

Article 39.

Protection of Minors.

§ 14-313. Youth access to tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, vapor products, and cigarette wrapping papers.

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

- (1) Alternative nicotine product. – Any noncombustible product that contains nicotine, whether natural or synthetic, but does not contain tobacco and is intended for human consumption whether chewed, absorbed, dissolved, ingested, or by other means. This term does not include a vapor product or any product regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration under Chapter V of the federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.
- (1a) Consumable product. – Consumable product shall have the same meaning as provided in G.S. 105-113.4(1k). For purposes of this section, a consumable product does not contain any tobacco leaf.
- (1b) Distribute. – To sell, furnish, give, or provide tobacco products, including tobacco product samples or cigarette wrapping papers, to the ultimate consumer.
- (1c) FDA. – Food and Drug Administration.
- (2) Proof of age. – A drivers license or other photographic identification that includes the bearer's date of birth that purports to establish that the person is 18 years of age or older.
- (3) Sample. – A tobacco product distributed to members of the general public at no cost for the purpose of promoting the product.
- (3a) Repealed by Session Laws 2024-31, s. 2(a), effective December 1, 2024.
- (3b) Secretary. – The Secretary of the Department of Revenue.
- (3c) Timely Filed Premarket Tobacco Product Application. – An application pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 387j for a vapor product or consumable product containing nicotine derived from tobacco marketed in the United States as of August 8, 2016, that was submitted to the United States Food and Drug Administration on or before September 9, 2020, and accepted for filing.
- (4) Tobacco product. – Any product that contains tobacco and is intended for human consumption. For purposes of this section, the term includes an alternative nicotine product, vapor product, consumable product, or components of a vapor product.
- (5) Vapor product. – Any noncombustible product that employs a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit regardless of shape or size and that can be used to heat a consumable product. The term includes an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, and electronic pipe. The term does not include any product regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration under Chapter V of the federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

(b) Sale or Distribution to Persons Under the Age of 18 Years. – If any person shall distribute, or aid, assist, or abet any other person in distributing tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers to any person under the age of 18 years, or if any person shall purchase tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers on behalf of a person under the age of 18 years, the person shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor; provided, however, that it shall not be unlawful to distribute tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers to an employee when required in the

performance of the employee's duties. Retail distributors of tobacco products shall prominently display near the point of sale a sign in letters at least five-eighths of an inch high which states the following:

N.C. LAW STRICTLY PROHIBITS
THE PURCHASE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ALTERNATIVE NICOTINE PRODUCTS,
VAPOR PRODUCTS, AND CIGARETTE WRAPPING PAPERS
BY PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.
PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED.

Failure to post the required sign shall be an infraction punishable by a fine of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first offense and seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for each succeeding offense.

A person engaged in the sale of tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers shall demand proof of age from a prospective purchaser if the person has reasonable grounds to believe that the prospective purchaser is under 18 years of age. Failure to demand proof of age as required by this subsection is a Class 2 misdemeanor if in fact the prospective purchaser is under 18 years of age. Retail distributors of tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers shall train their sales employees in the requirements of this law. Proof of any of the following shall be a defense to any action brought under this subsection:

- (1) The defendant demanded, was shown, and reasonably relied upon proof of age in the case of a retailer, or any other documentary or written evidence of age in the case of a nonretailer.
- (2) The defendant relied on the electronic system established and operated by the Division of Motor Vehicles pursuant to G.S. 20-37.02.
- (3) The defendant relied on a biometric identification system that demonstrated (i) the purchaser's age to be at least the required age for the purchase and (ii) the purchaser had previously registered with the seller or seller's agent a drivers license, a special identification card issued under G.S. 20-37.7, a military identification card, or a passport showing the purchaser's date of birth and bearing a physical description of the person named on the card.

(b1) Distribution of Tobacco Products. – Tobacco products shall not be distributed in vending machines; provided, however, vending machines distributing tobacco products are permitted (i) in any establishment which is open only to persons 18 years of age and older; or (ii) in any establishment if the vending machine is under the continuous control of the owner or licensee of the premises or an employee thereof and can be operated only upon activation by the owner, licensee, or employee prior to each purchase and the vending machine is not accessible to the public when the establishment is closed. The owner, licensee, or employee shall demand proof of age from a prospective purchaser if the person has reasonable grounds to believe that the prospective purchaser is under 18 years of age. Failure to demand proof of age as required by this subsection is a Class 2 misdemeanor if in fact the prospective purchaser is under 18 years of age. Proof that the defendant demanded, was shown, and reasonably relied upon proof of age shall be a defense to any action brought under this subsection. Any person distributing tobacco products through vending machines in violation of this subsection shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(b2) Internet Distribution of Tobacco Products. – A person engaged in the distribution of tobacco products through the internet or other remote sales methods shall perform an age verification through an independent, third-party age verification service that compares information available from public records to the personal information entered by the individual during the

ordering process to establish that the individual ordering the tobacco products is 18 years of age or older.

(c) Purchase By Persons Under the Age of 18 Years. – If any person under the age of 18 years purchases or accepts receipt, or attempts to purchase or accept receipt, of tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers, or presents or offers to any person any purported proof of age which is false, fraudulent, or not actually his or her own, for the purpose of purchasing or receiving any tobacco product or cigarette wrapping papers, the person shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor; provided, however, that it shall not be unlawful for an employee to purchase or accept receipt of tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers when required in the performance of the employee's duties.

(d) Sending or Assisting a Person [Less Than] 18 Years to Purchase or Receive Tobacco Products or Cigarette Wrapping Papers. – If any person shall send a person less than 18 years of age to purchase, acquire, receive, or attempt to purchase, acquire, or receive tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers, or if any person shall aid or abet a person who is less than 18 years of age in purchasing, acquiring, or receiving or attempting to purchase, acquire, or receive tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers, the person shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor; provided, however, persons under the age of 18 may be enlisted by police or local sheriffs' departments to test compliance if the testing is under the direct supervision of that law enforcement department and written parental consent is provided; provided further, that the Department of Health and Human Services shall have the authority, pursuant to a written plan prepared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to use persons under 18 years of age in annual, random, unannounced inspections, provided that prior written parental consent is given for the involvement of these persons and that the inspections are conducted for the sole purpose of preparing a scientifically and methodologically valid statistical study of the extent of success the State has achieved in reducing the availability of tobacco products to persons under the age of 18, and preparing any report to the extent required by section 1926 of the federal Public Health Service Act (42 USC § 300x-26).

(e) Statewide Uniformity. – It is the intent of the General Assembly to prescribe this uniform system for the regulation of tobacco products and cigarette wrapping papers to ensure the eligibility for and receipt of any federal funds or grants that the State now receives or may receive relating to the provisions of this section. To ensure uniformity, no political subdivisions, boards, or agencies of the State nor any county, city, municipality, municipal corporation, town, township, village, nor any department or agency thereof, may enact ordinances, rules or regulations concerning the sale, distribution, display or promotion of (i) tobacco products or cigarette wrapping papers on or after September 1, 1995, (ii) alternative nicotine products or vapor products on or after August 1, 2013, or (iii) alternative nicotine products on or after December 1, 2024. This subsection does not apply to the regulation of vending machines, nor does it prohibit the Secretary of Revenue from adopting rules with respect to the administration of the tobacco products taxes levied under Article 2A of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes.

(f) Deferred Prosecution or Conditional Discharge. – Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-1341(a1) or G.S. 15A-1341(a4), any person charged with a misdemeanor under this section shall be qualified for deferred prosecution or a conditional discharge pursuant to Article 82 of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes provided the defendant has not previously been placed on probation for a violation of this section and so states under oath.

(g) Certification of Vapor Products and Consumable Products. – As required by Part 3 of Article 4 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes, the Secretary of the Department of Revenue

shall certify vapor products and consumable products eligible for retail sale in this State and shall list them on a directory.

(h) Fines and Civil Penalties. – The following penalties shall apply to violations of the certification requirements for consumable products and vapor products required by Part 3 of Article 4 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes:

- (1) Retailer, distributor, or wholesaler fines. – A retailer, distributor, or wholesaler who offers for sale a consumable product or vapor product intended for ultimate retail sale in this State that is not included in the directory is subject to a warning with a mandatory reinspection of the retailer within 30 days of the violation of Part 3 of Article 4 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes. [The following applies:]
 - a. For a second violation of this type within a 12-month period, the fine shall be at least five hundred dollars (\$500.00) but not more than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) and, if licensed, the licensee's license shall be suspended for 30 days.
 - b. For a third or subsequent violation of this type within a 12-month period, the fine shall be at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) but not more than one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) and, if licensed, the licensee's license shall be revoked.
 - c. Upon a second or subsequent violation of this type, consumable products or vapor products that are not on the directory as required by G.S. 143B-245.12, and are possessed by a retailer, distributor, or wholesaler, shall be subject to seizure, forfeiture, and destruction. The cost of such seizure, forfeiture, and destruction shall be borne by the person from whom the products are confiscated, except that no products may be seized from a consumer who has made a bona fide purchase of such product. The Secretary may store and dispose of the seized products as appropriate, in accordance with federal, State, and local laws pertaining to storage and disposal of such products.
- (2) Manufacturer penalties. – A manufacturer whose consumable products or vapor products are not listed in the directory as required by G.S. 143B-245.12, and who causes the products that are not listed to be sold for retail sale in North Carolina, whether directly or through an importer, distributor, wholesaler, retailer, or similar intermediary or intermediaries, is subject to a civil penalty of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for each individual product offered for sale in violation of Part 3 of Article 4 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes until the offending product is removed from the market or until the offending product is properly listed on the directory. In addition, any manufacturer that falsely represents any information required by a certification form shall be guilty of a misdemeanor for each false representation.

(i) [State Recovery of Costs. –] In an action to enforce this section, the State shall be entitled to recover costs, including the costs of investigation, expert witness fees, and reasonable attorney fees.

(j) [Deceptive Trade Practice. –] A repeated violation of the requirements of Part 3 of Article 4 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes shall constitute a deceptive trade practice under Chapter 75 of the General Statutes. (1891, c. 276; Rev., s. 3804; C.S., s. 4438; 1969, c. 1224, s. 3;

1991, c. 628, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 216; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 241, s. 1; 1997-434, ss. 1-6; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-461, s. 5; 2002-159, s. 5; 2005-350, s. 6(b); 2013-165, s. 1; 2014-119, s. 2(c); 2015-264, s. 4; 2024-31, s. 2(a); 2025-25, s. 29(3).)

§ 14-314. Repealed by Session Laws 1971, c. 31.

§ 14-315. Selling or giving weapons to minors.

(a) Sale of Weapons Other Than Handguns. – If a person sells, offers for sale, gives, or in any way transfers to a minor any pistol cartridge, brass knucks, bowie knife, dirk, shurikin, leaded cane, or slungshot, the person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and, in addition, shall forfeit the proceeds of any sale made in violation of this section.

(a1) Sale of Handguns. – If a person sells, offers for sale, gives, or in any way transfers to a minor any handgun as defined in G.S. 14-269.7, the person is guilty of a Class H felony and, in addition, shall forfeit the proceeds of any sale made in violation of this section. This section does not apply in any of the following circumstances:

- (1) The handgun is lent to a minor for temporary use if the minor's possession of the handgun is lawful under G.S. 14-269.7 and G.S. 14-316 and is not otherwise unlawful.
- (2) The handgun is transferred to an adult custodian pursuant to Chapter 33A of the General Statutes, and the minor does not take possession of the handgun except that the adult custodian may allow the minor temporary possession of the handgun in circumstances in which the minor's possession of the handgun is lawful under G.S. 14-269.7 and G.S. 14-316 and is not otherwise unlawful.
- (3) The handgun is a devise and is distributed to a parent or guardian under G.S. 28A-22-7, and the minor does not take possession of the handgun except that the parent or guardian may allow the minor temporary possession of the handgun in circumstances in which the minor's possession of the handgun is lawful under G.S. 14-269.7 and G.S. 14-316 and is not otherwise unlawful.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 597, s. 2.

(b1) Defense. – It shall be a defense to a violation of this section if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-8, s. 2(b), effective March 29, 2023, and applicable to pistols sold, given away, transferred, purchased, or received on or after that date.
- (2) The person reasonably believed that the minor was not a minor.
- (3) The person either:
 - a. Shows that the minor produced a drivers license, a special identification card issued under G.S. 20-37.7, a military identification card, or a passport, showing the minor's age to be at least the required age for purchase and bearing a physical description of the person named on the card reasonably describing the minor; or
 - b. Produces evidence of other facts that reasonably indicated at the time of sale that the minor was at least the required age. (1893, c. 514; Rev., s. 3832; C.S., s. 4440; 1985, c. 199; 1993, c. 259, s. 3; 1993, c. 539, s. 217; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 597, s. 2;

1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 20.13(b); 2011-284, s. 9; 2013-369, s. 18; 2023-8, s. 2(b).)

§ 14-315.1. Storage of firearms to protect minors.

(a) Any person who resides in the same premises as a minor, owns or possesses a firearm, and stores or leaves the firearm (i) in a condition that the firearm can be discharged and (ii) in a manner that the person knew or should have known that an unsupervised minor would be able to gain access to the firearm, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor if a minor gains access to the firearm without the lawful permission of the minor's parents or a person having charge of the minor and the minor:

- (1) Possesses it in violation of G.S. 14-269.2(b);
- (2) Exhibits it in a public place in a careless, angry, or threatening manner;
- (3) Causes personal injury or death with it not in self defense; or
- (4) Uses it in the commission of a crime.

(b) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a person from carrying a firearm on his or her body, or placed in such close proximity that it can be used as easily and quickly as if carried on the body.

(c) This section shall not apply if the minor obtained the firearm as a result of an unlawful entry by any person.

(d) "Minor" as used in this section means a person under 18 years of age who is not emancipated. (1993, c. 558, s. 2; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 11.)

§ 14-315.2. Warning upon sale or transfer of firearm to protect minor.

(a) Upon the retail commercial sale or transfer of any firearm, the seller or transferor shall deliver a written copy of G.S. 14-315.1 to the purchaser or transferee.

(b) Any retail or wholesale store, shop, or sales outlet that sells firearms shall conspicuously post at each purchase counter the following warning in block letters not less than one inch in height the phrase: "IT IS UNLAWFUL TO STORE OR LEAVE A FIREARM THAT CAN BE DISCHARGED IN A MANNER THAT A REASONABLE PERSON SHOULD KNOW IS ACCESSIBLE TO A MINOR."

(c) A violation of subsection (a) or (b) of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1993, c. 558, s. 2; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 12.)

§ 14-316. Permitting young children to use dangerous firearms.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly permit a child under the age of 12 years to have access to, or possession, custody or use in any manner whatever, of any gun, pistol or other dangerous firearm, whether such weapon be loaded or unloaded, unless the person has the permission of the child's parent or guardian, and the child is under the supervision of an adult. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(b) Air rifles, air pistols, and BB guns shall not be deemed "dangerous firearms" within the meaning of subsection (a) of this section except in the following counties: Caldwell, Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Haywood, Mecklenburg, Stokes, Union, Vance. (1913, c. 32; C.S., s. 4441; 1965, c. 813; 1971, c. 309; 1993, c. 539, s. 218; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2013-369, s. 4; 2014-119, s. 10(a).)

§ 14-316.1. Contributing to delinquency and neglect by parents and others.

Any person who is at least 18 years old who knowingly or willfully causes, encourages, or aids any juvenile within the jurisdiction of the court to be in a place or condition, or to commit an act whereby the juvenile could be adjudicated delinquent, undisciplined, abused, or neglected as defined by G.S. 7B-101 and G.S. 7B-1501 shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

It is not necessary for the district court exercising juvenile jurisdiction to make an adjudication that any juvenile is delinquent, undisciplined, abused, or neglected in order to prosecute a parent or any person, including an employee of the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety under this section. An adjudication that a juvenile is delinquent, undisciplined, abused, or neglected shall not preclude a subsequent prosecution of a parent or any other person including an employee of the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety, who contributes to the delinquent, undisciplined, abused, or neglected condition of any juvenile. (1919, c. 97, s. 19; C.S., s. 5057; 1959, c. 1284; 1969, c. 911, s. 4; 1971, c. 1180, s. 5; 1979, c. 692; 1983, c. 175, ss. 8, 10; c. 720, s. 4; 1993, c. 539, s. 219; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 1998-202, s. 4(b); 2000-137, s. 4(c); 2011-145, s. 19.1(l); 2017-57, s. 16D.4(p); 2017-186, s. 2(ii); 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2021-180, s. 19C.9(z).)

§ 14-317. Permitting minors to enter barrooms or billiard rooms.

If the manager or owner of any barroom, wherein beer, wine, or any alcoholic beverages are sold or consumed, or billiard room shall knowingly allow any minor under 18 years of age to enter or remain in such barroom or billiard room, where before such minor under 18 years of age enters or remains in such barroom or billiard room, the manager or owner thereof has been notified in writing by the parents or guardian of such minor under 18 years of age not to allow him to enter or remain in such barroom or billiard room, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1897, c. 278; Rev., s. 3729; C.S., s. 4442; 1967, c. 1089; 1993, c. 539, s. 220; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 14-318. Exposing children to fire.

If any person shall leave any child under the age of eight years locked or otherwise confined in any dwelling, building or enclosure, and go away from such dwelling, building or enclosure without leaving some person of the age of discretion in charge of the same, so as to expose the child to danger by fire, the person so offending shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1893, c. 12; Rev., s. 3795; C.S., s. 4443; 1983, c. 175, s. 9, 10, c. 720, s. 4; 1993, c. 539, s. 221; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 14-318.1. Discarding or abandoning iceboxes, etc.; precautions required.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to discard, abandon, leave or allow to remain in any place any icebox, refrigerator or other container, device or equipment of any kind with an interior storage area of more than one and one-half cubic feet of clear space which is airtight, without first removing the door or doors or hinges from such icebox, refrigerator, container, device or equipment. This section shall not apply to any icebox, refrigerator, container, device or equipment which is being used for the purpose for which it was originally designed, or is being used for display purposes by any retail or wholesale merchant, or is crated, strapped or locked to such an extent that it is impossible for a child to obtain access to any airtight compartment thereof. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1955, c. 305; 1993, c. 539, s. 222; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 14-318.2. Child abuse a misdemeanor.

(a) Any parent of a child less than 16 years of age, or any other person providing care to or supervision of such child, who inflicts physical injury, or who allows physical injury to be inflicted, or who creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical injury, upon or to such child by other than accidental means is guilty of the Class A1 misdemeanor of child abuse.

(b) The Class A1 misdemeanor of child abuse is an offense additional to other civil and criminal provisions and is not intended to repeal or preclude any other sanctions or remedies.

(c) A parent who abandons an infant less than 30 days of age pursuant to G.S. 14-322.3 shall not be prosecuted under this section for any acts or omissions related to the care of that infant.

(d) Any parent of a child less than 18 years of age, or any other person providing care to or supervision of the child, is not guilty of a violation of this section for raising a child consistent with the child's biological sex, including referring to a child consistent with the child's biological sex, and making related mental health or medical decisions based on the child's biological sex. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize or allow any other acts or omissions that would constitute a violation under this section, including the infliction of serious physical injury or the creation of a substantial risk of physical injury. (1965, c. 472, s. 1; 1971, c. 710, s. 6; 1993, c. 539, s. 223; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 13; c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-291, s. 4; 2008-191, s. 1; 2009-570, s. 6; 2025-4, s. 5.4(a); 2025-59, s. 2(a).)

§ 14-318.3. Repealed by Session Laws 1971, c. 710, s. 7.

§ 14-318.4. Child abuse a felony.

(a) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age who intentionally inflicts any serious physical injury upon or to the child or who intentionally commits an assault upon the child which results in any serious physical injury to the child is guilty of a Class D felony, except as otherwise provided in subsection (a3) of this section.

(a1) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age who commits, permits, or encourages any act of prostitution with or by the child is guilty of child abuse and shall be punished as a Class D felon.

(a2) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age who commits or allows the commission of any sexual act upon the child is guilty of a Class D felony.

(a3) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age who intentionally inflicts any serious bodily injury to the child or who intentionally commits an assault upon the child which results in any serious bodily injury to the child, or which results in permanent or protracted loss or impairment of any mental or emotional function of the child, is guilty of a Class B2 felony.

(a4) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age whose willful act or grossly negligent omission in the care of the child shows a reckless disregard for human life is guilty of a Class E felony if the act or omission results in serious bodily injury to the child.

(a5) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age whose willful act or grossly negligent omission in the care of the child shows a reckless disregard for human life is guilty of a Class G felony if the act or omission results in serious physical injury to the child.

(a6) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-16, s. 3.2, effective December 1, 2025, and applicable to offenses committed on or after that date.

(a7) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child less than 16 years of age who, for the purpose of causing fear, emotional injury, or deriving sexual gratification, intentionally and routinely (i) inflicts physical injury on that child and (ii) deprives that child of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or proper physical care is guilty of a Class B2 felony.

(b) The felony of child abuse is an offense additional to other civil and criminal provisions and is not intended to repeal or preclude any other sanctions or remedies.

(c) Abandonment of an infant less than 30 days of age pursuant to G.S. 14-322.3 may be treated as a mitigating factor in sentencing for a conviction under this section involving that infant.

(c1) Any parent of a child less than 18 years of age, or any other person providing care to or supervision of the child, is not guilty of a violation of this section for raising a child consistent with the child's biological sex, including referring to a child consistent with the child's biological sex, and making related mental health or medical decisions based on the child's biological sex. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize or allow any other acts or omissions that would constitute a violation under this section, including the infliction of serious bodily injury or serious physical injury.

(d) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Grossly negligent omission. – In the context of providing care to or supervision of a child, this term includes the failure to report a child as missing to law enforcement as provided in G.S. 14-318.5(b).

(1k) Serious bodily injury. – Bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes serious permanent disfigurement, coma, a permanent or protracted condition that causes extreme pain, or permanent or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ, or that results in prolonged hospitalization.

(2) Serious physical injury. – Physical injury that causes great pain and suffering. The term includes serious mental injury. For purposes of this subdivision, a parent raising a child consistent with the child's biological sex does not constitute serious mental injury. (1979, c. 897, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 18; 1981, c. 63, s. 1; c. 179, s. 14; 1983, c. 653, s. 1; c. 916, s. 1; 1985, c. 509, s. 5; c. 668; 1993, c. 539, s. 1233; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1999-451, s. 1; 2001-291, s. 5; 2008-191, s. 2; 2013-35, s. 1; 2013-52, s. 3; 2025-4, s. 5.4(b); 2025-16, s. 3.2; 2025-59, s. 2(b).)

§ 14-318.5. Failure to report the disappearance of a child to law enforcement; immunity of person reporting in good faith.

(a) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Child. – Any person who is less than 16 years of age.

(2) Disappearance of a child. – When the parent or other person providing supervision of a child does not know the location of the child and has not had contact with the child for a 24-hour period.

(b) A parent or any other person providing care to or supervision of a child who knowingly or wantonly fails to report the disappearance of a child to law enforcement is in violation of this subsection. Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this subsection is punishable as a Class I felony.

(c) Any person who reasonably suspects the disappearance of a child and who reasonably suspects that the child may be in danger shall report those suspicions to law enforcement within a

reasonable time. Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this subsection is punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(d) This section does not apply if G.S. 110-102.1 is applicable.

(e) Notwithstanding subsection (b) or (c) of this section, if a child is absent from school, a teacher is not required to report the child's absence to law enforcement officers under this section, provided the teacher reports the child's absence from school pursuant to Article 26 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes.

(f) The felony of failure to report the disappearance of a child as required by subsection (b) of this section is an offense additional to other civil and criminal provisions and is not intended to repeal or preclude any other sanctions or remedies.

(g) Any person who reports the disappearance of a child as required by this section is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed for that action, provided that the person was acting in good faith. In any proceeding involving liability, good faith is presumed. (2013-52, s. 2.)

§ 14-318.6. Failure to report crimes against juveniles; penalty.

(a) Definitions. – As used in this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Juvenile. – As defined in G.S. 7B-101. For the purposes of this section, the age of the juvenile at the time of the abuse or offense governs.
- (2) Serious bodily injury. – As defined in G.S. 14-318.4(d).
- (3) Serious physical injury. – As defined in G.S. 14-318.4(d).
- (4) Sexually violent offense. – An offense committed against a juvenile that is a sexually violent offense as defined in G.S. 14-208.6(5). This term also includes the following: an attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any of these offenses; aiding and abetting any of these offenses.
- (5) Violent offense. – Any offense that inflicts upon the juvenile serious bodily injury or serious physical injury by other than accidental means. This term also includes the following: an attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any of these offenses; aiding and abetting any of these offenses.

(b) Requirement. – Any person 18 years of age or older who knows or should have reasonably known that a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse under G.S. 14-318.2 shall immediately report the case of that juvenile to the appropriate local law enforcement agency in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. The report may be made orally or by telephone. The report shall include information as is known to the person making it, including the name, address, and age of the juvenile; the name and address of the juvenile's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker; the name, address, and age of the person who committed the offense against the juvenile; the location where the offense was committed; the names and ages of other juveniles present or in danger; the present whereabouts of the juvenile, if not at the home address; the nature and extent of any injury or condition resulting from the offense or abuse; and any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the need for law enforcement involvement. The person making the report shall give his or her name, address, and telephone number.

(c) Penalty. – Any person 18 years of age or older, who knows or should have reasonably known that a juvenile was the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse under G.S. 14-318.2, and knowingly or willfully fails to report as required by subsection (b)

of this section, or who knowingly or willfully prevents another person from reporting as required by subsection (b) of this section, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(d) Construction. – Nothing in this section shall be construed as relieving a person subject to the requirement set forth in subsection (b) of this section from any other duty to report required by law.

(e) Protection. – The identity of a person making a report pursuant to this section must be protected and only revealed as provided in G.S. 132-1.4(c)(4).

(f) Good-Faith Immunity. – A person who makes a report in good faith under this Article, cooperates with law enforcement in an investigation, or testifies in any judicial proceeding resulting from a law enforcement report or investigation is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed for that action, provided that person was acting in good faith.

(g) Law Enforcement Duty to Report Evidence to the Department of Social Services. – If any law enforcement officer, as the result of a report, finds evidence that a juvenile may be abused, neglected, or dependent as defined in G.S. 7B-101, the law enforcement officer shall make an oral report as soon as practicable and make a subsequent written report of the findings to the director of the department of social services within 48 hours after discovery of the evidence. When a report of abuse, neglect, or dependency is received, the director of the department of social services shall make a prompt and thorough assessment, in accordance with G.S. 7B-302, to determine whether protective services should be provided or the complaint filed as a petition.

(h) Nothing in this section shall be construed as to require a person with (i) a privilege under G.S. 8-53.3, 8-53.7, 8-53.8, or 8-53.12, (ii) attorney-client privilege, or (iii) psychiatrist-client or patient privilege to report pursuant to this section if that privilege would prevent them from doing so. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring a licensed marriage and family therapist with a privilege under G.S. 8-53.5 to report pursuant to this section if that privilege would prevent that person from doing so, but the privilege only applies to the primary client and not to any other family members. For purposes of this subsection, the term "primary client" means a person who contracts with a licensed marriage and family therapist for professional services for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment. (2019-245, s. 1(a); 2023-134, s. 9L.1(a).)

§ 14-318.7. Exposing a child to a controlled substance.

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Child. – Any person who is less than 16 years of age.

(2) Controlled substance. – A controlled substance, controlled substance analogue, drug, marijuana, narcotic drug, opiate, opioid, opium poppy, poppy straw, or targeted controlled substance, all as defined in G.S. 90-87.

(3) Ingest. – Any means used to take into the body, to eat or drink, or otherwise consume or absorb into the body in any way.

(b) A person who knowingly, intentionally, or with reckless disregard for human life causes or permits a child to be exposed to a controlled substance is guilty of a Class H felony.

(c) A person who knowingly, intentionally, or with reckless disregard for human life causes or permits a child to be exposed to a controlled substance and, as a result, the child ingests the controlled substance is guilty of a Class E felony.

(d) A person who knowingly, intentionally, or with reckless disregard for human life causes or permits a child to be exposed to a controlled substance and, as a result, the child ingests the

controlled substance, resulting in serious physical injury as defined in G.S. 14-318.4, is guilty of a Class D felony.

(e) A person who knowingly, intentionally, or with reckless disregard for human life causes or permits a child to be exposed to a controlled substance and, as a result, the child ingests the controlled substance, resulting in serious bodily injury as defined in G.S. 14-318.4, is guilty of a Class C felony.

(f) A person who knowingly, intentionally, or with reckless disregard for human life causes or permits a child to be exposed to a controlled substance and, as a result, the child ingests the controlled substance, and the ingestion is the proximate cause of death, is guilty of a Class B1 felony.

(g) The punishments set forth in subsections (b) through (f) of this section apply unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment.

(h) This section does not apply to a person that intentionally gives a child a controlled substance that has been prescribed for the child by a licensed medical professional when given to the child in the prescribed amount and manner. (2025-70, s. 1(a).)

§ 14-319. Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 402.

§ 14-320. Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 716, s. 2.

§ 14-320.1. Transporting child outside the State with intent to violate custody order.

When any federal court or state court in the United States shall have awarded custody of a child under the age of 16 years, it shall be a felony for any person with the intent to violate the court order to take or transport, or cause to be taken or transported, any such child from any point within this State to any point outside the limits of this State or to keep any such child outside the limits of this State. Such crime shall be punishable as a Class I felony. Provided that keeping a child outside the limits of the State in violation of a court order for a period in excess of 72 hours shall be prima facie evidence that the person charged intended to violate the order at the time of taking. (1969, c. 81; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 47; 1981, c. 63, s. 1, c. 179, s. 14; 1983, c. 563, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 1234; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 14-321. Failing to pay minors for doing certain work.

Whenever any person, having a contract with any corporation, company or person for the manufacture or change of any raw material by the piece or pound, shall employ any minor to assist in the work upon the faith of and by color of such contract, with intent to cheat and defraud such minor, and, having secured the contract price, shall willfully fail to pay the minor when he shall have performed his part of the contract work, whether done by the day or by the job, the person so offending shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1893, c. 309; Rev., s. 3428a; C.S., s. 4446; 1993, c. 539, s. 224; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 14-321.1. Prohibit baby sitting service by sex offender or in the home of a sex offender.

(a) For purposes of this section the term "baby sitting service" means providing, for profit, supervision or care for a child under the age of 13 years who is unrelated to the provider by blood, marriage, or adoption, for more than two hours per day while the child's parents or guardian are not on the premises.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person who is an adult may provide or offer to provide a baby sitting service in any of the following circumstances:

- (1) The baby sitting service is offered in a home and a resident of the home is a sex offender who is registered in accordance with Article 27A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.
- (2) A provider of care for the baby sitting service is a sex offender who is registered in accordance with Article 27A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.

(c) A violation of this section that is a first offense is a Class 1 misdemeanor. A violation of this section that is a second or subsequent offense is a Class H felony. (2005-416, s. 4.)

§ 14-321.2. Prohibit unlawful transfer of custody of minor child.

(a) It shall be unlawful for:

- (1) A parent to effect or attempt to effect an unlawful transfer of custody of that parent's minor child.
- (2) A person to accept or attempt to accept custody pursuant to an unlawful transfer of custody of a minor child; except that it shall not be unlawful for a person to receive custody of a child from a parent who intends to effect an unlawful transfer of custody of that parent's minor child if the person promptly notifies law enforcement or child protective services in the county where the child resides or is found and promptly makes the child available to law enforcement or child protective services.
- (3) A person to advertise, recruit, or solicit, or to aid, abet, conspire, or seek the assistance of another to advertise, recruit, or solicit the unlawful transfer of custody of a minor child.

(b) Definitions. – As used in this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Minor child" means a child under the age of 18 and includes an adopted minor child, as defined in G.S. 48-1-101(14a).
- (2) "Parent" means a biological parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian.
- (3) "Relative" means the child's other parent, stepparent, grandparent, adult sibling, aunt, uncle, first cousin, great-aunt, great-uncle, great-grandparent, or a parent's first cousin.
- (4) "Unlawful transfer of custody" means the transfer of physical custody of a minor child, in willful violation of applicable adoption law or by grossly negligent omission in the care of the child, by the child's parent, without a court order or other authorization under law, to a person other than a relative or another individual having a substantial relationship with the child. Compensation in the form of money, property, or other item of value is not required in order for an unlawful transfer of custody to occur. Unlawful transfer of custody does not include any of the following:
 - a. Placement of a minor child with a prospective adoptive parent in accordance with Part 2 of Article 3 of Chapter 48 of the General Statutes.
 - b. A consent to adoption of a minor child in accordance with Part 6 of Article 3 of Chapter 48 of the General Statutes.

- c. Relinquishment of a minor child in accordance with Part 7 of Article 3 of Chapter 48 of the General Statutes.
- d. Placement of a minor child in accordance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children under Article 38 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes or the Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption.
- e. Temporary transfer of physical custody of a minor child to an individual with a prior substantial relationship with the child for a specified period of time due to (i) the child's medical, mental health, educational, or recreational needs or (ii) the parent's inability to provide proper care or supervision for the minor child, which may be due to the parent's incarceration, military service, employment, medical treatment, incapacity, or other voluntary or involuntary absence.
- f. Transfer of physical custody of a minor child to a relative.
- g. Temporary transfer of physical custody of a minor child to a behavioral health facility or other health care provider, an educational institution, or a recreational facility by a parent for a specified period of time due to the child's medical, mental health, educational, or recreational needs.
- h. A voluntary foster care placement of the minor child made pursuant to an agreement between the minor child's parent and a county department of social services as described in G.S. 7B-910.
- i. Placement of a minor child with a prospective adoptive parent in substantial compliance with the applicable adoption laws of this State or of another state.

(c) Any person who commits an offense under subsection (a) of this section is guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor.

(d) Any person who commits an offense under subsection (a) of this section that results in serious physical injury to the child is guilty of a Class G felony. (2016-115, s. 1.)