



CHAPTER 20
ARTICLE 3 - MOTOR VEHICLE ACT OF 1937

N.C.G.S. § 20-54.

Authority for refusing registration or
certificate of title.

SOURCE	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT	RETRIEVED	SOURCE FINGERPRINT
General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	S.L. 2025-47, s. 13(e) — sixteenth act in the lineage	21 September 2026, 04:13 UTC	c1f20ddaa8fc08ceaec3e6f8 - 65e9260344e441a39b186f2f - 79bab5672b37009a

The Division shall refuse registration or issuance of a certificate of title or any transfer of registration upon any of the following grounds:

The application contains a false or fraudulent statement, the applicant has failed to furnish required information or reasonable additional information requested by the Division, or the applicant is not entitled to the issuance of a certificate of title or registration of the vehicle under this Article.

The vehicle is mechanically unfit or unsafe to be operated or moved upon the highways.

The Division has reasonable ground to believe that the vehicle is a stolen or embezzled vehicle, or that the granting of registration or the issuance of a certificate of title would constitute a fraud against the rightful owner or another person who has a valid lien against the vehicle.

The registration of the vehicle stands suspended or revoked for any reason as provided in the motor vehicle laws of this State, except in such cases to abide by the ignition interlock installation requirements of G.S. 20-17.8.

The required fee has not been paid, including any additional registration fees or taxes due pursuant to G.S. 20-91(c).

The vehicle is not in compliance with the inspection requirements of Part 2 of Article 3A of this Chapter or a civil penalty assessed as a result of the failure of the vehicle to comply with that Part has not been paid.

The Division has been notified that the motor vehicle has been seized by a law enforcement officer and is subject to forfeiture pursuant to G.S. 20-28.2, et seq., or any other statute. However, the Division shall not prevent the renewal of existing registration prior to an order of forfeiture.

The vehicle is a golf cart. If the vehicle is an all-terrain vehicle or utility vehicle, the Division shall refuse registration or any transfer of registration but shall issue a certificate of title as provided by G.S. 20-53.6.

The applicant motor carrier is subject to an order issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration or the Division. The Division shall deny registration of a vehicle of a motor carrier if the applicant fails to disclose material information required, or if the applicant has made a materially false statement on the application, or if the applicant has applied as a subterfuge for the real party in interest who has been issued a federal out-of-service order, or if the applicant's business is operated, managed, or otherwise controlled by or affiliated with a person who is ineligible for registration, including the applicant entity, a relative, family member, corporate officer, or shareholder. The Division shall deny registration for a vehicle that has been assigned for safety to a commercial motor carrier who has been prohibited from operating by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration or a carrier whose business is operated, managed, or otherwise controlled by or affiliated with a person who is ineligible for registration, including the owner, a relative, family member, corporate officer, or shareholder.

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority has notified the Division that the owner of the vehicle has not paid the amount of tolls, fees, and civil penalties the owner owes the Authority for use of a Turnpike project.

The Division has been notified (i) pursuant to G.S. 20-217(g2) that the owner of the vehicle has failed to pay any fine imposed pursuant to G.S. 20-217 or (ii) pursuant to G.S. 153A-246(b)(14) that the owner of the vehicle has failed to pay a civil penalty due under G.S. 153A-246.

The owner of the vehicle has failed to pay any penalty or fee imposed pursuant to G.S. 20-311.

The Division has been notified by the State Highway Patrol that the owner of the vehicle has failed to pay any civil penalty and fees imposed by the State Highway Patrol for a violation of Part 9 of Article 3 of this Chapter.

The Division has been notified (i) pursuant to G.S. 153A-246.1(d)(6) that the owner of the vehicle has failed to pay any penalty imposed under G.S. 153A-246.1 or (ii) pursuant to G.S. 160A-300.4(d)(6) that the owner of the vehicle has failed to pay any penalty imposed under G.S. 160A-300.4.

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
16 ACTS

Amendment lineage

The State prints this history as a single parenthetical at the foot of the section. It is reproduced verbatim in the colophon and unpacked below in order of enactment.



Nº	YEAR	ACT	CHARACTER
01	1937	c. 407, s. 19	ENACTED
02	1975	c. 716, s. 5	AMENDED
03	1975	1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 754, s. 7	AMENDED
04	1998	S.L. 1998-182, s. 9	AMENDED
05	2001	S.L. 2001-356, s. 3	AMENDED
06	2002	S.L. 2002-152, s. 1	AMENDED
07	2007	S.L. 2007-164, s. 5	AMENDED
08	2008	S.L. 2008-225, s. 7	AMENDED
09	2009	S.L. 2009-319, s. 1	AMENDED
10	2013	S.L. 2013-293, s. 4	AMENDED
11	2015	S.L. 2015-241, s. 29.31(b)	AMENDED
12	2016	S.L. 2016-87, s. 4	AMENDED
13	2017	S.L. 2017-188, s. 3	AMENDED
14	2019	S.L. 2019-196, s. 2	AMENDED
15	2024	S.L. 2024-46, s. 1(b)	AMENDED
16	2025	S.L. 2025-47, s. 13(e)	AMENDED

APPARATUS II
13 AUTHORITIES

Authorities referenced

Every G.S. cross-reference appearing in the text of this section, in order of first appearance. Nothing is characterized; the operative language is quoted from the section itself.

REFERENCE	APPEARS IN	OPERATIVE LANGUAGE IN THIS SECTION
G.S. 20-17.8	(null)(4)	"the ignition interlock installation requirements of"
G.S. 20-91(c)	(null)(5)	"fees or taxes due pursuant to"
G.S. 20-28.2	(null)(7)	"is subject to forfeiture pursuant to"
G.S. 20-53.6	(null)(8)	"certificate of title as provided by"
G.S. 20-217(g2)	(null)(11)	"has been notified (i) pursuant to"
G.S. 20-217 or (ii)	(null)(11)	"pay any fine imposed pursuant to"
G.S. 153A-246(b)(14)	(null)(11)	"G.S. 20-217 or (ii) pursuant to"
G.S. 153A-246	(null)(11)	"pay a civil penalty due under"

G.S. 20-311	(null)(12)	"penalty or fee imposed pursuant to"
G.S. 153A-246.1(d)(6)	(null)(14)	"has been notified (i) pursuant to"
G.S. 153A-246.1 or (ii)	(null)(14)	"to pay any penalty imposed under"
G.S. 160A-300.4(d)(6)	(null)(14)	"G.S. 153A-246.1 or (ii) pursuant to"
G.S. 160A-300.4	(null)(14)	"to pay any penalty imposed under"

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-54 (2025).

Pinpoint keys are set in the left margin of the text rather than line numbers: subsection designators are stable across editions and paper sizes, line numbers are not.

COLOPHON

Provenance

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This is not the official text. The official text is published by the General Assembly of North Carolina.

HISTORY PARENTHETICAL, AS PRINTED BY THE STATE

(1937, c. 407, s. 19; 1975, c. 716, s. 5; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 754, s. 7; 1998-182, s. 9; 2001-356, s. 3; 2002-152, s. 1; 2007-164, s. 5; 2008-225, s. 7; 2009-319, s. 1; 2013-293, s. 4; 2015-241, s. 29.31(b); 2016-87, s. 4; 2017-188, s. 3; 2019-196, s. 2; 2024-46, s. 1(b); 2025-47, s. 13(e).)

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