

Article 5.

Limitations, Other than Real Property.

**§ 1-46. Periods prescribed.**

The periods prescribed for the commencement of actions, other than for the recovery of real property, are as set forth in this Article. (C.C.P., s. 30; Code, s. 151; Rev., s. 390; C.S., s. 436.)

**§ 1-46.1. Twelve years.**

Within 12 years an action –

- (1) No action for the recovery of damages for personal injury, death, or damage to property based upon or arising out of any alleged defect or any failure in relation to a product shall be brought more than 12 years after the date of initial purchase for use or consumption.
- (2) Reserved for future codification purposes. (2009-420, s. 2.)

**§ 1-47. Ten years.**

Within ten years an action -

- (1) Upon a judgment or decree of any court of the United States, or of any state or territory thereof, from the date of its entry. No such action may be brought more than once, or have the effect to continue the lien of the original judgment.
- (1a) Upon a judgment rendered by a justice of the peace, from its date.
- (2) Upon a sealed instrument or an instrument of conveyance of an interest in real property, against the principal thereto. Provided, however, that if action on an instrument is filed, the defendant or defendants in such action may file a counterclaim arising out of the same transaction or transactions as are the subject of plaintiff's claim, although a shorter statute of limitations would otherwise apply to defendant's counterclaim. Such counterclaim may be filed against such parties as provided in G.S. 1A-1, Rules of Civil Procedure.
- (3) For the foreclosure of a mortgage, or deed in trust for creditors with a power of sale, of real property, where the mortgagor or grantor has been in possession of the property, within ten years after the forfeiture of the mortgage, or after the power of sale became absolute, or within ten years after the last payment on the same.
- (4) For the redemption of a mortgage, where the mortgagee has been in possession, or for a residuary interest under a deed in trust for creditors, where the trustee or those holding under him has been in possession, within ten years after the right of action accrued.
- (5) Repealed by Session Laws 1959, c. 879, s. 2.
- (6) a. Against any registered land surveyor as defined in G.S. 89C-3(9) or any person acting under his supervision and control for physical damage or for economic or monetary loss due to negligence or a deficiency in the performance of surveying or platting, within 10 years after the last act or omission giving rise to the cause of action.
- b. For purposes of this subdivision, "surveying and platting" means boundary surveys, topographical surveys, surveys of property lines, and any other measurement or surveying of real property and the consequent graphic representation thereof.
- c. The limitation prescribed by this subdivision shall apply to the exclusion of G.S. 1-15(c) and G.S. 1-52(16). (C.C.P., ss. 14, 31; Code, s. 152; Rev., s. 391; C.S., s. 437; 1937, c. 368; 1959, c. 879, s. 2; 1961, c. 115, s. 2; 1969, c. 810, s. 1; 1991, c. 268, s. 2; 1995 (Reg.

Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 1(a); 1997-456, s. 27; 1999-221, s. 3; 2004-203, s. 15(a).)

**§ 1-48. Transferred to § 1-54, subdivision (6), by Session Laws 1951, c. 837, s. 2.**

**§ 1-49. Seven years.**

Within seven years an action –

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 1961, c. 115, s. 1.
- (2) By a creditor of a deceased person against his personal or real representative, within seven years next after the qualification of the executor or administrator and his making the advertisement required by law for creditors of the deceased to present their claims, where no personal service of such notice in writing is made upon the creditor. A creditor thus barred of a recovery against the representative of any principal debtor is also barred of a recovery against any surety to the debt. (C.C.P., s. 32; Code, s. 153; Rev., s. 392; C.S., s. 438; 1961, c. 115, s. 1.)

**§ 1-50. Six years.**

(a) Within six years an action –

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 1997-297, s. 1.
- (2) Against an executor, administrator, collector, or guardian on his official bond, within six years after the auditing of his final account by the proper officer, and the filing of the audited account as required by law.
- (3) For injury to any incorporeal hereditament.
- (4) Against a corporation, or the holder of a certificate or duplicate certificate of stock in the corporation, on account of any dividend, either a cash or stock dividend, paid or allotted by the corporation to the holder of the certificate or duplicate certificate of stock in the corporation.
- (5) a. No action to recover damages based upon or arising out of the defective or unsafe condition of an improvement to real property shall be brought more than six years from the later of the specific last act or omission of the defendant giving rise to the cause of action or substantial completion of the improvement.  
b. For purposes of this subdivision, an action based upon or arising out of the defective or unsafe condition of an improvement to real property includes:
  1. Actions to recover damages for breach of a contract to construct or repair an improvement to real property;
  2. Actions to recover damages for the negligent construction or repair of an improvement to real property;
  3. Actions to recover damages for personal injury, death or damage to property;
  4. Actions to recover damages for economic or monetary loss;
  5. Actions in contract or in tort or otherwise;
  6. Actions for contribution indemnification for damages sustained on account of an action described in this subdivision;
  7. Actions against a surety or guarantor of a defendant described in this subdivision;

8. Actions brought against any current or prior owner of the real property or improvement, or against any other person having a current or prior interest therein;
  9. Actions against any person furnishing materials, or against any person who develops real property or who performs or furnishes the design, plans, specifications, surveying, supervision, testing or observation of construction, or construction of an improvement to real property, or a repair to an improvement to real property.
- c. For purposes of this subdivision, "substantial completion" means that degree of completion of a project, improvement or specified area or portion thereof (in accordance with the contract, as modified by any change orders agreed to by the parties) upon attainment of which the owner can use the same for the purpose for which it was intended. The date of substantial completion may be established by written agreement.
  - d. The limitation prescribed by this subdivision shall not be asserted as a defense by any person in actual possession or control, as owner, tenant or otherwise, of the improvement at the time the defective or unsafe condition constitutes the proximate cause of the injury or death for which it is proposed to bring an action, in the event such person in actual possession or control either knew, or ought reasonably to have known, of the defective or unsafe condition.
  - e. The limitation prescribed by this subdivision shall not be asserted as a defense by any person who shall have been guilty of fraud, or willful or wanton negligence in furnishing materials, in developing real property, in performing or furnishing the design, plans, specifications, surveying, supervision, testing or observation of construction, or construction of an improvement to real property, or a repair to an improvement to real property, or to a surety or guarantor of any of the foregoing persons, or to any person who shall wrongfully conceal any such fraud, or willful or wanton negligence.
  - f. This subdivision prescribes an outside limitation of six years from the later of the specific last act or omission or substantial completion, within which the limitations prescribed by G.S. 1-52 and 1-53 continue to run. For purposes of the three-year limitation prescribed by G.S. 1-52, a cause of action based upon or arising out of the defective or unsafe condition of an improvement to real property shall not accrue until the injury, loss, defect or damage becomes apparent or ought reasonably to have become apparent to the claimant. However, as provided in this subdivision, no action may be brought more than six years from the later of the specific last act or omission or substantial completion.
  - g. The limitation prescribed by this subdivision shall apply to the exclusion of G.S. 1-15(c), G.S. 1-52(16) and G.S. 1-47(2).
- (6) Repealed by Session Laws 2009-420, s. 1, effective October 1, 2009, and applicable to causes of action that accrue on or after that date.
  - (7) Recodified as G.S. 1-47(6) by Session Laws 1995 (Regular Session, 1996), c. 742, s. 1.

(b) This section applies to actions brought by a private party and to actions brought by the State or a political subdivision of the State. (C.C.P., s. 33; Code, s. 154; Rev., s. 393; C.S.,

s. 439; 1931, c. 169; 1963, c. 1030; 1979, c. 654, s. 2; 1981, c. 644, s. 1; 1991, c. 268, s. 2; 1995, c. 291, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 1(a); 1997-297, s. 1; 2009-420, s. 1.)

**§ 1-51. Five years.**

Within five years –

- (1) No suit, action or proceeding shall be brought or maintained against a railroad company owning or operating a railroad for damages or compensation for right-of-way or use and occupancy of any lands by the company for use of its railroad unless the action or proceeding is commenced within five years after the lands have been entered upon for the purpose of constructing the road, or within two years after it is in operation.
- (2) No suit, action or proceeding shall be brought or maintained against a railroad company for damages caused by the construction of the road, or the repairs thereto, unless such suit, action or proceeding is commenced within five years after the cause of action accrues, and the jury shall assess the entire amount of damages which the party aggrieved is entitled to recover by reason of the trespass on his property. (1893, c. 152; 1895, c. 224; 1897, c. 339; Rev., s. 394; C.S., s. 440.)

**§ 1-52. Three years.**

Within three years an action -

- (1) Upon a contract, obligation or liability arising out of a contract, express or implied, except those mentioned in the preceding sections or in G.S. 1-53(1).
- (1a) Upon the official bond of a public officer.
- (2) Upon a liability created by statute, either state or federal, unless some other time is mentioned in the statute creating it.
- (3) For trespass upon real property. When the trespass is a continuing one, the action shall be commenced within three years from the original trespass, and not thereafter.
- (4) For taking, detaining, converting or injuring any goods or chattels, including action for their specific recovery.
- (5) For criminal conversation, or for any other injury to the person or rights of another, not arising on contract and not hereafter enumerated.
- (6) Against the sureties of any executor, administrator, collector or guardian on the official bond of their principal; within three years after the breach thereof complained of.
- (7) Against bail; within three years after judgment against the principal; but bail may discharge himself by a surrender of the principal, at any time before final judgment against the bail.
- (8) For fees due to a clerk, sheriff or other officer, by the judgment of a court; within three years from the entry of the judgment, or the issuing of the last execution thereon.
- (9) For relief on the ground of fraud or mistake; the cause of action shall not be deemed to have accrued until the discovery by the aggrieved party of the facts constituting the fraud or mistake.
- (10) Repealed by Session Laws 1977, c. 886, s. 1.
- (11) For the recovery of any amount under and by virtue of the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and amendments thereto, said act being an act of Congress.
- (12) Upon a claim for loss covered by an insurance policy that is subject to the three-year limitation contained in G.S. 58-44-16.

- (13) Against a public officer, for a trespass, under color of his office.
- (14) An action under Chapter 75B of the General Statutes, the action in regard to a continuing violation accrues at the time of the latest violation.
- (15) For the recovery of taxes paid as provided in G.S. 105-381.
- (16) Unless otherwise provided by statute, for personal injury or physical damage to claimant's property, the cause of action, except in causes of actions referred to in G.S. 1-15(c), shall not accrue until bodily harm to the claimant or physical damage to his property becomes apparent or ought reasonably to have become apparent to the claimant, whichever event first occurs. Provided that no cause of action shall accrue more than 10 years from the last act or omission of the defendant giving rise to the cause of action.
- (17) Against a public utility, electric or telephone membership corporation, or a municipality for damages or for compensation for right-of-way or use of any lands for a utility service line or lines to serve one or more customers or members unless an inverse condemnation action or proceeding is commenced within three years after the utility service line has been constructed or by October 1, 1984, whichever is later.
- (18) Against any registered land surveyor as defined in G.S. 89C-3(9) or any person acting under his supervision and control for physical damage or economic or monetary loss due to negligence or a deficiency in the performance of surveying or platting as defined in G.S. 1-47(6).
- (19) For assault, battery, or false imprisonment.
- (20) Upon a liability for a civil penalty, civil assessment, or civil fine imposed pursuant to Chapter 20 of the General Statutes. (C.C.P., s. 34; Code, s. 155; 1889, cc. 218, 269; 1895, c. 165; 1899, c. 15, s. 71; 1901, c. 558, s. 23; Rev., s. 395; 1913, c. 147, s. 4; C.S., s. 441; 1945, c. 785; 1971, c. 939, s. 1; 1975, c. 252, ss. 2, 4; 1977, c. 886, s. 1; c. 916, s. 2; c. 946, s. 4; 1979, c. 654, s. 3; 1981, c. 702; c. 777, s. 4; 1991, c. 268, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 1(b); 1997-297, s. 2; 2001-175, s. 2; 2004-203, s. 15(b); 2007-491, s. 3; 2009-171, s. 5; 2010-129, s. 6.)

### **§ 1-53. Two years.**

Within two years -

- (1) An action against a local unit of government upon a contract, obligation or liability arising out of a contract, express or implied. Unless otherwise provided by law, if the preceding sentence of this subsection would bar commencement of a cause of action arising out of a contract to improve real property: (i) such an action may be brought no later than 90 days after substantial completion, provided proper notice of the claim has been given if required by contract, or (ii) if prior to substantial completion the contract was terminated by either party, such an action may be brought no later than 90 days after the date of termination of the contract. As used in this subdivision, "substantial completion" has the same meaning as in G.S. 1-50(a)(5)c. This subdivision shall not apply to actions based upon bonds, notes and interest coupons or when a different period of limitation is prescribed by this Article.
- (2) An action to recover the penalty for usury, including an action regarding the financing of usurious points, usurious fees, or other usurious charges; the two-year period shall accrue with each payment made and accepted on the loan.
- (3) The forfeiture of all interest for usury.

- (4) Actions for damages on account of the death of a person caused by the wrongful act, neglect or fault of another under G.S. 28A-18-2; the cause of action shall not accrue until the date of death. Provided that, whenever the decedent would have been barred, had he lived, from bringing an action for bodily harm because of the provisions of G.S. 1-15(c) or 1-52(16), no action for his death may be brought. (1874-5, c. 243; 1876-7, c. 91, s. 3; Code, ss. 756, 3836; 1895, c. 69; Rev., s. 396; C.S., s. 442; 1931, c. 231; 1937, c. 359; 1945, c. 774; 1951, c. 246, s. 2; 1979, c. 654, s. 3; 1981, c. 777, s. 3; 2007-351, s. 1; 2008-139, s. 1.)

**§ 1-54. One year.**

Within one year an action or proceeding –

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 252, s. 5.
- (2) Upon a statute, for a penalty or forfeiture, where the action is given to the State alone, or in whole or in part to the party aggrieved, or to a common informer, except where the statute imposing it prescribes a different limitation.
- (3) For libel and slander.
- (4) Against a public officer, for the escape of a prisoner arrested or imprisoned on civil process.
- (5) For the year's allowance of a surviving spouse or children.
- (6) For a deficiency judgment on any debt, promissory note, bond or other evidence of indebtedness after the foreclosure of a mortgage or deed of trust on real estate securing such debt, promissory note, bond or other evidence of indebtedness, which period of limitation above prescribed commences with the date of the delivery of the deed pursuant to the foreclosure sale: Provided, however, that if an action on the debt, note, bond or other evidence of indebtedness secured would be earlier barred by the expiration of the remainder of any other period of limitation prescribed by this subchapter, that limitation shall govern.
- (7) Repealed by Session Laws 1971, c. 939, s. 2.
- (7a) For recovery of damages under Article 1A of Chapter 18B of the General Statutes.
- (8) As provided in G.S. 105-377, to contest the validity of title to real property acquired in any tax foreclosure action or to reopen or set aside the judgment in any tax foreclosure action.
- (9) As provided in Article 14 of Chapter 126 of the General Statutes, entitled "Protection for Reporting Improper Government Activities".
- (10) Actions contesting the validity of any zoning or unified development ordinance or any provision thereof adopted under Part 3 of Article 18 of Chapter 153A or Part 3 of Article 19 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes or other applicable law, other than an ordinance adopting or amending a zoning map or approving a special use, conditional use, or conditional zoning district rezoning request. Such an action accrues when the party bringing such action first has standing to challenge the ordinance; provided that, a challenge to an ordinance on the basis of an alleged defect in the adoption process shall be brought within three years after the adoption of the ordinance. (C.C.P., s. 35; Code, s. 156; 1885, c. 96; Rev., s. 397; C.S., s. 443; 1933, c. 529, s. 1; 1951, c. 837, s. 2; 1965, c. 9; 1969, c. 1001, s. 2; 1971, c. 12; c. 939, s. 2; 1975, c. 252, s. 5; 1977, c. 886, s. 3; 1983, c. 435, s. 38; 1989, c. 236, s. 4; 2001-175, s. 1; 2011-384, s. 1.)

**§ 1-54.1. Two months.**

Within two months an action contesting the validity of any ordinance adopting or amending a zoning map or approving a special use, conditional use, or conditional zoning district rezoning request under Part 3 of Article 18 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes or Part 3 of Article 19 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes or other applicable law. Such an action accrues upon adoption of such ordinance or amendment. (1981, c. 705, s. 1; c. 891, s. 4; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 746, s. 5; 2011-384, s. 2.)

**§ 1-55. Six months.**

Within six months an action –

- (1) Upon a contract, transfer, assignment, power of attorney or other instrument transferring or affecting unearned salaries or wages, or future earnings, or any interest therein, whether said instrument be under seal or not under seal. The above period of limitations shall commence from the date of the execution of such instrument.
- (2) For the wrongful conversion or sale of leaf tobacco in an auction tobacco warehouse during the regular season for auction sales of tobacco in such warehouse. This paragraph shall not apply to actions for the wrongful conversion or sale of leaf tobacco which was stolen from the lawful owner or possessor thereof.
- (3) For wrongful discharge or demotion because of proceedings under the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act as prohibited by G.S. 97-6.1. (C.C.P., s. 36; Code, s. 157; Rev., s. 398; C.S., s. 444; 1931, c. 168; 1943, c. 642, s. 2; 1969, c. 1001, s. 1; 1979, c. 738, s. 2; 1991, c. 636, s. 3.)