

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
1977 SESSION

CHAPTER 596  
SENATE BILL 673

AN ACT TO AMEND ARTICLE 1, CHAPTER 69 OF THE GENERAL STATUTES, TO PROVIDE AUTHORIZATION FOR CHIEFS OF RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO INVESTIGATE FIRES; TO PERMIT THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY COMPUTER; AND TO SUBSTITUTE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR REFERENCES TO COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE TO CONFORM WITH G.S. 143A-52.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**Section 1.** G.S. 69-1, as the same appears in the 1975 Replacement Volume 2C of the General Statutes, is hereby rewritten to read as follows:

"§ 69-1. **Fires investigated, reports; records.** — The Attorney General, through the State Bureau of Investigation, and the chief of the fire department, or chief of police where there is no chief of the fire department, in municipalities and towns, and the county fire marshall and the sheriff of the county and the chief of the rural fire department where such fire occurs outside of a municipality, are hereby authorized to investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of every fire occurring in such municipalities or counties in which property has been destroyed or damaged, and shall specially make investigation whether the fire was the result of carelessness or design. A preliminary investigation shall be made by the chief of fire department or chief of police, where there is no chief of fire department in municipalities, and by the county fire marshall and the sheriff of the county or the chief of the rural fire department where such fire occurs outside of a municipality, and must be begun within three days, exclusive of Sunday, of the occurrence of the fire, and the Attorney General, through the State Bureau of Investigation, shall have the right to supervise and direct the investigation when he deems it expedient or necessary.

The officer making the investigation of fires shall forthwith notify the Attorney General, and must within one week of the occurrence of the fire furnish to the Attorney General a written statement of all facts relating to the cause and origin of the fire, the kind, value and ownership of the property destroyed, and such other information as is called for by the forms provided by the Attorney General. Departments capable of submitting the required information by the utilization of computers and related equipment, by means of an approved format of standard punch cards, magnetic tapes or an approved telecommunications system, may do so in lieu of the submission of the written statement as provided for in this section. The Attorney General shall keep in his office a record of all reports submitted pursuant to this section. These reports shall at all times be open to public inspection."

**Sec. 2.** Whenever the words "Commissioner of Insurance" or "Commissioner" are used in the provisions of G.S. 69-2, G.S. 69-3, G.S. 69-3.1, G.S. 69-5, and G.S. 69-6, the same shall be deleted and the words "Attorney General" shall be inserted in lieu thereof.

**Sec. 3.** G.S. 143A-52 is amended in line 9 by deleting the word and figures "and G.S. 69-6."

**Sec. 4.** G.S. 69-4 is hereby amended by adding a new sentence at the end thereof, to read as follows:

"The commissioner shall submit annually, as early as consistent with full and accurate preparation, and not later than the first day of June, a detailed report of his official action under this Article, and it shall be embodied in his report to the General Assembly."

**Sec 5.** This act shall become effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 16th day of June, 1977.