



**GEORGIA FORESTRY**  
C O M M I S S I O N

# 2017

## Georgia Forestry Laws

Courtesy of  
Georgia Forestry Commission's  
Law Enforcement

10/16/2017

# Georgia Forestry Laws – 2017



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## CONTENTS:

### ARTICLE 1

#### **FOREST RESOURCES**

##### **Page Part 1 State Forestry Commission**

- 5 12-6-1. Definitions
- 5 12-6-2. Creation of State Forestry Commission; members; terms of office; ineligibility of Governor for membership; vacancies; effect of appointment when Senate not in session.
- 6 12-6-3. Chairman; reimbursement of members for expenses; meetings
- 6 12-6-4. Dismissal of members for failure to attend meetings
- 6 12-6-5. Powers and duties of commission generally; volunteer services
- 8 12-6-5.1. Legislative findings; reforestation incentives program authorized; powers of commission
- 9 12-6-6. Management, conservation, and protection of forest lands; sale of forest products from land managed by commission; production and sale of seedlings
- 10 12-6-7. Federal financial aid -- Participation in rural fire prevention and control program; contributions by counties and fire departments
- 10 12-6-8. Federal financial aid -- Expenditure of funds for forest farming and marketing of forest products
- 11 12-6-9. Acquisition of land; gifts of land for use as lookout tower sites; abandoned tower sites; improvements on land subject to reversionary clause
- 12 12-6-10. Reports to General Assembly
- 12 12-6-11. Director -- Appointment; qualifications; salary; reimbursement for expenses; term
- 12 12-6-12. Director -- Duty of director to devote full time to office; power and duty of director to act for commission when commission not in session
- 13 12-6-13. Director -- Oath; bond; location of office
- 13 12-6-14. Director -- Eligibility of commission members for directorship or for employment under commission or director
- 13 12-6-15. Director -- Adoption of rules, regulations, and methods of administration
- 13 12-6-16. Director -- Control of tree diseases and insect infestation
- 14 12-6-17. Director -- Regulation of controlled burning where drought or other conditions exist

**Page**

- 14 12-6-18. Director -- Expenditure of funds for benefit of lands under commission's control; sale and disposal of products from controlled lands
- 15 12-6-19. Director -- Promulgation of rules and regulations as to lands under commission's control; sale, lease, or exchange of controlled lands
- 15 12-6-20. Investigation and enforcement of forestry laws; powers of forestry investigators
- 16 12-6-21. Uncontrolled fire as constituting a public nuisance; duties and liabilities of person or entity responsible
- 17 12-6-22. Investigation of tree diseases or insect infestation; notification of landowner; recommendations; effect of landowner's failure to act; disposition of proceeds derived from sale of trees
- 17 12-6-22.1. Control of aviation; power of commission

**Part 1A Timber Harvesting and Removal Requirements**

- 19 12-6-23. Scale load ticket required for wood removal; form; exceptions
- 20 12-6-24. Notice of timber harvesting operations

**Part 2 Practice of Professional Forestry**

- 23 12-6-40. Legislative purpose
- 23 12-6-41. Definitions
- 23 12-6-42. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Creation; appointment of members; certificate of appointment; oath; term of office
- 24 12-6-43. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Qualifications of members
- 24 12-6-44. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Compensation of members
- 24 12-6-45. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Removal of members; vacancies
- 25 12-6-46. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Meetings; officers
- 25 12-6-47. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Rules and regulations; seal
- 25 12-6-48. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Record of proceedings
- 25 12-6-49. Qualifications and requirements for registered foresters
- 26 12-6-49.1. Denial or suspension of license for noncompliance with child support order
- 27 12-6-49.2. Suspension of registered forester license; borrowers in default; hearing and appeal procedures
- 28 12-6-50. Applications for registration; fee
- 28 12-6-51. Examinations
- 28 12-6-52. Licenses -- Issuance generally; endorsement by registrant of plans, maps, specifications, and reports issued by registrant
- 29 12-6-53. Licenses -- Eligibility of foresters with 12 years' experience
- 29 12-6-54. Licenses -- Reciprocity for nonresidents
- 29 12-6-55. Licenses -- Only individuals may be licensed
- 30 12-6-56. Licenses -- Expiration and renewal generally; continuing forestry education requirement
- 30 12-6-57. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Denial or revocation of license; discipline of licensee; code of ethics
- 30 12-6-58. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Duplicate license for lost, destroyed, or mutilated license
- 31 12-6-59. Receipts and disbursements

**Page**

- 31 12-6-60. Injunctive relief
- 31 12-6-61. Prohibited acts
- 32 12-6-62. Penalty; authority to prefer charges; immunity of person bringing charges from liability; duty to enforce part; legal assistance by Attorney General
- 32 12-6-63. Termination

**Part 3 Forest Fire Prevention & Control**

- 33 12-6-80. Short title
- 33 12-6-81. Legislative purpose
- 33 12-6-82. Definitions
- 34 12-6-83. Direction and supervision by State Forestry Commission of forest fire protection work; making and enforcing rules and regulations
- 34 12-6-84. Entry upon land for fire-prevention purposes or investigations
- 34 12-6-85. Fire protection units
- 34 12-6-86. Unit forestry boards -- Creation; appointment; qualifications; terms of office; vacancies; service by members without compensation
- 35 12-6-87. Unit forestry boards – Duties
- 35 12-6-88. Unit forestry boards -- Annual forest fire protection plans appropriation of funds for public information campaign
- 35 12-6-89. "Extreme forest fire emergency" defined; authority of Governor, forestry investigators, and peace officers in emergency; advice by director to Governor as to existence of emergency
- 36 12-6-90. Permit required for burning woods, lands, marshes, or other flammable vegetation; exceptions
- 37 12-6-91. Controlled burning by owners over own forest land
- 37 12-6-92. Vesting of title to property in State Forestry Commission
- 37 12-6-93. Appropriations; agreements between State Forestry Commission and counties; taxation by counties for fire protection

**Part 4 Forestry Research**

- 38 12-6-110. Powers and duties of State Forestry Commission as to forestry research
- 39 12-6-111. Employment by State Forestry Commission of assistants and other employees
- 39 12-6-112. Appropriations, grants, or gifts to State Forestry Commission for forestry research
- 39 12-6-113. Georgia Forest Research Council - Creation; status as advisory body.
- 39 12-6-114. Georgia Forest Research Council - Appointment and confirmation of members; terms of office; vacancies.
- 39 12-6-115. Georgia Forest Research Council - Removal of members; effect of removal.
- 39 12-6-116. Georgia Forest Research Council - Chairman.
- 39 12-6-117. Georgia Forest Research Council - Quorum.
- 39 12-6-118. Georgia Forest Research Council - Meetings with director of State Forestry Commission; per diem and allowances.

<b>Page</b>	<b>Part 5</b>	<b>Herty Advanced Materials Development Center</b>
40	12-6-130.	Legislative declaration.
40	12-6-131.	Creation of Foundation; corporate powers; creation of board of trustees; terms of trustees; purpose of Foundation.
40	12-6-132.	Composition of board of directors.
40	12-6-133.	Powers of Foundation generally.
40	12-6-134.	Purpose; acceptance of donations, bequests, and appropriations; pulpwood experiments for states making appropriations; duties to citizens of states or subdivisions making appropriations; reports.
40	12-6-135.	Appointment of directors from states making financial contributions to Foundation; effect of cessation of contributions.
40	12-6-136.	Service of process.
40	12-6-137.	Title to property.
40	12-6-138.	Support of experimental work.
40	12-6-139.	Audit of accounts.

**Part 6        Prescribed Burning**

40	12-6-145.	Short title
40	12-6-146.	Legislative findings and purpose
41	12-6-147.	Definitions
41	12-6-148.	Requirements for prescribed burning; limitation on liability
42	12-6-149.	Fire manager program authorized; record-keeping requirements; public information campaign

**ARTICLE 4**  
**HARVEST AND SALE OF PINE STRAW**

42	12-6-200.	Definitions
43	12-6-201.	Legislative findings
43	12-6-202.	Certificate of harvest
44	12-6-203.	Prohibited acts
44	12-6-204.	Stop sale, stop use, or removal orders to owners or custodians of pine straw
44	12-6-205.	Seizure of pine straw obtained or offered for sale in violation of article
45	12-6-206.	Harvesting or handling pine straw for home or personal use
45	12-6-207.	Penalty

**ARTICLE 2**  
**CRIMINAL TRESPASS AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY**

45	16-7-21.	Criminal trespass
46	16-7-22.	Criminal damage to property in the first degree

**Page**

47 16-7-23. Criminal damage to property in the second degree

**ARTICLE 3**  
**ARSON AND EXPLOSIVES**

48 16-7-60. Arson in the first degree  
48 16-7-61. Arson in the second degree  
49 16-7-62. Arson in the third degree  
49 16-7-63. Burning of woodlands, brush, fields, or other lands; arson of lands; destruction of or damage to material or device used in detection or suppression of wildfires; penalties for violations

**ARTICLE 4**  
**FRAUD AND RELATED OFFENSES**

50 16-9-58. Failing to pay for natural products or chattels  
51 16-9-61. Misrepresenting the origin or ownership of timber or agricultural commodities

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**ARTICLE 1 FOREST RESOURCES**

**PART 1**  
**STATE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

**12-6-1. Definitions**

As used in this part, the term:

- (1) "Commission" means the State Forestry Commission.
- (2) "Director" means the director of the State Forestry Commission.

**12-6-2. Creation of State Forestry Commission; members; terms of office; ineligibility of Governor for membership; vacancies; effect of appointment when Senate not in session**

- (a) There is created and established a State Forestry Commission.
- (b) The commission shall be composed of seven members. Four of the members shall be owners, or representatives of owners, of 50 acres or more of forest land within the State of Georgia. Two members shall be manufacturers or processors of forest products, or representatives thereof. One additional member shall be a person other than a member of either such identified group. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate and shall hold office until their successors are appointed and qualified.

(c) The term of office of all members appointed to the commission shall be for seven years each and until their successors are duly appointed and qualified.

(d) The Governor shall not be a member of the commission.

(e) Any vacancy on the commission shall be filled by appointment by the Governor for the unexpired term, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Any appointment, whether for a full term or to fill a vacancy, made when the Senate is not in session shall be effective until the appointment is acted upon by the Senate.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1921, p. 192, § 1; Ga. L. 1925, p. 199, § 1; Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 21; Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1943, p. 180, §§ 1, 3; Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, §§ 1, 2, 5; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, §§ 12-14; Ga. L. 2002, p. 1082, § 1.

### **12-6-3. Chairman; reimbursement of members for expenses; meetings**

(a) The commission shall elect a chairman annually.

(b) The members of the commission, including the chairman, shall receive such per diem subsistence allowances for each day of actual attendance at the meetings of the commission, as well as mileage to and from the place of meeting and their respective homes by the nearest practical route, as may be authorized by the commission. The per diem and mileage allowances received shall not exceed those authorized by law for other state commissions and boards. Such per diem and travel expense shall be paid from funds of the commission.

(c) The commission shall meet at such times at the state capitol or at other points as it may determine, and it shall convene in all sessions upon call by the chairman or by a majority of the members of the commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 6; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 15.

### **12-6-4. Dismissal of members for failure to attend meetings**

If any member of the commission, for any cause, fails to attend three successive meetings of the commission without good and valid cause or excuse or without leave of absence from the chairman his office shall be declared vacant by the commission. The chairman shall notify the Governor of a vacancy on the commission, and the Governor shall fill the vacancy as provided by Code Section 12-6-2.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 7; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 16

### **12-6-5. Powers and duties of commission generally; volunteer services**

(a) The commission shall have power and authority:

- (1) To take all action appropriate to foster, improve, and encourage reforestation;
- (2) To engage in research and other projects for the ascertainment and promulgation of better forestry practices;
- (3) To offer aid, assistance, and technical advice to landowners relative to the preservation and culture of forests;
- (4) To receive gifts or donations made to it and to expend the same under the terms of such gifts or donations;
- (5) To conduct and direct fire prevention work and maintain equipment, personnel, and installations for the detection, prevention, and combating thereof;
- (6) To publish in print or electronically and distribute the results of its research and investigations;
- (7) To cooperate and contract with other agencies and instrumentalities of government, either county, municipal, state, or national, and with private persons or concerns for the advancement of the forests of this state; and
- (8) To engage in land conservation projects as provided by Chapter 6A of this title.

(b) (1) The director is authorized to accept the services of individuals without compensation as volunteers for or in aid of fire tower operation, urban tree planting and inventories, seedling deliveries, insect surveys and evaluations, tours and field days, staffing exhibits, facility maintenance, beautification projects, and any other activity in and related to the objectives, powers, duties, and responsibilities of the commission.

(2) The director is authorized to provide for reimbursement of volunteers for incidental expenses such as transportation, uniforms, lodging, and subsistence. The director is also authorized to provide general liability coverage and fidelity bond coverage for such volunteers while they are rendering service to or on behalf of the commission.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this Code section, a volunteer shall not be deemed to be a state employee and shall not be subject to the provisions of law relating to state employment including, without limitation, those relating to hours of work, rates of compensation, leave, unemployment compensation, retirement, and state employee benefits.

(4) Volunteers performing work under the terms of this Code section may be authorized by the department to operate state owned vehicles. They may also be treated as employees of the state for the purposes of inclusion in any automobile liability insurance or self-insurance, general liability insurance or self-insurance, or fidelity bond coverage provided by the commission for its employees while operating state owned vehicles.



(5) No volunteer shall be authorized or allowed to enter privately owned or operated lands, facilities, or properties, except for emergency fire fighting purposes, without the express prior written permission of the owner or operator of such privately owned or operated lands, facilities, or properties; provided, however, that such prohibition shall not apply to lands, facilities, or properties leased to the State of Georgia.

(c) The commission shall have the power and authority to create, establish, and operate a program or programs to facilitate, amplify, or supplement the objectives and functions of the commission through the use of volunteer services including, but not limited to, the recruitment, training, and use of volunteers.

(d) The enumeration of specific powers in this Code section shall not be construed as a denial of others not specified in this Code section.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1921, p. 192, § 4; Ga. L. 1925, p. 199, §§ 3, 5, 6; Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 21; Code 1933, §§ 43-201, 43-202, 43-205, 43-206; Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1943, p. 180, §§ 1, 3; Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, §§ 1, 2, 5; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, §§ 12, 17; Ga. L. 1993, p. 423, § 1; Ga. L. 2008, p. 90, § 2-2/HB 1176; Ga. L. 2009, p. 745, § 2/SB 97; Ga. L. 2010, p. 838, § 10/SB 388; Ga. L. 2012, p. 446, § 2-7/HB 642.

#### **12-6-5.1. Legislative findings; reforestation incentives program authorized; powers of commission**

(a) The General Assembly finds that 433,000 acres of trees were planted in Georgia in 1984, while 640,000 acres were harvested during that year for a net loss of over 200,000 planted acres. The General Assembly further finds that the forest industry is of fundamental importance to the economy of the State of Georgia and that increased reforestation is necessary to meet future demands for forest products and to promote economic development and additional employment opportunities within this state. The General Assembly further finds that many acres of farm land and other open land in Georgia are not currently being used to the best advantage and that a program to provide incentives to encourage reforestation on these lands would be of great benefit to the people of Georgia. The General Assembly further finds that increased reforestation would substantially reduce soil erosion, which continues to be a serious problem in Georgia, and would be of other value in preserving and protecting wildlife and other natural resources of this state. It is determined, therefore, that it is in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare and would serve an important public purpose for the State Forestry Commission to establish a reforestation incentives program for the State of Georgia.

(b) In accordance with the findings set forth in subsection (a) of this Code section, the State Forestry Commission is authorized to establish a reforestation incentives program to encourage the planting of trees on lands within this state which are suitable for that purpose but which are currently not being utilized or are not being properly utilized for that purpose. In establishing and maintaining the reforestation incentives program, the commission may:

(1) Provide technical advice and assistance on reforestation to landowners and encourage such

landowners to participate in the reforestation incentives program;

(2) Provide seedlings or equipment to landowners for reforestation purposes pursuant to such terms, conditions, and requirements as the commission shall determine;

(3) Define the types of land eligible for participation in the reforestation incentives program and establish limitations on such participation;

(4) Define the class or classes of landowners who shall be eligible for participation in the reforestation incentives program; and

(5) Provide for any other matters reasonably necessary for the commission to establish and maintain an effective reforestation incentives program.

(c) The powers of the commission provided by this Code section are cumulative of other powers possessed by the commission pursuant to any other provisions of this part or pursuant to any other law and are not in lieu of such other powers.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-5.1, enacted by Ga. L. 1986, p. 402, § 1; Ga. L. 2006, p. 72, § 12/SB 465.

#### **12-6-6. Management, conservation, and protection of forest lands; sale of forest products from land managed by commission; production and sale of seedlings**

(a) Any other provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, the State Forestry Commission is authorized to manage, conserve, and protect any forest lands or forest properties belonging to or under the jurisdiction and control of any department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority of state government. The State Forestry Commission shall manage such forest lands or forest properties subject to the special needs of the department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority and the use of such lands or properties by such department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority. Such management shall conform to the principles of sound forest management where consistent with the use of such lands or properties. Management of forest lands or forest properties shall be undertaken by the State Forestry Commission only upon the written request of the department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority to which the lands or properties belong or which exercise control and jurisdiction over such lands or properties.

(b) The State Forestry Commission is authorized to sell, contract for the sale of, offer, and accept bids for the sale of timber and other forest products grown or produced on lands subject to the management of the commission under this Code section. Such actions may be taken by the State Forestry Commission without the prior approval of any other department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority. The sale of such timber or forest products shall be made in the same manner as the sale of timber or forest products grown or produced on lands belonging to or under the jurisdiction and control of the State Forestry Commission. Any funds derived from the sale of any such timber or forest products shall be paid into the general fund of the state or to the department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority to which the forest lands or forest properties belong or which has jurisdiction and control over such lands or properties in the same

manner as if such timber or forest products had been sold directly by the department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority.

(c) In order to foster, improve, and encourage reforestation and in furtherance of its other duties and powers, the commission is authorized to contract for the production of seedlings, for the purchase of such seedlings for resale to Georgia forest owners or for fulfilling contractual obligations to Georgia forest owners, or for the sale of seedlings to other states and to the United States.

(d) In order to carry out the provisions of subsection (c) of this Code section, the commission is authorized to enter into contracts with other agencies and instrumentalities of the state and local governments of Georgia, with other states, with the United States, with private persons, with corporations, or with other entities. Such actions may be taken by the commission without the prior approval of any other department, board, commission, bureau, agency, or authority of the state. The purchase or sale of such seedlings shall be made in the same manner as the purchase or sale of such seedlings grown or produced on land belonging to or under the jurisdiction and control of the commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1974, p. 458, § 1; Ga. L. 1980, p. 561, § 1; Ga. L. 1981, p. 1385, § 1.

#### **12-6-7. Federal financial aid -- Participation in rural fire prevention and control program; contributions by counties and fire departments**

(a) The commission may enter into agreements with the secretary of agriculture of the United States in order to participate in the rural fire prevention and control program authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-313.

(b) With respect to the formulation of projects relating to fire protection of livestock, wildlife, crops, pastures, orchards, range land, woodland, farmsteads, or other improvements, and other values in rural areas, for which such federal matching funds are available, any participating county or fire department may contribute to the nonfederal matching share and may also contribute such other nonfederal cooperation as may be deemed necessary by the commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1974, p. 559, § 1.

#### **12-6-8. Federal financial aid -- Expenditure of funds for forest farming and marketing of forest products**

The commission shall be the designated agency to expend through the department all federal-aid funds available under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-313, for fire prevention and nursery work and for farm forestry or forest farming and nursery work. The commission shall also be the designated agency to expend through the department all other

federal funds now in existence or to be created for the purpose of assisting private timber landowners in Georgia in the planting, management, and protection of their forests, and in the marketing of their forest products. All such funds shall be expended through regular Office of Planning and Budget channels, provided that those federal funds that may be appropriated or allocated to the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, or any other act of Congress, or any other source or allocation of federal funds for the purpose of carrying on agricultural or forestry extension work shall be made available directly to the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 24; Code 1933, § 43-104; Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1945, p. 390, § 1; Ga. L. 1946, p. 28, § 1; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 27; Ga. L. 1982, p. 3, § 12; Ga. L. 2001, p. 4, § 12.

**12-6-9. Acquisition of land; gifts of land for use as lookout tower sites; abandoned tower sites; improvements on land subject to reversionary clause**

(a) The commission shall have the right to acquire, in the name of the state, by purchase, lease, agreement, or condemnation, such land within the state as may be deemed necessary and proper. Condemnation proceedings shall be subject to the applicable provisions of law relating to the condemnation of property by the State of Georgia. The acquisition by the commission of any land, either by purchase or by condemnation, shall be construed as transferring a fee simple interest, unless the instrument conveying such interest, or the condemnation petition, clearly indicates otherwise.

(b) The director, provided for in Code Section 12-6-11, is authorized to acquire in the name of the state, where the grantor makes a gift thereof to the state, small tracts of land not in excess of five acres, to be used as forest fire lookout tower sites. Title to such land may be conveyed by deeds containing reversionary clauses. Upon abandonment by the commission of such site after the site is no longer of use to it, the director is authorized to reconvey title by quitclaim deed to the grantor, his successors, or assigns, and the director is authorized to reconvey all tower sites subject to reversionary clauses which sites were acquired by the commission as gifts prior to March 3, 1955. However, in case of any abandonment or reconveyance under this subsection, the commission shall have the unqualified right to remove any improvements or fixtures, either temporary or permanent, placed on such property without regard to whether same would have, under general principles of law, become part of the realty, which right may be exercised any time before or a reasonable time after abandonment.

(c) The director is authorized to improve with funds appropriated to the commission any real estate under its control or management which may be held under a deed containing a reversionary clause conditioned on the discontinuation of use for the purpose for which conveyed.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1925, p. 199, § 5; Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 21; Code 1933, § 43-205; Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 18; Ga. L. 1956, p. 377, § 1; Ga. L. 1963, p. 615, § 1.

### **12-6-10. Reports to General Assembly**

It shall be the duty of the commission, in cooperation with the director provided for in Code Section 12-6-11, to:

(1) Annually submit reports to each regular session of the General Assembly together with such information as is necessary to show the condition of the forest resources of the state, with particular reference to the protection, preservation, and propagation of timber growth, and all other matters pertaining to the forest resources, and with recommendations for necessary legislation as to protection, reforestation, and management; and

(2) Quinquennially submit reports to the General Assembly verifying the ability of forest resources in this state to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. The first such report shall be due not later than July 1, 2008. The director shall prescribe the manner, procedures, and data necessary to produce such report.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1925, p. 199, § 3; Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 21; Code 1933, § 43-204; Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 10; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 19; Ga. L. 2007, p. 82, § 1/SB 176.

### **12-6-11. Director -- Appointment; qualifications; salary; reimbursement for expenses; term**

The commission shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Governor, a director, who shall be the executive secretary and administrative officer of the commission. When seeking candidates for the position of director, emphasis shall be placed on identifying individuals who hold a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry or who have significant experience in forest management. The director shall receive a salary fixed by the commission plus actual expenses as provided for other state officials and employees and shall hold office at the pleasure of the commission. The present director shall continue to serve until removed by the commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 8; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 20; Ga. L. 2007, p. 63, § 1/SB 116.

### **12-6-12. Director -- Duty of director to devote full time to office; power and duty of director to act for commission when commission not in session**

The director shall devote his full time to the duties of his office; and when the commission is not in session, the director shall have power, and it shall be his duty, to act in all matters as fully as the commission is authorized, except in such matters where the approval of the commission is specifically required by this part.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 8; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 21.

### **12-6-13. Director -- Oath; bond; location of office**

The director shall take oath of office and give bond in the sum of \$10,000.00 in the usual form required of state officials. The director shall have offices at the site of the state capitol or at such other place as may be recommended by the commission and approved by the Governor. The office of the director shall be the office of the commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 8; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 22.

### **12-6-14. Director -- Eligibility of commission members for directorship or for employment under commission or director**

No member of the commission during his tenure of office or within two years thereafter shall be eligible for appointment as director or for any employment under the commission or the director.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 8; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 23.

### **12-6-15. Director -- Adoption of rules, regulations, and methods of administration**

The director, with the approval of the commission, shall have the power to adopt all rules, regulations, and methods of administration necessary for the efficient operation of the activities of the commission as created and established by this part.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 1079, § 9; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 24.

### **12-6-16. Director -- Control of tree diseases and insect infestation**

(a) Whenever the director or his agents determine that there exists an infestation of forest insect pests or an infection of forest tree diseases, injurious or potentially injurious to the timber or forest trees within the state, and that the infestation or infection is of such a character as to be a menace to the timber or forest growth of the state, the director shall declare the existence of a zone of infestation or infection and shall declare and fix boundaries so as to definitely describe and identify such zone of infestation or infection. The director or his agents shall give notice in writing by mail or otherwise to each forest landowner within the designated control zone advising him of the nature of the infestation or infection and the recommended control measures and offering him technical advice on methods of carrying out controls.

(b) The director shall have the power, by rule or regulation, to declare and define areas of quarantine and to prescribe all needful rules and regulations relating thereto. Any person violating any such rule or regulation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. The director or any other person is empowered to institute action in his name to enjoin any practice in violation of such rules or regulations, without regard to whether such practices would under general law constitute

a nuisance and without regard to whether an adequate remedy exists at law. The commission or any of its duly authorized agents or anyone acting at their direction shall have authority at all times to enter upon any lands for the purposes of making investigations and otherwise carrying out this Code section, without incurring liability for trespassing.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 25

**12-6-17. Director -- Regulation of controlled burning where drought or other conditions exist**

(a) Whenever in the judgment of the director, because of drought or other conditions, controlled burning of woods, lands, marshes, refuse, or other combustible materials in any county or counties or in any area within a county constitutes an unusual hazard to property, the director may by order, rule, or regulation prohibit the setting on fire of any woods, lands, marshes, refuse, or other combustible materials within any county or counties or within any area within a county, or may permit such burning only upon such conditions and under such regulations as in his judgment are necessary and proper to prevent the destruction of property. Where by rule or regulation the setting on fire of any woods, lands, marshes, refuse, or other combustible material has been prohibited, no person shall set or cause to be set any backfire, except under the direct supervision or permission of a state or federal forest officer, unless it can be established that the setting of such backfire was necessary for the purpose of saving life or valuable property, the burden of proving which shall rest on such person claiming same as a defense. Any order, rule, or regulation promulgated by the director under the authority of this Code section shall have the force and effect of law.

(b) Any person violating a lawful order or regulation promulgated under the authority of this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 26.

**12-6-18. Director -- Expenditure of funds for benefit of lands under commission's control; sale and disposal of products from controlled lands**

When lands are acquired or leased under this part, the director, with the approval of the commission, is authorized to make expenditures of funds, not otherwise obligated, for the management, development, and utilization of such areas and to sell and otherwise dispose of the products from such lands.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 28.

**12-6-19. Director -- Promulgation of rules and regulations as to lands under commission's control; sale, lease, or exchange of controlled lands**

The director, with the approval of the commission, is authorized to establish and from time to time alter rules and regulations governing the use, occupancy, and protection of the land and property under the commission's control and to preserve the peace therein. The director, with the approval of the commission, shall have full power and authority to exchange, sell, or lease lands under its jurisdiction when in the judgment of the director and the commission it is advantageous to the state to do so in the highest orderly development and management of state forests, provided that such lease, sale, or exchange shall not be contrary to the terms of any contract which the commission has entered into.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 29.

**12-6-20. Investigation and enforcement of forestry laws; powers of forestry investigators**

(a) As used in this Code section, the term "forestry laws" means laws relating to forestry or timber resources and the protection, security, conservation, or sale of such resources.

(a.1) The director, with the approval of the commission, may appoint investigators to enforce the forestry laws of this state.

(b) The investigators so appointed and any fire-fighting crews under their direction may enter upon any land for the purpose of preventing and suppressing fires and enforcing the fire and other forestry laws of this state.

(c) Investigators who have been so appointed shall be certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council after having successfully completed the course of training required by Chapter 8 of Title 35, the "Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Act," and thereafter shall be authorized and empowered to:

(1) Make summary arrests for violations of the fire and other forestry laws of this state; and, in case of such arrests, the investigator shall as soon as possible deliver the arrested person or persons to the custody of the sheriff of the county wherein the offense was committed;

(2) Arrest persons accused of violating any law which such investigators are empowered to enforce by the issuance of a citation, provided that the offense is committed in the presence of the investigator or information concerning the offense constituting a basis for arrest was received by the arresting investigator from a law enforcement officer, commission firefighter, or forester who observed the offense being committed. The arresting investigator may issue to the accused person a citation which shall enumerate the specific charges against such person and the date upon which such person is to appear and answer such charges. Whenever an arrest is made by the arresting investigator on the basis of information received from another law enforcement officer, commission firefighter, or forester who observed the offense being committed, such citation shall list the name of each officer, firefighter, or forester and each officer, firefighter, or forester shall be present when the charges against the offender are heard;



(3) Execute search warrants and arrest warrants for criminal violations relating to the forestry laws of this state and to arrest, upon probable cause and without warrant, any person the investigator observes violating any criminal law of this state while carrying out his or her duties, provided that such person shall immediately be delivered to the sheriff of the county where the violation occurred; and

(4) Carry weapons in order to execute their enforcement authority under this Code section.

(d) (1) Upon initiating any investigation regarding the potential theft or conversion of timber, the investigator shall promptly notify the sheriff or other law enforcement agency exercising jurisdiction within the county or municipality in which the investigator is conducting such investigation. No investigator shall request any other state law enforcement agency to render assistance in any investigation relating to the theft or conversion of timber without the consent of the sheriff or other law enforcement agency exercising jurisdiction within the county or municipality in which the investigation is conducted.

(2) The director may, and in the case of a request by the Governor shall, authorize and direct investigators to cooperate with and render assistance to any law enforcement agency of this state or of any political subdivision of this state in any criminal case, in the prevention or detection of violations of any law, or in the apprehension or arrest of any person who violates the criminal laws of this state, any other state, or the United States, upon a request by the sheriff or chief law enforcement officer of any political subdivision of this state or by the Governor.

(3) Nothing in this Code section shall repeal, supersede, alter, affect, or otherwise usurp the power of any other law enforcement officer of this state or of any political subdivision of this state.

(e) If any person charged by citation as provided in paragraph (2) of subsection (c) of this Code section shall fail to appear in court as specified in the citation, the judge having jurisdiction of the offense may issue a warrant ordering the apprehension of such person and commanding that he or she be brought before the court to answer the charge contained within such citation and the charge of his or her failure to appear as required. Such person shall then be allowed to make a reasonable bond to appear on a given date before the court.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1925, p. 199, § 8; Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 21; Code 1933, § 43-208; Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1952, p. 211, § 1; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 30; Ga. L. 2008, p. 444, § 1/SB 400; Ga. L. 2009, p. 8, § 12/SB 46; Ga. L. 2014, p. 695, § 2/HB 790.

#### **12-6-21. Uncontrolled fire as constituting a public nuisance; duties and liabilities of person or entity responsible**

Any fire burning uncontrolled on any forested or cut-over brush land or grassland is declared to be a public nuisance by reason of its menace to life and property. Any person, firm, or corporation responsible either for the starting or for the existence of such fire is required to control or extinguish it immediately. If such person, firm, or corporation shall refuse or neglect

to do so, any organized fire suppression force may suppress the nuisance thus constituted by controlling and extinguishing the fire; and the cost thereof may be recovered from the responsible person, firm, or corporation.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1937, p. 264, § 9; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 31.

**12-6-22. Investigation of tree diseases or insect infestation; notification of landowner; recommendations; effect of landowner's failure to act; disposition of proceeds derived from sale of trees**

(a) The commission shall have the authority to enter upon any land on which the commission believes the trees are suffering from an infestation or infection for the purpose of determining whether such infestation or infection exists, the location thereof, and the extent and cause thereof. If an infestation or infection is found to exist by the commission, it shall notify the landowner of such condition and recommend a course of action by the landowner to prevent the spreading of the infestation or disease. If the landowner, within a reasonable period of time following such notification, fails to take action to prevent the spreading of the infestation or disease, then the commission may:

- (1) Fell and remove infested or diseased trees;
- (2) Fell and chemically treat infested or diseased trees;
- (3) Chemically treat standing infested or diseased trees; or
- (4) Take such other effective control methods as the commission deems appropriate.

(b) Any proceeds derived from any sale of such trees shall be paid to the landowner.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1974, p. 426, §§ 1, 2.

**12-6-22.1. Control of aviation; power of commission**

(a) (1) The commission shall be authorized to acquire, operate, maintain, house, and dispose of all state aviation assets assigned to the commission, to provide aviation services and oversight of such state aircraft and aviation operations for the mission of the commission and legitimate state business purposes, to achieve policy objectives through aviation missions, and to provide for the efficient operation of such state aircraft.

(2) All aircraft under the custody and control of the Georgia Aviation Authority as of June 30, 2012, which were previously transferred to the authority by the commission and associated parts and equipment and any budgeted operating funds associated with such aircraft shall be transferred on July 1, 2012, back to the custody and control of the commission.

(3) Any persons who as of June 30, 2012, were employed by the Georgia Aviation Authority pursuant to previous transfer from the commission to the authority shall be transferred back to the commission on July 1, 2012, and shall no longer be under the administration or direction of the authority.

(4) All airfields and appurtenances, including hangars, previously transferred to the Georgia Aviation Authority by the commission and all accounts receivable, budgeted operating funds, other funds, contracts, liabilities, and obligations associated with the aircraft being transferred back to the commission as of July 1, 2012, shall become the property, accounts receivable, budgeted operating funds, other funds, contracts, liabilities, and obligations of the commission on such date.

(5) The commission shall be responsible for providing aviation services in support of the mission of the commission. The commission shall be authorized to dispose of any state aircraft assigned to the commission and apply the proceeds derived therefrom to the purchase of replacement aviation assets.

(b) The commission shall have the power to:

(1) Hire, organize, and train personnel to operate, maintain, house, purchase, and dispose of aviation assets;

(2) Purchase, lease, maintain, develop, and modify facilities to support aviation assets and operations;

(3) Develop operating, maintenance, safety, security, training, education, and scheduling standards for commission aviation operations and conduct inspections, audits, and other similar oversight to determine practices and compliance with such standards;

(4) Develop an accountability system for commission aviation operations and activities;

(5) Identify the costs associated with training, education, and the purchase, operation, maintenance, and administration of state aircraft assigned to the commission and aviation operations and related facilities;

(6) In conjunction with the Georgia Aviation Authority, develop an appropriate joint billing structure for passenger transportation where the aircraft is designated and operated as a "civil aircraft" under Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations and charge agencies and other state entities for the full variable hourly costs for the operation of each type of aircraft, evaluated annually and adjusted as necessary based upon the price of fuel, maintenance, and other fees that are a direct result of flying the aircraft on that specific trip; provided, however, that any billing to an agency by the commission shall be suspended whenever the Governor declares a state of emergency on any cost associated with aircraft used during and in response to such state of emergency;

(7) Retain appropriate external consulting and auditing expertise;

(8) Engage aviation industry representatives to ensure best practices for commission aviation assets;

(9) Delegate certain powers pursuant to this article to other state entities;

(10) Otherwise implement appropriate and efficient management practices for commission aviation operations; and

(11) Enter into agreements with the Georgia Aviation Authority for mutual use of state airfields and appurtenances, including aircraft hangars.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-22.1, enacted by Ga. L. 2012, p. 1082, § 3/SB 339.

### **Part 1A**

## **TIMBER HARVESTING AND REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **12-6-23. Scale load ticket required for wood removal; form; exceptions**

(a) Any person, company, corporation, or others purchasing timber from lands in Georgia shall, within 20 days of removal of such timber, furnish the seller of timber a scale ticket for each and every load of wood removed, when such load is sold by weight, cord, or measure of board feet. A scale ticket shall include information clearly understandable to the seller as follows:

(1) Ticket number;

(2) Name and location of the person or company and its facility where the load of wood is received and weighed or measured;

(3) Date wood was received at such facility;

(4) Tract name;

(5) County and state of origin;

(6) Dealer name (if any);

(7) Producer or logging company name;

(8) Species of wood;

(9) Weight or scale information. If the load is measured by weight, the gross, tare, and net weights shall be shown. If the load is measured by scale, the total volume shall be shown;

(10) Weight, scale, or amount of wood deducted and the deduction classification (cull,

undersize, metal, knots, etc.); and

(11) Name of the person receiving, weighing, or scaling the wood.

(b) Subsection (a) of this Code section shall not apply to the following:

(1) The sale of wood for firewood only;

(2) Any landowner harvesting and processing his own timber; and

(3) Bulk or lump sum sales wherein the landowner and the purchaser agree on a total price for all of said timber purchased.

(c) Any person, company, or corporation which violates any provision of subsection (a) of this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-23, enacted by Ga. L. 1985, p. 1077, § 1; Ga. L. 1986, p. 402, § 2; Ga. L. 2002, p. 1126, § 1; Ga. L. 2014, p. 695, § 3/HB 790.

#### **12-6-24. Notice of timber harvesting operations**

(a) (1) A county governing authority may by ordinance or resolution require all persons or firms harvesting standing timber in any unincorporated area of such county for delivery as pulpwood, logs, poles, posts, or wood chips to any woodyard or processing plant located inside or outside this state to provide notice of such harvesting operations to the county governing authority or the designated agent thereof prior to entering onto the property if possible, but in no event later than 24 hours after entering onto the property. Further, such persons shall give notice of cessation of cutting within 24 hours after the job is completed.

(2) A municipal governing authority may by ordinance or resolution require all persons or firms harvesting standing timber in any incorporated area of such municipality for delivery as pulpwood, logs, poles, or wood chips to any woodyard or processing plant located inside or outside this state to provide notice of such harvesting operations to the municipal governing authority or the designated agent thereof prior to entering onto the property if possible, but in no event later than 24 hours after entering onto the property. Further, such persons shall give notice of cessation of cutting within 24 hours after the job is completed.

(b) Any ordinance or resolution adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section shall conform to the following requirements:

(1) Prior written notice shall be required of any person or firm harvesting such timber for each separate tract to be harvested thereby, shall be made only in such form as prescribed by rule or regulation of the director, and shall be limited to the following:

(A) A map of the area which identifies the location of the tract to be harvested and, as to those trucks which will be traveling to and from such tract for purposes of picking up and

hauling loads of cut forest products, the main point of ingress to such tract from a public road and, if different, the main point of egress from such tract to a public road;

(B) A statement as to whether the timber will be removed pursuant to a lump sum sale, per unit sale, or owner harvest for purposes of ad valorem taxation under Code Section 48-5-7.5;

(C) The name, address, and daytime telephone number of the timber seller if the harvest is pursuant to a lump sum or per unit sale or of the timber owner if the harvest is an owner harvest; and

(D) The name, business address, business telephone number, and nighttime or emergency telephone number of the person or firm harvesting such timber;

(2) Notice may be submitted in person, by transmission of an electronic record via telefacsimile, e-mail, or such other means as approved by the governing authority, or by mail;

(3) The governing authority may require persons or firms subject to such notice requirement to deliver a bond or letter of credit as provided by this paragraph, in which case notice shall not be or remain effective for such harvesting operations unless and until the person or firm providing such notice has delivered to the governing authority or its designated agent a valid surety bond, executed by a surety corporation authorized to transact business in this state, protecting the county or municipality, as applicable, against any damage caused by such person or firm in an amount specified by the governing authority not exceeding \$5,000.00 or, at the option of the person or firm harvesting timber, a valid irrevocable letter of credit issued by a bank or savings and loan association, as defined in Code Section 7-1-4, in the amount of and in lieu of such bond. Each county or municipality shall require no more than one bond from each person or firm harvesting timber regardless of the number of tracts harvested in such county or municipality by each such person or firm so long as the bond remains in effect. Otherwise, a valid replacement bond must be obtained and delivered to the governing authority of such county or municipality or its designated agent no later than the close of business on the fifth business day following the day that such governing authority filed a claim to recover damages against the then-existing bond. Upon filing such claim, such governing authority shall immediately provide notice thereof, including the date such claim was filed, to the person or firm causing the damage. Such notice may be given in person, by transmission of an electronic record via telefacsimile, or by e-mail. For purposes of this paragraph, any such surety bond or letter of credit shall be valid only for the calendar year in which delivered;

(4) Notice shall be effective for such harvesting operation on such tract within such unincorporated area of the county or incorporated area of the municipality upon receipt of the same by the applicable governing authority or its designated agent and, if applicable, compliance with the requirements of paragraph (3) of this subsection and until such time as the person or firm giving such notice has completed the harvesting operation for such tract; provided, however, that any subsequent change in the facts required to be provided for purposes of such notice shall be reported to the governing authority or its designated agent within three business days after such change;

(5) Notice requirements shall be applicable to any such timber harvested on or after the

effective date of the ordinance or resolution adopted pursuant to this Code section; and

(6) Violation of the notice requirements of any ordinance or resolution adopted pursuant to this Code section shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding \$500.00.

(c) The director shall promulgate such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary for purposes of the standard form required by paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of this Code section.

(d) Any municipal governing authority or designated agent thereof which receives a notice required by ordinance or resolution adopted pursuant to this Code section regarding timber harvesting operations to be conducted in whole or in part within the corporate limits of such municipality shall transmit a copy of such notice to the governing authority of the county or the designated agent thereof.

(e) (1) No county, municipality, or other political subdivision in this state shall require any person or firm harvesting standing timber therein for delivery as pulpwood, logs, poles, posts, or wood chips to any woodyard or processing plant located inside or outside this state to provide any notice of or plan or security for such harvesting or hauling of forest products except as provided by this Code section.

(2) No county, municipality, or other political subdivision in this state shall require any person or firm harvesting standing timber therein for delivery as pulpwood, logs, poles, posts, or wood chips to any woodyard or processing plant located inside or outside this state to obtain any permit for such harvesting or hauling of forest products, including without limitation any permit for any new driveway in connection with timber harvesting operations; provided, however, that this paragraph shall not otherwise limit the authority of a county or municipality to regulate roads or streets under its jurisdiction in accordance with Title 32.

(3) The provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection shall not preclude counties, municipalities, and other political subdivisions from enacting and enforcing tree ordinances, landscape ordinances, or streamside buffer ordinances; provided, however, such ordinances shall not apply to timber harvesting as described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (4) of this subsection or in unzoned tracts as described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (4) of this subsection.

(4) (A) The limitations on the regulatory authority of counties, municipalities, or other political subdivisions provided by paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection shall apply only to timber harvesting operations which qualify as forestry land management practices or agricultural operations under Code Section 12-7-17, not incidental to development, on tracts which are zoned for or used for forestry, silvicultural, or agricultural purposes.

(B) The limitations on the regulatory authority of counties, municipalities, or other political subdivisions provided by paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection shall also apply to tracts which are unzoned.

(5) No county or municipality shall require a fee of any kind for receiving a notification of a

timber harvest.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-24, enacted by Ga. L. 2002, p. 1126, § 1; Ga. L. 2003, p. 578, § 1.

## **PART 2**

### **PRACTICE OF PROFESSIONAL FORESTRY**

#### **12-6-40. Legislative purpose**

It is the purpose of this part to protect the public by improving the standards relative to the practice of professional forestry.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 1; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 1.

#### **12-6-41. Definitions**

As used in this part, the term:

(1) "Board" means the State Board of Registration for Foresters provided for by this part.

(2) "Professional forestry" or "practice of professional forestry" means any professional service relating to forestry, such as investigation, evaluation, development of forest management plans or responsible supervision of forest management, forest protection, silviculture, forest utilization, forest economics, or other forestry activities in connection with any public or private lands, provided that forestry instructional and educational activities shall be exempted. The board shall issue licenses only to those applicants who meet the requirements of this Code section, provided that no person shall be eligible for registration as a registered forester who is not of good character and reputation; provided, further, that employees of the state and federal governments assisting farmers in agricultural programs shall be exempt from this part.

(3) "Registered forester" means a person who has registered and qualified under this part to engage in professional forestry practices as defined in this Code section.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 2; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 2; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 1.

#### **12-6-42. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Creation; appointment of members; certificate of appointment; oath; term of office**

(a) A State Board of Registration for Foresters is created whose duty it shall be to administer this part.

(b) The board shall consist of five foresters who shall be selected and appointed by the Governor



and who shall have the qualifications required by Code Section 12-6-43.

(c) In addition to the five members provided for in subsection (b) of this Code section, the board shall consist of a sixth member who shall be appointed by the Governor from the public at large and who shall have no connection whatsoever with the practice of professional forestry. The initial term of appointment for the additional member provided for by this subsection shall expire June 30, 1985; thereafter, the Governor shall appoint successors for terms of five years each.

(d) Every member of the board shall receive a certificate of his appointment from the Governor and before beginning his term of office shall file with the Secretary of State his written oath or affirmation for the faithful discharge of his official duty.

(e) The five members of the board shall be appointed for terms of five years. On the expiration of the term of any member of the board, the Governor shall in the manner provided in this Code section appoint for a term of five years a registered forester having the qualifications required by Code Section 12-6-43 to take the place of the member whose term on the board is expiring. Each member shall hold office until the expiration of the term for which that member is appointed or until a successor shall have been duly appointed and shall have qualified.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 3; Ga. L. 1980, p. 54, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 2; Ga. L. 1992, p. 6, § 12.

#### **12-6-43. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Qualifications of members**

Each member of the board shall be a citizen of the United States and a resident of Georgia and shall have been engaged in the practice of forestry for at least ten years, provided that only the citizenship and residency requirements of this Code section shall apply to the member appointed pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section 12-6-42.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 4; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 3.

#### **12-6-44. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Compensation of members**

Each member of the board shall be reimbursed as provided for in subsection (f) of Code Section 43-1-2.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 5.

#### **12-6-45. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Removal of members; vacancies**

The Governor may remove any member of the board for misconduct, incompetency, or neglect of duty. Vacancies in the membership of the board shall be filled for the unexpired term by

appointment only as provided in this part.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 6.

#### **12-6-46. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Meetings; officers**

The board shall hold meetings as necessary. The board shall elect or appoint annually a chairman and a vice-chairman. The division director of the professional licensing boards division, as provided in Chapter 1 of Title 43, shall serve as secretary of the board in the same manner as provided by Code Sections 43-1-1 and 43-1-2.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 7; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 4; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1706, § 20; Ga. L. 2001, p. 4, § 12.

#### **12-6-47. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Rules and regulations; seal**

(a) The board shall have the power to promulgate rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the Constitution and laws of this state, which may be reasonably necessary for the proper performance of its duties and the regulation of the proceedings before it.

(b) The board shall adopt and have an official seal.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 8; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 3; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 5.

#### **12-6-48. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Record of proceedings**

The board shall keep a record of its proceedings. The records of the board shall be prima-facie evidence of the proceedings of the board set forth therein, and a transcript thereof, duly certified by the secretary of the board under seal, shall be admissible in evidence with the same force and effect as if the original were produced.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 10; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 6.

#### **12-6-49. Qualifications and requirements for registered foresters**

(a) The minimum qualifications and requirements for registration as a registered forester shall be as follows:

(1) Graduation with a baccalaureate degree from a school, college, or department of forestry approved by the board, passage of a board approved examination after graduation, and a specific record of an additional two years' or more experience in forestry work of a character satisfactory to the board indicating that the applicant is competent to practice forestry. Such two years' experience need not be obtained on lands owned, leased, rented, or held by the applicant or by

any person, corporation, agency, entity, or institution by which such applicant is employed, so long as the applicant works under supervision of a registered forester or under other supervision acceptable to the board; or

(2) Graduation from a school of forestry not approved by the board or completion of a curriculum approved by the board in which the applicant has acquired a minimum of 40 quarter hours' credit, or its equivalent, in forestry subjects, provided that such applicant may be licensed only after acquiring two years' experience of a character satisfactory to the board and under the supervision of a registered forester or under other supervision acceptable to the board, and only after passing a board approved examination; provided, however, that an applicant who graduates on or after July 1, 1993, from a school of forestry not approved by the board or who, on or after July 1, 1993, completes a curriculum approved by the board in which the applicant has acquired a minimum of 40 quarter hours' credit, or its equivalent, in forestry subjects, may be licensed only after completing three years' experience of a character satisfactory to the board and under the supervision of a registered forester or under other supervision acceptable to the board and only after passing a board approved examination.

(b) The board shall issue licenses only to those applicants who meet the requirements of this Code section, provided that no person shall be eligible for registration as a registered forester who is not of good moral character and reputation.

(c) It shall be the duty of the board by rule or regulation to define "supervision" and "experience" as used in this part, and in so doing the board shall consider and give effect to the directness, immediacy, scope, extent, quality, and constancy of such supervision, and, as to experience, the nature, quality, and extent thereof.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 12; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 4; Ga. L. 1989, p. 352, § 1; Ga. L. 1993, p. 481, § 1.

#### **12-6-49.1. Denial or suspension of license for noncompliance with child support order**

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) "Agency" means the agency within the Department of Human Services which is responsible for enforcing orders for child support pursuant to Article 1 of Chapter 11 of Title 19, the "Child Support Recovery Act."

(2) "Compliance with an order for child support" means, as set forth in a court order, administrative order, or contempt order for child support, the obligor is not more than 60 calendar days in arrears in making payments in full for current support, periodic payments on a support arrearage, or periodic payments on a reimbursement for public assistance.

(3) "Proof of compliance" means the notice of release issued by the agency or a court of competent jurisdiction stating that the delinquent obligor is in compliance with an order for child support.

(b) The board shall suspend, as provided for in Code Sections 19-6-28.1 and 19-11-9.3, the license of any registered forester upon receipt of a record from the agency or a court of competent jurisdiction stating that such licensee is not in compliance with an order for child support.

(c) The board shall deny the application or renewal, as provided for in Code Sections 19-6-28.1 and 19-11-9.3, of any applicant or licensee upon receipt of a record that such applicant or licensee is not in compliance with an order for child support from the agency or court of competent jurisdiction.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the hearings and appeals procedures provided for in Code Section 19-6-28.1 or 19-11-9.3, where applicable, shall be the only such procedures required to suspend a license or deny the issuance or renewal of an application for a license under this part.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-49.1, enacted by Ga. L. 1996, p. 453, § 4; Ga. L. 2009, p. 453, § 2-2/ HB 228.

#### **12-6-49.2. Suspension of registered forester license; borrowers in default; hearing and appeal procedures**

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) "Agency" means the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation created in Code Section 20-3-263 which is responsible for administering a program of guaranteed educational loans to eligible students and eligible parents known as the Georgia Higher Education Loan Program.

(2) "Borrower" means an individual who borrowed a guaranteed educational loan under the Georgia Higher Education Loan Program.

(3) "Default" means default as defined by federal law under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

(4) "Satisfactory repayment status" means the borrower has agreed to repay the defaulted loan to the agency and has made a payment in the most recent prior 60 days.

(b) The board shall suspend, as provided for in Code Section 20-3-295, the license of any registered forester upon receipt of a record from the agency stating that such licensee is a borrower in default who is not in satisfactory repayment status.

(c) The board shall deny the application for renewal, as provided for in Code Section 20-3-295, of any applicant or licensee upon receipt of a record from the agency stating that such licensee is a borrower in default who is not in satisfactory repayment status.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the hearings and appeals procedures provided for in Code Section 20-3-295, where applicable, shall be the only such procedures required to suspend a license or deny the issuance or renewal of an application for a license under this part.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-49.2, enacted by Ga. L. 1998, p. 1094, § 5.

#### **12-6-50. Applications for registration; fee**

(a) Applications for registration shall be made on forms prescribed and furnished by the board; shall contain statements made under oath, showing the applicant's education and a detailed summary of the applicant's technical work; and shall contain not fewer than five references, of whom three or more shall be registered foresters having personal or professional knowledge of the applicant's forestry experience.

(b) The registration fee for a license as a registered forester shall be an amount established by the board. Should the board deny the issuance of a license to any applicant, the initial fee deposited shall be retained by the board as an application fee.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 13; Ga. L. 1993, p. 481, § 2.

#### **12-6-51. Examinations**

When written examinations are required, they shall be held at such time and place as the division director of the professional licensing boards division, as provided in Chapter 1 of Title 43, shall determine. The methods of procedure shall be prescribed by the division director of the professional licensing boards division, as provided in Chapter 1 of Title 43. A candidate failing on examination may apply for reexamination in the manner provided for by the division director of the professional licensing boards division, as provided in Chapter 1 of Title 43. Subsequent examination will be granted upon payment of a fee to be determined by the board.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 14; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1706, § 20; Ga. L. 2001, p. 4, § 12.

#### **12-6-52. Licenses -- Issuance generally; endorsement by registrant of plans, maps, specifications, and reports issued by registrant**

The board shall issue a license upon payment of a registration fee as provided for in this part to any applicant who, in the opinion of the board, has satisfactorily met all of the requirements of this part. The issuance of a license by the board shall be evidence that the person named therein is entitled to all the rights and privileges of a registered forester while the license remains unrevoked or unexpired. Plans, maps, specifications, and reports issued by a registrant shall be endorsed with his name and license number during the life of the registrant's license.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 15; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 7.

### **12-6-53. Licenses -- Eligibility of foresters with 12 years' experience**

Reserved. Repealed by Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 8, effective July 1, 1988

### **12-6-54. Licenses -- Reciprocity for nonresidents**

(a) Any person who is licensed as a registered forester under the laws of another state may be licensed and registered under the laws of Georgia by reciprocity without having to qualify under the other provisions of this part, subject to the following conditions:

(1) That the requirements and qualifications for licensing and registration under the laws of the state in which such person is licensed are substantially equivalent to those of Georgia, such substantial equivalency to be determined by the board; and

(2) That such state permits licensing of foresters registered in Georgia on terms substantially equivalent to those of this Code section, such substantial equivalency to be determined by the board.

(b) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Code section, the board may decline to license by reciprocity any person on an individual basis where the board determines that such applicant does not possess good character or has been guilty of fraud in making application under the laws of Georgia or of any other state, or where the board determines by examination or otherwise that such applicant is not in fact qualified to become licensed as a registered forester.

(c) Any person desiring to become registered under this Code section shall make application under oath on blanks to be furnished by the board, shall accompany such application with the same fee required for licensing and registration under Code Section 12-6-50, and shall cause to be sent to the board a certificate from the proper authority of the state under which such person is already registered certifying thereto.

(d) Any license issued under this Code section shall be subject to all provisions of this part governing expiration, renewal, renewal fees, revocation, and any and all other provisions of law governing or relating to registered foresters.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 18; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 6; Ga. L. 1982, p. 3, § 12; Ga. L. 1993, p. 481, § 3

### **12-6-55. Licenses -- Only individuals may be licensed**

Registration shall be determined upon a basis of individual personal qualifications. No firm, company, partnership, or corporation can be licensed.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 17.

**12-6-56. Licenses -- Expiration and renewal generally; continuing forestry education requirement**

(a) Licenses shall be valid for up to two years and shall be renewable biennially on the renewal date established by the division director of the professional licensing boards division, as provided in Chapter 1 of Title 43.

(b) The board shall require persons who are licensed under this part to complete not less than six hours and not more than 20 hours of continuing forestry education as a condition of license renewal. The board shall be authorized to approve continuing forestry education courses offered by professional organizations, institutions of higher learning, qualified individuals, or specialty societies. In addition, the board shall be authorized to approve credit for meetings, presentations, or other activities considered by the board to be a form of continuing education.

(c) The board shall be authorized to waive the continuing forestry education requirement in cases of hardship or illness.

(d) The board shall be authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to ensure compliance with the requirements of this Code section.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 16; Ga. L. 1956, p. 691, § 2; Ga. L. 1957, p. 169, § 1; Ga. L. 1958, p. 656, § 1; Ga. L. 1989, p. 352, § 2; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1706, § 20.

**12-6-57. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Denial or revocation of license; discipline of licensee; code of ethics**

The board shall have the authority to refuse to grant a license to an applicant, to revoke the license of a person licensed by the board, or to discipline a person licensed by the board upon a finding by a majority of the board that the licensee or applicant has violated the provisions of Code Section 43-1-19. The board shall have the authority to adopt, by regulation, a code of professional ethics for foresters and thereby define unethical conduct or practice by applicants or licensees of the board for purposes of Code Section 43-1-19.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 19; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 9; Ga. L. 1998, p. 183, § 1.

**12-6-58. State Board of Registration for Foresters -- Duplicate license for lost, destroyed, or mutilated license**

A duplicate license to replace any lost, destroyed, or mutilated license may be issued, subject to the rules of the board, upon payment of a fee established by the board.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1964, p. 409, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 10.

### **12-6-59. Receipts and disbursements**

Reserved. Repealed by Ga. L. 1988, p. 953, § 11, effective July 1, 1988.

### **12-6-60. Injunctive relief**

In addition to any other remedy or criminal prosecution, whenever it shall appear to the board that any person, firm, company, partnership, association, or corporation, or their agents, officers, or directors, is or has been holding himself, itself, or themselves out to the public as a registered forester when not so registered, the board may, on its own motion or on the verified complaint in writing of any person, file an equitable petition in its own name in the superior court in any county of this state having jurisdiction of the parties, alleging the facts and praying for a temporary restraining order, a temporary injunction, or a permanent injunction against such person, firm, company, partnership, association, or corporation, or their agents, officers, and directors, restraining him, it, or them from violating such law. Upon proof of the facts as alleged, the court shall issue such restraining order, temporary injunction, or permanent injunction without requiring allegation or proof that the petitioner therefor has no adequate remedy at law.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1964, p. 409, § 3.

### **12-6-61. Prohibited acts**

(a) No person shall use in connection with his name or otherwise assume, use, or advertise any title or description tending directly or indirectly to convey the impression that he is a registered forester without first having been licensed and registered as a registered forester as provided in this part.

(b) Except as specifically authorized under this part, no person shall engage in the practice of professional forestry, as defined in this part, or in any manner advertise or hold himself out as engaged in such practice without first being licensed as a registered forester under this part.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this Code section or any other provisions of this part, nothing in this part shall be construed as preventing or prohibiting any person from managing or otherwise conducting forestry practices on land owned, leased, rented, or held by such person; nor shall anything in this part prohibit any regular employee or official of any person, corporation, agency, institution, or other entity from engaging in professional or other forestry practices on lands owned, leased, rented, or held by such person, corporation, agency, or other entity; nor shall anything in this part prohibit any graduate of a school of forestry from practicing forestry under supervision as authorized in Code Section 12-6-49 so as to qualify for licensing as provided in that Code section.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, § 1; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 1.



**12-6-62. Penalty; authority to prefer charges; immunity of person bringing charges from liability; duty to enforce part; legal assistance by Attorney General**

(a) Any person, firm, or partnership violating any provision of this part shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(b) Any person who:

(1) Refuses upon request to surrender to the board or any duly authorized agent thereof any license held by such person;

(2) Presents or attempts to use as his own the license of another;

(3) Gives any false or forged evidence of any kind to the board or any member thereof in obtaining a license;

(4) Attempts to use an expired or revoked license; or

(5) Endorses any documents with his name and license number as provided in Code Section 12-6-52 after the license of the registrant named thereon has expired or has been revoked, unless the license has been renewed or reissued, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(c) Any registered forester who endorses any plan, specification, estimate, or map without having actually prepared such plan, specification, estimate, or map or without having been in the actual charge of the preparation thereof shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(d) The board or such person or persons as may be designated by the board to act in its stead is empowered to prefer charges for any of the violations of this part in any court of competent jurisdiction. Where reasonable ground existed to believe or suspect the guilt of the accused, such person bringing charges shall be immune from liability in damages or otherwise, notwithstanding that the accused was acquitted thereof.

(e) It shall be the duty of all duly constituted officers of the law of this state or of any political subdivision thereof to enforce the provisions of this part and to prosecute any persons, firms, or partnerships violating the same. The Attorney General of the state and his assistants shall act as legal advisor to the board and render such legal assistance as may be necessary in carrying out this part.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1951, p. 581, §§ 15, 20; Ga. L. 1959, p. 161, § 5.

**12-6-63. Termination**

Repealed by Ga. L. 1992, p. 3137, § 41, effective July 1, 1992.

**PART 3**  
**FOREST FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

**12-6-80. Short title**

This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Forest Fire Protection Act."

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 1; Ga. L. 1996, p. 6, § 12.

**12-6-81. Legislative purpose**

The General Assembly, recognizing that the forest lands and resources of the state are a natural resource of great economic value to the citizens of the state, comprising two-thirds of the state's area, or 24 million acres, and giving employment to over 177,000 Georgia citizens and bringing to the state a \$19.5 billion economic impact; that uncontrolled forest fires threaten not only lands on which they occur, but also the health of the lands and the citizens of the state; that the present and potential production of forest products are materially menaced and reduced through recurring uncontrolled forest fires, thereby resulting in loss to owners of forest lands, industries, workers, and communities; that it is of vital importance to the state to protect and develop forest lands for the continuous production of forest products; and that this cannot be accomplished without organized and coordinated state-wide protection, declares that protection against uncontrolled fire and preservation of the forest lands and forest resources of the state are essential for the economic welfare of the state and its people and further declares that prescribed burning is an effective method of reducing fuel loads and the potential hazards and impact associated with uncontrolled fires.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 2; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 1.

**12-6-82. Definitions**

As used in this part, the term:

(1) "Forest fire" means any fire burning uncontrolled on any forest land covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass, or other flammable material.

(2) "Forest lands" means all lands which are situated outside of corporate limits and which have enough forest growth, either standing or down, or have sufficient flammable debris or grass, to constitute, in the judgment of the State Forestry Commission, a menace to such lands or adjoining lands.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, §§ 7, 8.

**12-6-83. Direction and supervision by State Forestry Commission of forest fire protection work; making and enforcing rules and regulations**

All forest fire protection work shall be under the direction and supervision of the State Forestry Commission, through the director of the commission, subject to this part and the laws of this state relative to forestry and forest fire prevention and suppression. The commission shall have power to make and enforce all rules and regulations necessary for the administration of forest fire protection.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1925, p. 199, § 3; Ga. L. 1931, p. 7, § 21; Code 1933, § 43-206; Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 4.

**12-6-84. Entry upon land for fire-prevention purposes or investigations**

The members of the State Forestry Commission and any of its authorized agents or anyone acting at their direction shall have the right at any or all times to go upon any land for the purpose of preventing, controlling, or suppressing forest fires, as defined in Code Section 12-6-82, or for the purpose of making investigations, without incurring liability for trespassing.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 13; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 33.

**12-6-85. Fire protection units**

The State Forestry Commission shall divide the state into fire protection units which will provide efficient and economical fire protection within the unit area. Such units will comprise one or more counties or portions of counties.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 9.

**12-6-86. Unit forestry boards -- Creation; appointment; qualifications; terms of office; vacancies; service by members without compensation**

(a) In the discretion of the State Forestry Commission, there may be set up in each fire protection unit a board to be known as the unit forestry board, consisting of five members who shall be appointed by the State Forestry Commission.

(b) The State Forestry Commission shall determine the number of members from each county within the fire protection unit to be appointed to the board in accordance with the percentage of forest land acreage for each county within the unit.

(c) The members of the board shall be residents of the county from which they are appointed and shall be owners of forest land or representatives of such owners. Change of residence from the county shall terminate the appointment.

(d) The initial term of the members of all of the unit forestry boards shall be one member for one year, one member for two years, one member for three years, one member for four years, and one member for five years, each member holding office until his successor is appointed. After the expiration of the first term, one member shall be appointed annually for a term of five years.

(e) In case of a vacancy on the unit forestry board by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise, such vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as provided for the appointment of members thereof.

(f) The members of the unit forestry boards shall serve without compensation.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 10; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 36.

#### **12-6-87. Unit forestry boards -- Duties**

The duties of the unit forestry board shall be to assist in the efficient performance of this part and in the general conduct of the forestry program in the fire protection unit.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 11.

#### **12-6-88. Unit forestry boards -- Annual forest fire protection plans appropriation of funds for public information campaign**

The State Forestry Commission shall prepare for each unit forestry board a plan for forest fire protection for the fiscal year and shall present such plan at a meeting of the board prior to July 1 of each year. It is the intent of the General Assembly that funds be appropriated to the State Forestry Commission each year to provide a public information campaign as provided in Code Section 12-6-149 and for prescribed fire training throughout the state.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 12; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 2.

#### **12-6-89. "Extreme forest fire emergency" defined; authority of Governor, forestry investigators, and peace officers in emergency; advice by director to Governor as to existence of emergency**

(a) As used in this Code section, "extreme forest fire emergency" means a condition whereby forest fires within the state are of such number, size, severity, and intensity that they cannot be controlled by the existing facilities of the State Forestry Commission and are endangering life and property.

(b) The Governor shall have authority to declare and determine the existence and termination of

such emergency and, by order, rule, or regulation, to prohibit hunting, fishing, camping, or picnicking in any woods or lands of the state, or to prohibit the entering of such woods or lands for any other purposes which might cause a fire hazard or endanger the life or property of any person within such area. The Governor may direct and commandeer all state agencies and personnel to assist the State Forestry Commission in such emergency by executive order.

(c) Forestry investigators and any and all other peace officers of this state, or of any county or municipality thereof, shall have authority to make arrests for violation of any order, rule, or regulation made pursuant to a declaration of extreme forest fire emergency. Any person who violates any such order, rule, or regulation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(d) The director of the State Forestry Commission will notify the Governor from time to time what situation, in his judgment, constitutes an extreme forest fire emergency.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 968; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, §§ 37, 38; Ga. L. 1959, p. 72, § 2.

### **12-6-90. Permit required for burning woods, lands, marshes, or other flammable vegetation; exceptions**

(a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this Code section, any person, firm, corporation, or association lawfully entitled to burn any woods, lands, marshes, or any other flammable vegetation, whether in cultivated or uncultivated areas, shall prior to such burning obtain a permit therefor from the forest ranger of the county wherein such burning is to be made or from another employee of the forestry unit serving such county who is authorized by the chief forester of such unit to grant such permits. An applicant for a permit shall provide the county forest ranger or other authorized employee of the forestry unit serving the county with the location and the recommended time of the proposed burn. Such information may be provided and the permit may be obtained by a telephone call to the county forest ranger or to another authorized employee of the forestry unit serving the county. The permit shall be given by providing the applicant therefor with a permit number which will grant permission for a controlled burn to take place at the location specified by the applicant at a time approved by the county forest ranger or by the other authorized employee of the forestry unit serving the county.

(b) It shall not be necessary to obtain a permit otherwise required by subsection (a) of this Code section if a sudden emergency requires a firing in order to render one's premises safe. In any prosecution under this Code section, a necessary firing in a sudden emergency shall constitute an affirmative defense, but the burden of proving such necessity shall rest upon the person asserting it as a defense.

(c) It shall not be necessary to obtain a permit otherwise required by subsection (a) of this Code section to burn improved pastures, residue on cultivated crop land, or leaf piles if the person, firm, corporation, or association intending to burn such residue shall, prior to such burning, give notice of the approximate time and location thereof to the forest ranger of the county wherein such burning is to be made or to an employee of the forestry unit serving such county who is authorized to grant permits under subsection (a) of this Code section.

(d) The notice or permit required by this Code section shall be in addition to any other notice or permit or other requirement for burning provided for by law or by ordinance, resolution, or regulation of any county or municipality of this state; provided, however, that no additional restrictions provided by local ordinance shall prohibit burning the understory for the health of the forest and wildlife or prohibit the landowner's ability to reduce fuel loads on the forest floor for the safety of the community; provided, further, that the foregoing exception shall not apply to the burning of leaf or brush piles not necessary to accomplish the purposes of prescribed burning.

(e) Any person who fails to give any notice required by subsection (c) of this Code section or who makes a burn described by subsection (a) of this Code section without obtaining the permit required by said subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1956, p. 382, §§ 1-3; Ga. L. 1981, p. 895, § 1; Ga. L. 1988, p. 477, § 1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 3; Ga. L. 2001, p. 4, § 12.

#### **12-6-91. Controlled burning by owners over own forest land**

Unless prohibited by the director of the State Forestry Commission pursuant to the provisions of Code Section 12-6-17, the owners of any forest land may accomplish controlled burning over their own land when a permit therefor is obtained pursuant to the requirements of Code Section 12-6-90 and the fire is not allowed to spread onto or over the land of another or others.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 15; Ga. L. 1988, p. 477, § 2.

#### **12-6-92. Vesting of title to property in State Forestry Commission**

The title to all property already acquired or which may be acquired incidental to carrying out this part shall be vested in the State Forestry Commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 14.

#### **12-6-93. Appropriations; agreements between State Forestry Commission and counties; taxation by counties for fire protection**

(a) The funds required to carry out this part and provide for the coordinated protection of uncontrolled fire on all forest lands in the State of Georgia may be provided from annual appropriations made by the General Assembly for this purpose.

(b) In the event any county desires forest fire protection, the county shall enter into an agreement with the State Forestry Commission, and such agreement shall provide for the payment to the commission of an amount reasonably related to the actual cost of providing forest fire protection. Such amount shall be calculated per forest acre of privately owned forest land. Forest acres of

privately owned land shall be based upon the most recent United States Forest Service survey for Georgia.

(c) Any agreement in existence on July 1, 2010, between a county and the commission providing for a different percentage or amount of payment shall be changed so as to provide for the payment of an amount reasonably related to the actual cost of providing forest fire protection. Such amount shall be calculated per forest acre.

(d) Any county may levy a tax to provide the additional funds required for fire protection under this part.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1949, p. 937, § 3; Ga. L. 1950, p. 101, § 1; Ga. L. 1955, p. 309, § 34; Ga. L. 1967, p. 29, § 1; Ga. L. 2010, p. 9, § 1-33/HB 1055.

## **PART 4 FORESTRY RESEARCH**

### **12-6-110. Powers and duties of State Forestry Commission as to forestry research**

The State Forestry Commission shall have the following duties and powers:

(1) To investigate subjects or methods, means, and ways of carrying out such forestry research as it may determine most desirable or necessary in any phase of forestry, or any research which would benefit the promotion of forestry in the State of Georgia, or which would be for the benefit of any industry either privately owned or owned by federal or state governments, or any subdivision thereof;

(2) To promote and assist in the publicizing of the result of any research connected with any phase of forestry. The commission shall cooperate with, and is specifically authorized to counsel and advise, any entity having duties, powers, or objectives similar to or related to those of the commission, including but not limited to any private industry, any agency or agencies of the federal government, this state, other states, and any local governments;

(3) To coordinate all forestry research in the State of Georgia and to see that there is no duplication of research by any agency of the state with any research by the federal government, any county, municipality, or local government, any board, bureau, commission, or any other organization, public or private. The commission shall investigate and determine what forestry research is being carried on by any of the entities listed in this paragraph and shall use the results of this investigation to advise and furnish information to any other entity engaged in forestry research; and

(4) To designate any agency of the state or federal government, or any subdivision thereof, or any other organization which is organized for the purpose of and engaged in forestry research, to carry out any research or experiment in connection with forestry which the commission deems to have the best facilities or to be otherwise best suited for carrying out the particular research or experiment. The commission may, from its funds provided for in this part, allocate to such agency or organization such amount as it deems necessary for such particular research or

experiment.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1953, Nov.-Dec. Sess., p. 45, §§ 9, 10; Ga. L. 1978, p. 2056, § 1.

**12-6-111. Employment by State Forestry Commission of assistants and other employees**

The State Forestry Commission shall have the power to employ such assistants, technical, clerical, or otherwise, and such other employees as the commission in the exercise of its discretion shall deem necessary or proper to the effectual discharge of the duties and the exercise of the powers of the commission enumerated in this part. The commission shall have the power to fix, prescribe, and change the compensation and duties of any such employees.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1953, Nov.-Dec. Sess., p. 45, § 8; Ga. L. 1978, p. 2056, § 1.

**12-6-112. Appropriations, grants, or gifts to State Forestry Commission for forestry research**

(a) For carrying out any of the objectives stated in Code Section 12-6-110, the State Forestry Commission may accept appropriations, grants, or gifts from the federal government; the state government; any county, municipal, or local government; any board, bureau, commission, agency, or establishment of any such government; any other organizations, public or private; and any individual or groups of individuals or corporations. Such grants or gifts shall be held and administered subject to this part.

(b) Appropriations for research conducted by or through the State Forestry Commission for the purposes stated in this part shall be specified in the "General Appropriations Act" as a separate line item appropriation under the State Forestry Commission. Any funds in such line item appropriation shall be allocated to research projects selected by the State Forestry Commission and the director of the State Forestry Commission.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1953, Nov.-Dec. Sess., p. 45, § 11; Ga. L. 1978, p. 2056, § 1.

**12-6-113 through 12-6-118.**

Repealed by Ga. L. 2001, p. 873, § 4, effective July 1, 2001.

**PART 5**

**HERTY ADVANCED MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT CENTER**



## **12-6-130 through 12-6-139**

Reserved. Redesignated by Ga. L. 2012, p. 375, § 1/SB 396, effective July 1, 2012.

## **PART 6 PRESCRIBED BURNING**

### **12-6-145. Short title**

This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Prescribed Burning Act."

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-145, enacted by Ga. L. 1992, p. 2405, § 1.

### **12-6-146. Legislative findings and purpose**

(a) It is declared by the General Assembly that prescribed burning is a resource protection and land management tool which benefits the safety of the public, Georgia's forest resources, the environment, and the economy of the state. The General Assembly finds that:

- (1) Prescribed burning reduces naturally occurring vegetative fuels within forested areas. Reduction of such fuels by burning reduces the risk and severity of major wildfire, thereby lessening the threat of fire and the resulting loss of life and property;
- (2) Georgia's ever-increasing population situates urban development directly adjacent to fire prone forest lands. The use of prescribed fire to manage fuels in interface areas would substantially reduce the threat of damaging wildfire in urban communities;
- (3) Forest land constitutes significant economic, biological, and aesthetic resources of state-wide importance. Prescribed burning on forest land serves to reduce hazardous accumulations of fuels, prepare sites for both natural and artificial forest regeneration, improve wildlife habitat, control insects and disease, and perpetuate fire dependent ecosystems;
- (4) State and federally owned public use lands such as state parks, state and national forests, and wildlife refuges receive resource enhancement through use of prescribed burning;
- (5) As Georgia's population continues to grow, pressures from liability issues and smoke nuisance complaints cause prescribed burn practitioners to limit prescribed burn activity, thus reducing the above-mentioned benefits to the state;
- (6) Public misunderstanding of the benefit of prescribed burning to the ecological and economic welfare of the state exerts unusual pressures that prevent uninhibited use of this

valuable forest resource management tool; and

(7) Fire benefits rare, threatened, and endangered plants, deer, turkey, quail, dove, and other game as well as numerous songbirds and other nongame species by the increased growth and yields of herbs and legumes. It also allows openings for feeding and travel.

(b) It is the purpose of this part to authorize and promote the continued use of prescribed burning for community protection, silvicultural, environmental, and wildlife management purposes.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-146, enacted by Ga. L. 1992, p. 2405, § 1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 4.

### **12-6-147. Definitions**

As used in this part, the term:

(1) "Commission" means the State Forestry Commission.

(2) "Prescribed burning" means the controlled application of fire to existing vegetative fuels under specified environmental conditions and following appropriate precautionary measures, which causes the fire to be confined to a predetermined area and accomplishes one or more planned land management objectives or to mitigate catastrophic wildfires.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-147, enacted by Ga. L. 1992, p. 2405, § 1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 5.

### **12-6-148. Requirements for prescribed burning; limitation on liability**

(a) Prescribed burning conducted under the requirements of this part shall:

(1) Be accomplished only when an individual with previous prescribed burning experience or training is in charge of the burn and is present on site until the fire is adequately confined to reasonably prevent escape of the fire from the area intended to be burned;

(2) Be considered in the public interest and shall not create a public or private nuisance;

(3) Be considered a property right of the landowner; and

(4) Be conducted in accordance with a permit issued under Part 3 of this article.

(b) No property owner or owner's agent conducting an authorized prescribed burn under this part shall be liable for damages or injury caused by fire or resulting smoke unless it is proven that there was gross negligence in starting, controlling, or completing the burn.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-148, enacted by Ga. L. 1992, p. 2405, § 1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 6.

**12-6-149. Fire manager program authorized; record-keeping requirements; public information campaign**

(a) The commission may promulgate a certified prescribed fire manager program whereby practitioners may become qualified and registered under this part.

(b) The commission shall utilize the same or similar record-keeping requirements of Part 3 of this article, the "Georgia Forest Fire Protection Act," to reflect the use of prescribed burning under this part.

(c) The commission shall, subject to sufficient funding, institute a public information campaign in an effort to reveal the benefits of prescribed burning to the general public.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-149, enacted by Ga. L. 1992, p. 2405, § 1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1285, § 7.

**ARTICLE 4**

**HARVEST AND SALE OF PINE STRAW**

**12-6-200. Definitions**

As used in this article, the term:

- (1) "Director" means the director of the State Forestry Commission.
- (2) "Harvesting" means the various methods or processes of gathering pine straw for preservation, storage, use, or sale.
- (3) "Landowner" means the person who owns land on which pine straw is harvested or the person having possession, control, or use of such land who has lawful authority to grant permission to harvest pine straw from the land.
- (4) "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, or any other legal entity.
- (5) "Pine straw" means the dead needles of coniferous evergreen trees which have separated from the trees to which they were originally attached.

(6) "Pine straw dealer" means a person who purchases or otherwise obtains pine straw from a seller for the purpose of selling such pine straw at retail or for the purpose of selling such pine straw to another pine straw dealer or for both such purposes. "Pine straw dealer" also includes any person who purchases pine straw directly from a landowner for the purpose of selling such pine straw at retail.

(7) "Seller" means a person who exchanges pine straw for money or for any other valuable consideration.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-200, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

### **12-6-201. Legislative findings**

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) The natural occurrence of pine straw constitutes a significant economic resource for owners of timbered property;

(2) Such owners have been victimized by continuous and repeated trespasses onto their lands by persons engaged in harvesting pine straw and have been deprived of the economic benefit of such resources; and

(3) The repeated trespasses onto private property by certain persons engaged in the harvesting and baling of pine straw constitute an organized and methodical deprivation of the rights of others, necessitating the enactment of this article.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-201, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

### **12-6-202. Certificate of harvest**

(a) As a condition of selling pine straw to a pine straw dealer within the State of Georgia, the seller shall obtain and present to the pine straw dealer a certificate of harvest. A certificate of harvest shall be a written or printed document signed by the landowner where the pine straw was harvested granting permission for the harvest of the pine straw. A certificate of harvest shall be valid for one year. In addition to the permission of the landowner to harvest pine straw, a certificate of harvest shall include the following information:

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the landowner who granted permission to harvest the load of pine straw;

(2) The name, address, and telephone number of the person who was authorized to harvest the load of pine straw; and

(3) The date and location of the harvest, which shall include the state and county where harvested.

(b) A pine straw dealer who purchases pine straw directly from a landowner shall obtain a landowner's certificate of harvest. A landowner's certificate of harvest shall show the name, address, and telephone number of the landowner and the date and location of the harvest, including the state and county where harvested. A landowner's certificate of harvest shall be signed by the landowner.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-202, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

Title Note

### **12-6-203. Prohibited acts**

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or offer to sell pine straw to a pine straw dealer or seller within the State of Georgia without presenting to the pine straw dealer or seller a certificate of harvest or landowner's certificate of harvest.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any pine straw dealer or seller within the State of Georgia to purchase pine straw without first obtaining a certificate of harvest or landowner's certificate of harvest from the seller.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-203, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

### **12-6-204. Stop sale, stop use, or removal orders to owners or custodians of pine straw**

The director may issue and enforce written or printed stop sale, stop use, or removal orders to the owners or custodians of any pine straw ordering them to hold the same at a designated place, when the director finds that such pine straw is being offered or exposed for sale in violation of this article, until the law has been complied with and such pine straw has been released, in writing, by the director, or until such violations have been otherwise legally disposed of by written authority. The director shall release pine straw products when the requirements of this article have been complied with.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-204, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

### **12-6-205. Seizure of pine straw obtained or offered for sale in violation of article**

Any pine straw obtained or offered for sale in violation of this article shall be subject to seizure on the complaint of the director to the superior court of the county in which the pine straw is found. If the court finds the pine straw to be in violation of this article, and orders its condemnation, the pine straw shall be disposed of in any manner consistent with its quantity, the

interests of the parties, and the laws of this state, provided that in no instance shall the pine straw be ordered by the court to be disposed of without first giving the person claiming the pine straw an opportunity to apply to the court for release of the pine straw in such manner as to bring it into compliance with this article.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-205, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

### **12-6-206. Harvesting or handling pine straw for home or personal use**

This article shall not be construed so as to affect any farmer or other person harvesting or handling pine straw for home or personal use.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-206, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

### **12-6-207. Penalty**

Any person violating any provisions of this article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 12-6-207, enacted by Ga. L. 1989, p. 386, § 1.

## **ARTICLE 2**

### **CRIMINAL TRESPASS AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY**

#### **16-7-21. Criminal trespass**

(a) person commits the offense of criminal trespass when he or she intentionally damages any property of another without consent of that other person and the damage thereto is \$500.00 or less or knowingly and maliciously interferes with the possession or use of the property of another person without consent of that person.

(b) A person commits the offense of criminal trespass when he or she knowingly and without authority:

(1) Enters upon the land or premises of another person or into any part of any vehicle, railroad car, aircraft, or watercraft of another person for an unlawful purpose;

(2) Enters upon the land or premises of another person or into any part of any vehicle, railroad car, aircraft, or watercraft of another person after receiving, prior to such entry, notice from the owner, rightful occupant, or, upon proper identification, an authorized representative of the owner or rightful occupant that such entry is forbidden; or

(3) Remains upon the land or premises of another person or within the vehicle, railroad car, aircraft, or watercraft of another person after receiving notice from the owner, rightful occupant, or, upon proper identification, an authorized representative of the owner or rightful occupant to depart.

(c) For the purposes of subsection (b) of this Code section, permission to enter or invitation to enter given by a minor who is or is not present on or in the property of the minor's parent or guardian is not sufficient to allow lawful entry of another person upon the land, premises, vehicle, railroad car, aircraft, or watercraft owned or rightfully occupied by such minor's parent or guardian if such parent or guardian has previously given notice that such entry is forbidden or notice to depart.

(d) A person who commits the offense of criminal trespass shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(e) person commits the offense of criminal trespass when he or she intentionally defaces, mutilates, or defiles any grave marker, monument, or memorial to one or more deceased persons who served in the military service of this state, the United States of America or any of the states thereof, or the Confederate States of America or any of the states thereof, or a monument, plaque, marker, or memorial which is dedicated to, honors, or recounts the military service of any past or present military personnel of this state, the United States of America or any of the states thereof, or the Confederate States of America or any of the states thereof if such grave marker, monument, memorial, plaque, or marker is privately owned or located on land which is privately owned.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1882-83, p. 121, § 1; Penal Code 1895, § 220; Penal Code 1910, § 217; Code 1933, § 26-3002; Ga. L. 1959, p. 173, § 1; Ga. L. 1960, p. 142, § 1; Code 1933, § 26-1503, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 1249, § 1; Ga. L. 1969, p. 857, § 5; Ga. L. 1979, p. 764, § 1; Ga. L. 1985, p. 484, § 1; Ga. L. 1985, p. 1491, § 1; Ga. L. 1997, p. 526, § 1; Ga. L. 2001, p. 1153, § 1.

### **16-7-22. Criminal damage to property in the first degree**

(a) A person commits the offense of criminal damage to property in the first degree when he:

(1) Knowingly and without authority interferes with any property in a manner so as to endanger human life; or

(2) Knowingly and without authority and by force or violence interferes with the operation of any system of public communication, public transportation, sewerage, drainage, water supply, gas, power, or other public utility service or with any constituent property thereof.

(b) A person convicted of the offense of criminal damage to property in the first degree shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than ten years.

**HISTORY:** Code 1933, § 26-1501, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 1249, § 1.

**16-7-23. Criminal damage to property in the second degree**

(a) A person commits the offense of criminal damage to property in the second degree when he:

(1) Intentionally damages any property of another person without his consent and the damage thereto exceeds \$500.00; or

(2) Recklessly or intentionally, by means of fire or explosive, damages property of another person.

(b) A person convicted of the offense of criminal damage to property in the second degree shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years.

**HISTORY:** Code 1933, § 26-1502, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 1249, § 1; Ga. L. 1985, p. 484, § 2; Ga. L. 1985, p. 1491, § 2; Ga. L. 2008, p. 444, § 2/SB 400.

**ARTICLE 3**

**ARSON AND EXPLOSIVES**

**16-7-60. Arson in the first degree**

(a) A person commits the offense of arson in the first degree when, by means of fire or explosive, he or she knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to damage:

(1) Any dwelling house of another without his or her consent or in which another has a security interest, including but not limited to a mortgage, a lien, or a conveyance to secure debt, without the consent of both, whether it is occupied, unoccupied, or vacant;

(2) Any building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, or other structure of another without his or her consent or in which another has a security interest, including but not limited to a mortgage, a lien, or a conveyance to secure debt, without the consent of both, if such structure is designed for use as a dwelling, whether it is occupied, unoccupied, or vacant;

(3) Any dwelling house, building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure whether it is occupied, unoccupied, or vacant and when such is insured against loss or damage by fire or explosive and such loss or damage is accomplished without the consent of both the insurer and the insured;

(4) Any dwelling house, building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure whether it is occupied, unoccupied, or vacant with the intent to defeat, prejudice, or defraud the



rights of a spouse or co-owner; or

(5) Any building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure under such circumstances that it is reasonably foreseeable that human life might be endangered.

(b) A person also commits the offense of arson in the first degree when, in the commission of a felony, by means of fire or explosive, he or she knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to damage anything included or described in subsection (a) of this Code section.

(c) A person convicted of the offense of arson in the first degree shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$50,000.00 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than 20 years, or both.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1924, p. 192, § 1; Code 1933, § 26-2208; Ga. L. 1949, p. 1118, § 2; Code 1933, § 26-1401, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 1249, § 1; Ga. L. 1976, p. 1497, § 1; Ga. L. 1979, p. 935, § 1; Ga. L. 2004, p. 734, § 1.

#### **16-7-61. Arson in the second degree**

(a) A person commits the offense of arson in the second degree as to any building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure not included or described in Code Section 16-7-60 when, by means of fire or explosive, he or she knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to damage any building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure of another without his or her consent or in which another has a security interest, including but not limited to a mortgage, a lien, or a conveyance to secure debt, without the consent of both.

(b) A person also commits the offense of arson in the second degree as to any building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure not included or described in Code Section 16-7-60 when, in the commission of a felony, by means of fire or explosive, he or she knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to damage any building, vehicle, railroad car, watercraft, aircraft, or other structure of another without his or her consent or in which another has a security interest, including but not limited to a mortgage, a lien, or a conveyance to secure debt, without the consent of both.

(c) A person convicted of the offense of arson in the second degree shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$25,000.00 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than ten years, or both.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1924, p. 192, § 2; Code 1933, § 26-2209; Ga. L. 1949, p. 1118, § 3; Code 1933, § 26-1402, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 1249, § 1; Ga. L. 1976, p. 1497, § 2; Ga. L. 1979, p. 935, § 2; Ga. L. 1985, p. 149, § 16; Ga. L. 2004, p. 734, § 2.

### **16-7-62. Arson in the third degree**

(a) A person commits the offense of arson in the third degree when, by means of fire or explosive, he or she knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to damage:

(1) Any personal property of another without his or her consent or in which another has a security interest, including but not limited to a lien, without the consent of both and the value of the property is \$25.00 or more;

(2) Any personal property when such is insured against loss or damage by fire or explosive and the loss or damage is accomplished without the consent of both the insurer and insured and the value of the property is \$25.00 or more; or

(3) Any personal property with the intent to defeat, prejudice, or defraud the rights of a spouse or co-owner and the value of the property is \$25.00 or more.

(b) A person also commits the offense of arson in the third degree when, in the commission of a felony, by means of fire or explosive, he or she knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to damage anything included or described in subsection (a) of this Code section.

(c) A person convicted of the offense of arson in the third degree shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$10,000.00 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, or both.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1924, p. 192, §§ 3, 4; Code 1933, § 26-2210; Ga. L. 1949, p. 1118, § 4; Code 1933, § 26-1403, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 1249, § 1; Ga. L. 1976, p. 1497, § 3; Ga. L. 1979, p. 935, § 3; Ga. L. 2004, p. 734, § 3.

### **16-7-63. Burning of woodlands, brush, fields, or other lands; arson of lands; destruction of or damage to material or device used in detection or suppression of wildfires; penalties for violations**

(a) It shall be unlawful:

(1) To, with intent to damage, start, cause, or procure another to start or cause a fire in any woodlands, brush, field, or other lands that are not one's own and without the permission of the owner or the lessee having control of such property;

(2) To burn any brush, field, forest land, campfire, or debris, whether on one's own land or the lands of another, without taking the necessary precautions before, during, and after the fire to prevent the escape of such fire onto the lands of another. The escape of such fire shall be prima-facie evidence that necessary precautions were not taken;

(3) For any person to cause a fire by discarding any lighted cigarette, cigar, debris, or any other

flaming or smoldering material that may cause a forest fire; or

(4) To destroy or damage any material or device used in the detection or suppression of wildfires.

(b) This Code section shall not apply to fire resulting from the operation of transportation machinery or equipment used in its normal or accustomed manner.

(c) (1) Any person who violates paragraph (2), (3), or (4) of subsection (a) of this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(2) Any person who violates paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section shall be guilty of arson of lands in the third degree and shall be punished the same as provided by subsection (c) of Code Section 16-7-62 for arson in the third degree.

(3) Any person whose violation of paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section results in a fire that burns more than five acres that are not one's own shall be guilty of arson of lands in the second degree and shall be punished the same as provided by subsection (c) of Code Section 16-7-61 for arson in the second degree.

(4) Any person who violates paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section under such circumstances that it was reasonably foreseeable that human life might be endangered shall be guilty of arson of lands in the first degree and shall be punished the same as provided by subsection (c) of Code Section 16-7-60 for arson in the first degree.

**HISTORY:** Laws 1833, Cobb's 1851 Digest, p. 824; Code 1863, § 4473; Ga. L. 1865-66, p. 233, § 2; Code 1868, § 4519; Code 1873, § 4609; Code 1882, § 4609; Penal Code 1895, § 698; Ga. L. 1898, p. 60, § 1; Penal Code 1910, § 748; Code 1933, § 26-7704; Code 1933, § 26-2214, enacted by Ga. L. 1949, p. 1118, § 8; Code 1933, § 26-3601, enacted by Ga. L. 1956, p. 737, § 8; Ga. L. 1971, p. 577, §§ 1, 2; Code 1981, § 16-7-63, as redesignated by Ga. L. 2008, p. 444, § 3/SB 400.

## ARTICLE 4

### FRAUD AND RELATED OFFENSES

#### **16-9-58. Failing to pay for natural products or chattels**

Any person, either on his or her own account or for others, who with fraudulent intent shall buy cotton, corn, rice, crude turpentine, spirits of turpentine, rosin, pitch, tar, timber, pulpwood, Christmas trees, pine needles, horticultural crops, poultry and poultry products, cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, ratites, horses, mules, pecans, peaches, apples, watermelons, cantaloupes, or other products or chattels and fail or refuse to pay therefor within 20 days following receipt of such products or chattels or by such other payment due date explicitly stated in a written contract

agreed to by the buyer and seller, whichever is later, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; except that if the value of the products or chattels exceeded \$500.00 such person shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for not less than one year nor more than five years.

**HISTORY:** Ga. L. 1884-5, pp. 45, 52; Code 1933 § 5-9914 enacted by Code 1981, § 16-9-58, enacted by Ga. L. 1983, p. 485, § 2; Ga. L. 1995, p. 244, § 11; Ga. L. 2003, p. 369, § 1.

#### **16-9-61. Misrepresenting the origin or ownership of timber or agricultural commodities**

(a) A person commits the crime of misrepresenting the origin or ownership of timber or agricultural commodities when, in the course of a sale, attempted sale, delivery, or other completed or attempted transaction regarding timber or agricultural commodities, he or she knowingly, willfully, and with criminal intent to defraud makes a false statement or knowingly, willfully, and with criminal intent to defraud causes a false statement to be made with regard to any specific ownership of the timber or agricultural commodities or with regard to the location or ownership of the land where the timber was cut or the agricultural commodities were harvested.

(b) Misrepresenting the origin of timber or agricultural commodities shall be punished, upon conviction, as for a misdemeanor; except that if the property which was the subject of the misrepresentation exceeded \$500.00 in value, it shall be a felony offense punishable upon conviction by a sentence of imprisonment of not less than one year and not exceeding five years.

**HISTORY:** Code 1981, § 16-9-61, enacted by Ga. L. 1996, p. 943, § 1.