

Article 59.

Public Intoxication.

**§ 14-443. Definitions.**

As used in this Article:

- (1) "Alcoholism" is the state of a person who habitually lacks self-control as to the use of alcoholic beverages, or uses alcoholic beverages to the extent that his health is substantially impaired or endangered or his social or economic function is substantially disrupted; and
- (2) "Intoxicated" is the condition of a person whose mental or physical functioning is presently substantially impaired as a result of the use of alcohol; and
- (3) A "public place" is a place which is open to the public, whether it is publicly or privately owned. (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1134, s. 1; 1981, c. 412, s. 4; c. 747, s. 66.)

**§ 14-444. Intoxicated and disruptive in public.**

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person in a public place to be intoxicated and disruptive in any of the following ways:

- (1) Blocking or otherwise interfering with traffic on a highway or public vehicular area, or
- (2) Blocking or lying across or otherwise preventing or interfering with access to or passage across a sidewalk or entrance to a building, or
- (3) Grabbing, shoving, pushing or fighting others or challenging others to fight, or
- (4) Cursing or shouting at or otherwise rudely insulting others, or
- (5) Begging for money or other property.

(b) Any person who violates this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1134, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 292; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2015-247, s. 3(c).)

**§ 14-445. Defense of alcoholism.**

(a) It is a defense to a charge of being intoxicated and disruptive in a public place that the defendant suffers from alcoholism.

(b) The presiding judge at the trial of a defendant charged with being intoxicated and disruptive in public shall consider the defense of alcoholism even though the defendant does not raise the defense, and may request additional information on whether the defendant is suffering from alcoholism.

(c) Whenever any person charged with committing a misdemeanor under G.S. 14-444 enters a plea to the charge, the court may, without entering a judgment, defer further proceedings for up to 15 days to determine whether the person is suffering from alcoholism.

(d) If he believes it will be of value in making his determination, the district court judge may direct an alcoholism court counselor, if available, to conduct a prehearing review of the alleged alcoholic's drinking history in order to gather additional information as to whether the defendant is suffering from alcoholism. (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1134, s. 1; 1981, c. 519, s. 1.)

**§ 14-446. Disposition of defendant acquitted because of alcoholism.**

If a defendant is found not guilty of being intoxicated and disruptive in a public place because he suffers from alcoholism, the court in which he was tried may retain jurisdiction over him for up to 15 days to determine whether he is a substance abuser and dangerous to himself or others as provided in G.S. 122C-281. The trial judge may make that determination at the time the defendant

is found not guilty or he may require the defendant to return to court for the determination at some later time within the 15-day period. (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1134, s. 1; 1985, c. 589, s. 6.)

**§ 14-447. No prosecution for public intoxication.**

(a) No person may be prosecuted solely for being intoxicated in a public place. A person who is intoxicated in a public place and is not disruptive may be assisted as provided in G.S. 122C-301.

(b) If, after arresting a person for being intoxicated and disruptive in a public place, the law-enforcement officer making the arrest determines that the person would benefit from the care of a shelter or health-care facility as provided by G.S. 122C-301, and that he would not likely be disruptive in such a facility, the officer may transport and release the person to the appropriate facility and issue him a citation for the offense of being intoxicated and disruptive in a public place. This authority to arrest and then issue a citation is granted as an exception to the requirements of G.S. 15A-501(2). (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1134, s. 1; 1981, c. 519, s. 2; 1985, c. 589, s. 7.)

**§§ 14-448 through 14-452. Reserved for future codification purposes.**