



CHAPTER 5A

ARTICLE 2 - CIVIL CONTEMPT

N.C.G.S. § 5A-21.

Civil contempt; imprisonment to compel compliance.

SOURCE	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT	RETRIEVED	SOURCE FINGERPRINT
General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	S.L. 2015-210, s. 1 — fourth act in the lineage	21 September 2026, 05:25 UTC	10fda24ef84dc6139d3d4904 - 68b30bda66c51cf4e9d569b7 - cffae2acf0362ff4

§ 5A-21(a)

Failure to comply with an order of a court is a continuing civil contempt as long as:

- (1) The order remains in force;
- (2) The purpose of the order may still be served by compliance with the order;
- (2a) The noncompliance by the person to whom the order is directed is willful; and
- (3) The person to whom the order is directed is able to comply with the order or is able to take reasonable measures that would enable the person to comply with the order.

§ 5A-21(b)

A person who is found in civil contempt may be imprisoned as long as the civil contempt continues, subject to the limitations provided in subsections (b1) and (b2) of this section. Notwithstanding subsection (b2) of this section, if a person is found in civil contempt for failure to pay child support or failure to comply with a court order to perform an act that does not require the payment of a monetary judgment, the person may be imprisoned as long as the civil contempt continues without further hearing.

§ 5A-21(b1)

A person who is found in civil contempt, but was not arrested, for failure to comply with a nontestimonial identification order issued pursuant to Article 14, Nontestimonial Identification Order, of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes may not be imprisoned more than 90 days unless the person is arrested on probable cause.

§ 5A-21(b2)

The period of imprisonment for a person found in civil contempt shall not exceed 90 days for the same act of disobedience or refusal to comply with an order of the court. A person who has not purged himself or herself of the contempt within the period of imprisonment imposed by the court under this subsection may be recommitted for one or more successive periods of imprisonment, each not to exceed 90 days. However, the total period of imprisonment for the same act of disobedience or refusal to comply with the order of the court shall not exceed 12 months, including both the initial period of imprisonment imposed under this section and any additional period of imprisonment imposed under this subsection. Before the court may recommit a person to any additional period of imprisonment under this subsection, the court shall conduct a hearing de novo. The court must enter a finding for or against the alleged contemnor on each of the elements of G.S. 5A-21(a), and must find that all of elements of G.S. 5A-21(a) continue to exist before the person can be recommitted. For purposes of this subsection, a person's failure or refusal to purge himself or herself of contempt shall not be deemed a separate or additional act of disobedience, failure, or refusal to comply with an order of the court.

§ 5A-21(c) A person who is found in civil contempt under this Article shall not, for the same conduct, be found in criminal contempt under Article 1 of this Chapter.

§ 5A-21(d) A person who is found in civil contempt under this Article is not subject to the imposition of a fine.

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
4 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.

197719962015			
TICK HEIGHT = ACTS IN THAT YEAR DASHED = RECODIFICATION, NOT AMENDMENT			
Nº	YEAR	ACT	CHARACTER
01	1977	c. 711, s. 3	ENACTED
02	1979	2nd Sess., c. 1080, s. 1	AMENDED
03	1999	S.L. 1999-361, s. 1	AMENDED

APPARATUS II
1 AUTHORITY

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. 5A-21(a)	(b2)	<i>"on each of the elements of"</i>

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 5A-21 (2015).

PINPOINT

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 5A-21(a) (2015).

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

(1977, c. 711, s. 3; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1080, s. 1; 1999-361, s. 1; 2015-210, s. 1.)

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