

Chapter 161.
Register of Deeds.

Article 1.

The Office.

§ 161-1. Election and term of office.

In each county there shall be elected biennially by the qualified voters thereof, as provided for the election of members of the General Assembly, a register of deeds. (Const., art. 7, s. 1; Rev., s. 2650; C.S., s. 3543; 1981, c. 504, s. 9.)

§ 161-2. Four-year term for registers of deeds.

A register of deeds shall be elected in each county of the State by the qualified voters of the county. The register of deeds shall serve for a term of four years beginning on the first Monday in December after the election and until a successor register of deeds is elected and qualified. (1935, cc. 362, 392, 462; 1937, c. 271; 1939, cc. 11, 99; 1941, c. 192; 1949, cc. 756, 830; 1957, c. 1022, s. 2; 1973, c. 215, s. 1; 1991, c. 60, s. 2.)

§ 161-3. Oath of office.

The register of deeds shall take the oath of office on the first Monday of December next after his election, before a person authorized to administer oaths as defined in G.S. 11-7.1. (1868, c. 35, s. 2; 1876-7, c. 276, s. 5; Code, s. 3647; Rev., s. 2652; C.S., s. 3544; 1987, c. 620, s. 4.)

§ 161-4. Bond required.

(a) Every register of deeds shall give bond with sufficient surety, to be approved by the board of county commissioners, in a sum of not less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) nor more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), payable to the State, and conditioned for the safekeeping of the books and records, and for the faithful discharge of the duties of his office.

(b) The bond and surety required under subsection (a) shall further be conditioned for the safekeeping of the books and records, and for the faithful discharge of the duties of office of the register of deeds by any incumbent assistant and deputy register of deeds appointed prior to the vacancy pursuant to G.S. 161-6 and holding over after vacancy in the office of register of deeds for the interim, as provided in G.S. 161-5(b). (1868, c. 35, s. 3; 1876-7, c. 276, s. 5; Code, s. 3648; 1899, c. 54, s. 52; Rev., s. 301; C.S., s. 3545; 1963, c. 204; 1965, c. 900; 1969, c. 636.)

§ 161-4.1. Salary in counties where fees formerly allowed.

In any county where during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1980, and ending June 30, 1981, the register of deeds received fees in addition to salary, and retained them personally as allowed by local act, the salary of the register of deeds in such county in any future fiscal year shall not be less than the sum of the salary plus fees received in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1980 and ending June 30, 1981. (1981, c. 968, s. 4.)

§ 161-4.2. Liability insurance for register of deeds.

To the same extent that the county provides liability insurance to other county officers or employees, pursuant to G.S. 153A-97 and 160A-167, or 58-32-10, or Article 23 of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, the county shall provide insurance to the register of deeds. If the county does not provide insurance to any officers or employees, then the county shall notify the register of

deeds, in writing, prior to the first Monday in December of each year, of its intent not to provide insurance coverage to the register of deeds. This required notification shall be in the form of a letter signed by the chairman of the board of county commissioners, attested by the clerk of the board of county commissioners. If the county fails to provide the required notice, then the county shall be liable for damages that would have been paid had the county purchased the insurance pursuant to the General Statutes sections cited above. (1991, c. 470, s. 1.)

§ 161-5. Vacancy in office.

(a) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 60, s. 1.

(a1) When a vacancy occurs from any cause in the office of register of deeds, the board of county commissioners shall fill such vacancy by the appointment of a successor for the unexpired term, who shall qualify and give bond as required by law. If the register of deeds was elected as the nominee of a political party, the board of county commissioners shall consult the county executive committee of that political party before filling the vacancy and shall appoint the person recommended by that committee, if the party makes a recommendation within 30 days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

(b) In the interim between a vacancy in the office of register of deeds and the appointment and qualification of a successor register of deeds, under the provisions of subsection (a), any incumbent assistant or deputy register of deeds appointed under G.S. 161-6 prior to the vacancy shall continue to hold office as assistant or deputy registers of deeds until discharged or otherwise lawfully relieved of office by the lawful successor to the office of register of deeds. (1868, c. 35, s. 4; Code, s. 3649; Rev., s. 2651; C.S., s. 3546; 1965, c. 900; 1975, c. 868, ss. 1, 2; 1977, c. 180; 1981, c. 763, ss. 8, 9, 14; c. 830; 1987, c. 196, s. 2; 1989, c. 497, s. 4; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1056; 1991, c. 14, s. 1, c. 60, ss. 1, 4.)

§ 161-6. Appointment of assistant and deputy registers of deeds; authority to sign in name of register of deeds; holdover assistants and deputies.

(a) The registers of deeds of the several counties are hereby authorized to appoint one or more assistant registers of deeds and one or more deputy registers of deeds, whose acts as assistants or deputies shall be valid and for which the registers of deeds shall be officially responsible. The certificate of appointment of an assistant or deputy shall be filed by the appointing register of deeds in the office of the clerk of the superior court, who shall record the same.

(b) Each assistant and deputy register of deeds so appointed shall be authorized, in addition to his other powers and duties, to register and sign instruments and documents in the name and under the title of the appointing register of deeds, by himself as assistant or deputy, as appropriate. Such signing shall be substantially as follows:

John Doe, Register of Deeds

by Richard Roe, Assistant (or Deputy, as appropriate).

(c) Such registering and signing, when regular and sufficient in all other respects, shall be valid for all purposes, and of the same force and effect as if the instrument or document had been registered and signed by the register of deeds personally.

(d) Wherever in the General Statutes reference is made to "the register of deeds and (or) his assistant" or "the register of deeds and (or) his deputy" or words substantially to this effect, or reference is made only to "the assistant register of deeds" or "the deputy register of deeds," such reference to either assistant or deputy, unless the contrary intent is specifically stated in the text,

shall also include the other, insofar as such reference pertains to the authority, powers, duties, rights, privileges, or qualifications for office of assistant or deputy register of deeds.

(e) Incumbent assistant and deputy registers of deeds holding over after a vacancy in the office of register of deeds, pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 161-5(b), shall continue to have and exercise all lawful power and authority of office until lawfully relieved of office, including, but not restricted to, all power and authority set forth in subsections (a), (b), (c) and (d), and in Chapter 161 generally, and their acts as assistant or deputy registers of deeds shall be official and valid, and the appointing register of deeds, or his estate, and the official bond under G.S. 161-4 shall be responsible for their acts as assistant or deputy registers of deeds, and such assistant or deputy register of deeds shall also be individually, personally and officially responsible for his own acts. (1909, c. 628, s. 1; C.S., s. 3547; 1949, c. 261; 1959, c. 279; 1963, c. 191; 1965, c. 900.)

§ 161-7. Office at courthouse.

The register shall keep his office at the courthouse unless the board of county commissioners shall deem it impracticable. (1868, c. 35, s. 5; Code, s. 3650; Rev., s. 2653; C.S., s. 3548.)

§ 161-8. Attendance at office.

The board of county commissioners may fix by order, to be entered on their records, what days of each week, and at what hours of each day, the register of deeds shall attend at his office in person or by deputy, and he shall give his attendance accordingly. (1868, c. 35, s. 6; Code, s. 3651; Rev., s. 2654; C.S., s. 3549.)

§ 161-9. Official seal.

The office of register of deeds for every county shall have and use an official seal or stamp, which shall be provided by the county commissioners. The official seal or stamp shall be round, and the size shall not exceed one and five-eighths inches in diameter. Contained thereon shall be the name of the register of deeds, the county and letters "N.C.," and the words "Register of Deeds." The ink used for the official stamp shall be of the reproducible type; provided, that any register of deeds using a nonconforming seal or stamp prior to July 1, 1969 may continue to use such seal or stamp. (1893, c. 119, s. 1; Rev., s. 2649; C.S., s. 3550; 1969, c. 1028.)

§ 161-10. Uniform fees of registers of deeds.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, all fees collected under this section shall be deposited into the county general fund. While performing the duties of the office, the register of deeds shall collect the following fees which shall be uniform throughout the State:

- (1) Instruments in General. – For registering or filing any instrument for which no other provision is made by this section, the fee shall be twenty-six dollars (\$26.00) for the first 15 pages plus four dollars (\$4.00) for each additional page or fraction thereof.

For any instrument that assigns more than one security instrument as defined in G.S. 45-36.4(18) by reference to previously recorded instrument recording data that are required to be indexed pursuant to G.S. 161-14.1(b), the fee shall be an additional ten dollars (\$10.00) for each additional reference.

For an instrument that contains excessive recording data, the fee shall be an additional two dollars (\$2.00) for each party listed in the instrument in excess of 20. An instrument contains excessive recording data when there are more than

20 distinct parties listed in the instrument, including any attachments and exhibits, that require indexing pursuant to G.S. 147-54.3 or this Chapter.

When a document is presented for registration that consists of multiple instruments, the fee shall be an additional ten dollars (\$10.00) for each additional instrument. A document consists of multiple instruments when it contains two or more instruments with different legal consequences or intent, each of which is separately executed and acknowledged and could be recorded alone.

- (1a) Deeds of Trust, Mortgages, and Cancellation of Deeds of Trust and Mortgages. – For registering or filing any deed of trust or mortgage the fee shall be sixty-four dollars (\$64.00) for the first 35 pages plus four dollars (\$4.00) for each additional page or fraction thereof.

When a deed of trust or mortgage is presented for registration that contains one or more additional instruments, the fee shall be ten dollars (\$10.00) for each additional instrument. A deed of trust or mortgage contains one or more additional instruments if such additional instrument or instruments has or have different legal consequences or intent, each of which is separately executed and acknowledged and could be recorded alone.

For recording records of satisfaction, or the cancellation of record by any other means, of deeds of trust or mortgages, there shall be no fee. In all other cases, the fees provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall apply to the registration or filing of any subsequent instrument that relates to a previously recorded deed of trust or mortgage. For the purposes of this section, the term "subsequent instrument" has the same meaning as set forth in G.S. 161-14.1(a)(3).

- (2) Marriage Licenses. – For issuing a license sixty dollars (\$60.00); for issuing a delayed certificate with one certified copy twenty dollars (\$20.00); and for a proceeding for correction of an application, license or certificate, with one certified copy ten dollars (\$10.00).
- (3) Plats. – For each original or revised plat recorded twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) per sheet or page; for furnishing a certified copy of a plat five dollars (\$5.00).
- (4) Right-of-Way Plans. – For each original or amended plan and profile sheet recorded twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) for the first page and five dollars (\$5.00) per page for each additional page. This fee is to be collected from the Board of Transportation.
- (5) Registration of Birth Certificate One Year or More after Birth. – For preparation of necessary papers when birth to be registered in another county ten dollars (\$10.00); for registration when necessary papers prepared in another county, with one certified copy ten dollars (\$10.00); for preparation of necessary papers and registration in the same county, with one certified copy twenty dollars (\$20.00).
- (6) Amendment of Birth or Death Record. – For preparation of amendment and affecting correction ten dollars (\$10.00).
- (7) Legitimations. – For preparation of all documents concerned with legitimations ten dollars (\$10.00).

- (8) Certified Copies of Birth and Death Certificates and Marriage Licenses. – For furnishing a certified copy of a death or birth certificate or marriage license ten dollars (\$10.00). Provided however, a register of deeds, in accordance with G.S. 130A-93, may issue without charge a certified birth certificate to any person over the age of 62 years. Provided, however, upon verification of voter registration, a register of deeds, in accordance with G.S. 130A-93, shall issue without charge a certified copy of a birth certificate or a certified copy of a marriage license to any registered voter who declares the registered voter is registered to vote in this State and does not have a certified copy of that registered voter's birth certificate or marriage license necessary to obtain photo identification acceptable under G.S. 163-166.16. Any declaration shall prominently include the penalty under G.S. 163-275(13) for falsely or fraudulently making the declaration.
- (8a) Repealed by Session Laws 2012-18, s. 2.2, as amended by Session Laws 2012-194, s. 54, effective July 1, 2012.
- (9) Certified Copies. – For furnishing a certified copy of an instrument for which no other provision is made by this section five dollars (\$5.00) for the first page, plus two dollars (\$2.00) for each additional page or fraction thereof.
- (10) Comparing Copy for Certification. – For comparing and certifying a copy of any instrument filed for registration, when the copy is furnished by the party filing the instrument for registration and at the time of filing thereof five dollars (\$5.00).
- (11) Uncertified Copies. – A register of deeds who supplies uncertified copies of instruments, or index pages, as a convenience to the public, may charge fees that the register of deeds determines bear a reasonable relation to the quality of copies supplied and the cost of purchasing and maintaining copying and/or computer equipment. These fees may be changed from time to time, but the amount of these fees shall at all times be uniform and prominently posted in the office of the register of deeds.
- (12) Notarial Acts. – For taking an acknowledgment, oath, or affirmation or performing any other notarial act the maximum fee set in G.S. 10B-31 or G.S. 10B-118 for electronic notarial acts. This fee shall not be charged if the act is performed as a part of one of the services for which a fee is provided by this subsection; except that this fee shall be charged in addition to the fees for registering, filing, or recording instruments or plats as provided by subdivisions (1) and (3) of this subsection.
- (13) Uniform Commercial Code. – The following fees apply for services related to financing statements or other records under Part 5 of Article 9 of Chapter 25 of the General Statutes:
- a. For filing and indexing financing statements or records with two or fewer pages, thirty-eight dollars (\$38.00).
 - b. For filing and indexing financing statements or records with more than two pages, forty-five dollars (\$45.00) for the first 10 pages, plus two dollars (\$2.00) for each additional page.

- c. For responding to an information request, including a communication with respect to requests for financing statement information for a particular debtor, thirty-eight dollars (\$38.00).

This subdivision shall not apply to either the recording or the satisfaction of a deed of trust or mortgage, when such deed of trust or mortgage acted as a fixture filing or financing statement covering as-extracted collateral or timber to be cut as authorized under G.S. 25-9-502(c).

- (14) Torrens Registration. – Such fees as are provided in G.S. 43-5.
- (15) Master Forms. – Such fees as are provided for instruments in general.
- (16) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-296, s. 1, effective October 1, 2011.
- (17) Qualification of Notary Public. – For administering the oaths of office to a notary public and making the appropriate record entries as provided in G.S. 10B-10 ten dollars (\$10.00).
- (18) Reinstatement of Articles of Incorporation. – For filing reinstatements of Articles of Incorporation prepared pursuant to G.S. 105-232; such fees as provided for instruments in general. The fee shall be paid by the corporation affected.
- (18a) Nonstandard Document. – For registering or filing any document not in compliance with the recording standards adopted under G.S. 161-14(b), the fee shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) in addition to all other applicable recording fees.
- (19) Miscellaneous Services. – For performing miscellaneous services such as faxing documents, providing laminated copies of documents, expedited delivery of documents, and similar services, the cost of the service.

(b) The uniform fees set forth in this section are complete and exclusive and no other fees shall be charged by the register of deeds.

(c) These fees shall be collected in every case prior to filing, registration, recordation, certification or other service rendered by the register of deeds unless by law it is provided that the service shall be rendered without charge. (Code, ss. 710, 3109, 3751; 1887, c. 283; 1891, c. 324; 1897, cc. 27, 68; 1899, c. 17, s. 2; c. 247, s. 3; cc. 261, 302, 578, 723; 1901, c. 294; 1903, c. 792; 1905, cc. 226, 292, 319; Rev., s. 2776; 1911, c. 55, s. 3; C.S., s. 3906; 1967, c. 639, s. 4; c. 823, s. 33; 1969, c. 80, s. 1; c. 912, s. 3; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1317; 1975, c. 428; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1132; 1981, c. 968, ss. 1, 2; 1983, c. 894, ss. 2, 3; 1987, c. 792, ss. 2-5; 1989, c. 523, s. 1; 1991, c. 636, s. 18; c. 683, s. 3; c. 693, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 49; 1993, c. 425, s. 1; 1997-309, s. 9; 2000-167, s. 1; 2000-169, s. 44; 2001-390, s. 1; 2005-123, s. 7; 2005-391, s. 8; 2008-107, s. 29.7(a); 2009-451, ss. 17.8(a), 20A.4(a); 2011-296, s. 1; 2012-18, s. 2.2; 2012-79, s. 2.16; 2012-194, s. 54; 2013-225, s. 7(a), (b); 2013-381, s. 3.3; 2015-206, s. 1; 2015-227, s. 1; 2016-86, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-80, s. 1.2; 2018-144, s. 3.2(b); 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

§ 161-10.1. Exemption of Armed Forces discharge documents and certain other records needed in support of claims for veterans' benefits.

Any schedule of fees which is now or may be prescribed in Chapter 161 of the General Statutes or in G.S. 161-10 shall not apply to nor shall the same repeal any of the provisions of Article 5 of Chapter 47 of the General Statutes. Any schedule of fees which is now or may be hereafter prescribed in Chapter 161 of the General Statutes or as may appear in G.S. 161-10 shall not apply

to nor shall the same repeal any of the provisions of G.S. 143B-1215. (1971, c. 679; 2011-183, s. 109; 2015-241, s. 24.1(ee); 2015-268, s. 7.3(a).)

§ 161-10.2. Repealed by Session Laws 1969, c. 80, s. 6.

§ 161-11. Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 1027.

§ 161-11.1. Fees for Children's Trust Fund.

(a) Five dollars (\$5.00) of each fee collected by a register of deeds on or after October 1, 1983, for issuance of a marriage license pursuant to G.S. 161-10(a)(2) shall be forwarded, as soon as practical but no later than 60 days after collection by the register of deeds, to the county finance officer, who shall forward same to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, for deposit in the Children's Trust Fund.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1997-136, s. 1, effective June 4, 1997. (1983, c. 894, s. 4; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1039, s. 8; 1997-136, s. 1; 2010-31, s. 10.20A(b).)

§ 161-11.2. Fees for domestic violence centers.

Thirty dollars (\$30.00) of each fee collected by a register of deeds for issuance of a marriage license pursuant to G.S. 161-10(a)(2) shall be forwarded by the register of deeds to the county finance officer, who shall forward the funds to the Department of Administration to be credited to the Domestic Violence Center Fund established under G.S. 50B-9. The register of deeds shall forward the fees to the county finance officer as soon as practical. The county finance officer shall forward the fees to the Department of Administration within 60 days after receiving the fees. The Register of Deeds shall inform the applicants that thirty dollars (\$30.00) of the fee for a marriage license shall be used for Domestic Violence programs. (1991, c. 693, s. 2; 2009-451, s. 20A.4(b).)

§ 161-11.3. Automation Enhancement and Preservation Fund.

Ten percent (10%) of the fees collected pursuant to G.S. 161-10 and retained by the county, or six dollars and twenty cents (\$6.20) in the case of a fee collected pursuant to G.S. 161-10(a)(1a) for the first page of a deed of trust or mortgage, shall be set aside annually and placed in a nonreverting Automation Enhancement and Preservation Fund, the proceeds of which shall be expended on computer or imaging technology and needs associated with the preservation and storage of public records in the office of the register of deeds. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the duty of the board of county commissioners to furnish supplies and equipment to the office of the register of deeds. (2001-390, s. 2; 2007-353, s. 5; 2009-451, s. 17.8(c); 2011-296, s. 2; 2013-225, s. 7(a).)

§ 161-11.4: Repealed by Session Laws 2013-225, s. 7(c), effective July 1, 2013.

§ 161-11.5. Fees to be remitted to State Treasurer.

Six dollars and twenty cents (\$6.20) of each fee collected by the register of deeds under G.S. 161-10(a)(1) and (a)(1a) shall be remitted by the register of deeds to the county finance officer, who shall remit the funds to the State Treasurer on a monthly basis to be credited as follows:

- (1) Fifty-five percent (55%) to the Floodplain Mapping Fund established under G.S. 143-215.56A.
- (2) Twenty percent (20%) to the General Fund as nontax revenue.

- (3) Twenty-five percent (25%) to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to be used as provided in G.S. 121-5(e). (2009-451, s. 17.8(b); 2011-296, s. 3; 2013-225, s. 7(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(s).)

§ 161-11.6: Repealed by Session Laws 2013-225, s. 7(c), effective July 1, 2013.