

§ 15A-301.1. Electronic Repository.

(a) The Administrative Office of the Courts shall maintain, in cooperation with State and local law enforcement agencies, an automated electronic repository or repositories for criminal process (hereinafter referred to collectively as the Electronic Repository), which shall comprise a secure system of electronic data entry, storage, and retrieval that provides for creating, signing, issuing, entering, filing, and retaining criminal process in electronic form, and that provides for the following with regard to criminal process in electronic form:

- (1) Tracking criminal process.
- (2) Accessing criminal process through remote electronic means by all authorized judicial officials and employees and all authorized law enforcement officers and agencies that have compatible electronic access capacity.
- (3) Printing any criminal process in paper form by any authorized judicial official or employee or any authorized law enforcement officer or agency.

(b) Any criminal process may be created, signed, and issued in electronic form, filed electronically in the office of a clerk of superior court, and retained in electronic form in the Electronic Repository.

(c) Any process that was first created, signed, and issued in paper form may subsequently be filed in electronic form and entered in the Electronic Repository by the judicial official who issued the process or by any person authorized to enter it on behalf of the judicial official. All copies of the process in paper form are then subject to the provisions of subsections (i) and (k) of this section.

(d) Any criminal process in the Electronic Repository shall be part of the official records of the clerk of superior court of the county for which it was issued and shall be maintained in the office of that clerk as required by G.S. 15A-301(a).

(e) Any criminal process in the Electronic Repository may, at any time and at any place in this State, be printed in paper form and delivered to a law enforcement agency or officer by any judicial official, law enforcement officer, or other authorized person.

(f) When printed in paper form pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, any copy of a criminal process in the Electronic Repository confers the same authority and has the same force and effect for all other purposes as the original of a criminal process that was created and exists only in paper form.

(g) Service of any criminal process in the Electronic Repository may be effected by delivering to the person to be served a copy of the process that was printed in paper form pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

(h) The tracking information specified in subsection (i) of this section shall promptly be entered in the Electronic Repository when one or both of the following occurs:

- (1) A process is first created, signed, and issued in paper form and subsequently entered in electronic form in the Electronic Repository as provided in subsection (c) of this section.
- (2) A copy of a process in the Electronic Repository is printed in paper form pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

(i) The following tracking information shall be entered in the Electronic Repository in accordance with subsections (c) and (h) of this section:

- (1) The date and time when the process was printed in paper form.
- (2) The name of the law enforcement agency by or for which the process was printed in paper form.
- (3) If available, the name and identification number of the law enforcement officer to whom any copy of the process was delivered.

(j) The service requirements set forth in subsection (k) of this section shall apply to:

- (1) Each copy of a criminal process that is first created in paper form and subsequently entered into the Electronic Repository as provided in subsection (c) of this section.
- (2) Each copy of a criminal process in the Electronic Repository that is printed in paper form pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

(k) Service Requirements for Process Entered in the Electronic Repository. – The copy of a process printed for the purpose of service shall be served not later than 24 hours after it has been printed. The date, time, and place of service shall promptly be recorded in the Electronic Repository and shall be part of the official records of the court. If the process is not served within 24 hours, that fact shall promptly be recorded in the Electronic Repository and all copies of the process in paper form shall be destroyed. The process may again be printed in paper form at later times and at the same or other places. Subsection (f) of this section applies to each successively printed copy of the process.

(l) A law enforcement officer or agency that does not have compatible remote access to the Electronic Repository shall promptly communicate, by any reasonable means, the information required by subsection (k) of this section to the clerk of superior court of the county in which the process was issued or to any other person authorized to enter information into the Electronic Repository, and the information shall promptly be entered in the Electronic Repository.

(m) Failure to enter any information as required by subsection (i) or (k) of this section does not invalidate the process, nor does it invalidate service or execution made after the period specified in subsection (k) of this section.

(n) A warrant created and existing only in paper form is returned within the meaning of G.S. 132-1.4(k) when it is returned as provided in G.S. 15A-301(d). A warrant that exists only in electronic form in the Electronic Repository is returned within the meaning of G.S. 132-1.4(k), when it has been served or when service of the warrant is no longer being actively pursued, as either fact is entered in the Electronic Repository pursuant to subsection (k) of this section.

(o) At the time an individual is taken into custody, the custodial law enforcement agency shall attempt to identify all outstanding warrants against that individual and notify the appropriate law enforcement agencies of the location of the individual.

(p) Prior to the entry of any order of the court in a criminal case, the court shall attempt to identify all outstanding warrants against that individual, if in custody, and notify the appropriate law enforcement agencies of the location of the individual. (2002-64, s. 2; 2015-48, s. 1; 2017-101, s. 1; 2022-47, s. 16(g).)