.)

§ 1-324.7. Duty and liability of nonresident custodian.

The nonresident clerk, cashier, or other officer in such corporation, to whom notice in writing is sent as prescribed in G.S. 1-324.6, shall send forthwith to the officer having the writ, a statement of the time when he received the notice and a certificate of the number of shares held by the defendant in the corporation at the time of the receipt, not actually transferred on the books of the corporation, and the sheriff, or other officer, on receipt by him of this certificate, shall insert the number of shares in the inventory attached to the writ. If the clerk, cashier, or other officer in such corporation

neglects to send the certificate as aforesaid or willfully sends a false one, he is liable to the plaintiff for double the amount of damages occasioned by his neglect, or false certificate, to be recovered in an action against him, but the neglect to send, or miscarriage of the certificate, does not impair the validity of the levy upon the stock. (1901, c. 2, s. 72; Rev., s. 1218; C.S., s. 1207; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2.)