

Chapter 14.
Criminal Law.
SUBCHAPTER I. GENERAL PROVISIONS.
Article 1.

Felonies and Misdemeanors.

§ 14-1. Felonies and misdemeanors defined.

A felony is a crime which:

- (1) Was a felony at common law;
- (2) Is or may be punishable by death;
- (3) Is or may be punishable by imprisonment in the State's prison; or
- (4) Is denominated as a felony by statute.

Any other crime is a misdemeanor. (1891, c. 205, s. 1; Rev., s. 3291; C.S., s. 4171; 1967, c. 1251, s. 1.)

§ 14-1.1: Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 538, s. 2.

§ 14-2: Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 538, s. 2.1.

§ 14-2.1: Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 538, s. 3.

§ 14-2.2: Repealed by Session Laws 2003-0378, s. 1, effective August 1, 2003.

§ 14-2.3. Forfeiture of gain acquired through criminal activity.

(a) Except as is otherwise provided in Article 3 of Chapter 31A, in the case of any violation of Article 13A of Chapter 14, or a general statute constituting a felony other than a nonwillful homicide, any money or other property or interest in property acquired thereby shall be forfeited to the State of North Carolina, including any profits, gain, remuneration, or compensation directly or indirectly collected by or accruing to any offender.

(b) An action to recover such property shall be brought by either a District Attorney or the Attorney General pursuant to G.S. 1-532. The action must be brought within three years from the date of the conviction for the offense.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require forfeiture of any money or property recovered by law-enforcement officers pursuant to the investigation of an offense when the money or property is readily identifiable by the owner or guardian of the property or is traceable to him. (1981, c. 840, s. 1; 2008-214, s. 1.)

§ 14-2.4. Punishment for conspiracy to commit a felony.

(a) Unless a different classification is expressly stated, a person who is convicted of a conspiracy to commit a felony is guilty of a felony that is one class lower than the felony he or she conspired to commit, except that a conspiracy to commit a Class A or Class B1 felony is a Class B2 felony, a conspiracy to commit a Class B2 felony is a Class C felony, and a conspiracy to commit a Class I felony is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) Unless a different classification is expressly stated, a person who is convicted of a conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor is guilty of a misdemeanor that is one class lower than the misdemeanor he or she conspired to commit, except that a conspiracy to commit a Class 3

misdemeanor is a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1983, c. 451, s. 1; 1993, c. 538, s. 5; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 22, s. 12, c. 24, s. 14(b).)

§ 14-2.5. Punishment for attempt to commit a felony or misdemeanor.

Unless a different classification is expressly stated, an attempt to commit a misdemeanor or a felony is punishable under the next lower classification as the offense which the offender attempted to commit. An attempt to commit a Class A or Class B1 felony is a Class B2 felony, an attempt to commit a Class B2 felony is a Class C felony, an attempt to commit a Class I felony is a Class 1 misdemeanor, and an attempt to commit a Class 3 misdemeanor is a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1993, c. 538, s. 6; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 22, s. 11, c. 24, s. 14(b).)

§ 14-2.6. Punishment for solicitation to commit a felony or misdemeanor.

(a) Unless a different classification is expressly stated, an adult or minor who solicits another person who is an adult to commit a felony is guilty of a felony that is two classes lower than the felony the adult or minor solicited the other person who is an adult to commit, except that a solicitation to commit a Class A or Class B1 felony is a Class C felony, a solicitation to commit a Class B2 felony is a Class D felony, a solicitation to commit a Class H felony is a Class 1 misdemeanor, and a solicitation to commit a Class I felony is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(b) Unless a different classification is expressly stated, an adult or minor who solicits another person who is an adult to commit a misdemeanor is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

(c) Unless a different classification is expressly stated, a minor who solicits another minor to commit a felony is guilty of a felony that is two classes lower than the felony the minor solicited the other minor to commit, except that a solicitation to commit a Class A or Class B1 felony is a Class C felony, a solicitation to commit a Class B2 felony is a Class D felony, a solicitation to commit a Class H felony is a Class 1 misdemeanor, and a solicitation to commit a Class I felony is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(d) Unless a different classification is expressly stated, a minor who solicits another minor to commit a misdemeanor is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

(e) An adult who solicits a minor to commit a felony or a misdemeanor is guilty of the same class felony or misdemeanor the adult solicited the minor to commit.

(f) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Adult. – A person 18 years or older.

(2) Minor. – A person who has not reached the age of 18 years. (1993, c. 538, s. 6.1; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 22, s. 13; c. 24, s. 14(b); 2024-17, s. 11.)

§ 14-3. Punishment of misdemeanors, infamous offenses, offenses committed in secrecy and malice, or with deceit and intent to defraud, or with ethnic animosity.

(a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), every person who shall be convicted of any misdemeanor for which no specific classification and no specific punishment is prescribed by statute shall be punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. Any misdemeanor that has a specific punishment, but is not assigned a classification by the General Assembly pursuant to law is classified as follows, based on the maximum punishment allowed by law for the offense as it existed on the effective date of Article 81B of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes:

(1) If that maximum punishment is more than six months imprisonment, it is a Class 1 misdemeanor;

- (2) If that maximum punishment is more than 30 days but not more than six months imprisonment, it is a Class 2 misdemeanor; and
- (3) If that maximum punishment is 30 days or less imprisonment or only a fine, it is a Class 3 misdemeanor.

Misdemeanors that have punishments for one or more counties or cities pursuant to a local act of the General Assembly that are different from the generally applicable punishment are classified pursuant to this subsection if not otherwise specifically classified.

(b) If a misdemeanor offense as to which no specific punishment is prescribed be infamous, done in secrecy and malice, or with deceit and intent to defraud, the offender shall, except where the offense is a conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor, be guilty of a Class H felony.

(c) If any Class 2 or Class 3 misdemeanor is committed because of the victim's race, color, religion, nationality, or country of origin, the offender shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. If any Class A1 or Class 1 misdemeanor offense is committed because of the victim's race, color, religion, nationality, or country of origin, the offender shall be guilty of a Class H felony. (R.C., c. 34, s. 120; Code, s. 1097; Rev., s. 3293; C.S., s. 4173; 1927, c. 1; 1967, c. 1251, s. 3; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, ss. 2, 47, 48; 1981, c. 63, s. 1; c. 179, s. 14; 1991, c. 702, s. 2; 1993, c. 538, s. 7; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 2; c. 24, s. 14(b); 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 6; 2008-197, s. 4.1.)

§ 14-3.1. Infraction defined; sanctions.

(a) An infraction is a noncriminal violation of law not punishable by imprisonment. Unless otherwise provided by law, the sanction for a person found responsible for an infraction is a penalty of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00). The proceeds of penalties for infractions are payable to the county in which the infraction occurred for the use of the public schools.

(b) The procedure for disposition of infractions is as provided in Article 66 of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes. (1985, c. 764, s. 1.)

§ 14-4. Violation of local ordinances misdemeanor.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) or (c) of this section, if any person shall violate an ordinance of a county, city, town, or metropolitan sewerage district created under Article 5 of Chapter 162A, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00). No fine shall exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00) unless the ordinance expressly states that the maximum fine is greater than fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(b) If any person shall violate an ordinance of a county, city, or town regulating the operation or parking of vehicles, he shall be responsible for an infraction and shall be required to pay a penalty of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(c) A person may not be found responsible or guilty of a local ordinance violation punishable pursuant to subsection (a) of this section if, when tried for that violation, the person produces proof of compliance with the local ordinance through any of the following:

- (1) No new alleged violations of the local ordinance within 30 days from the date of the initial alleged violation.
- (2) The person provides proof of a good-faith effort to seek assistance to address any underlying factors related to unemployment, homelessness, mental health, or substance abuse that might relate to the person's ability to comply with the local ordinance. (1871-2, c. 195, s. 2; Code, s. 3820; Rev., s. 3702; C.S., s. 4174; 1969, c. 36, s. 2; 1985, c. 764, s. 2; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 17;

1991, c. 415, s. 1; c. 446, s. 1; 1993, c. 538, s. 8; c. 539, s. 9; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, ss. 14(b), 14(c); 1995, c. 509, s. 133.1; 2021-138, s. 13(c).)

§ 14-4.1. Legislative review of regulatory crimes.

(a) Any rule adopted or amended pursuant to Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes that creates a new criminal offense or otherwise subjects a person to criminal penalties is subject to G.S. 150B-21.3(b1) regardless of whether the rule received written objections from 10 or more persons pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3(b2).

(b) This section applies to rules adopted on or after January 1, 2020. (2019-198, s. 1.)