

Article 6.

Revocable Trusts.

§ 36C-6-601. Capacity of settlor of revocable trust.

The capacity required to create, amend, revoke, or add property to a revocable trust, or to direct the actions of the trustee of a revocable trust, is the same as that required to make a will. (2005-192, s. 2.)

§ 36C-6-602. Revocation or amendment of revocable trust.

(a) Unless the terms of a trust expressly provide that the trust is irrevocable, the settlor may revoke or amend the trust without regard to the actual capacity of the settlor. This subsection does not apply to a trust created under an instrument executed before the effective date of this Chapter.

(b) If a revocable trust is created or funded by more than one settlor:

- (1) To the extent the trust consists of community property, the trust may be revoked by either spouse acting alone but may be amended only by joint action of both spouses; and
- (2) To the extent the trust consists of property other than community property, each settlor may revoke or amend the trust with regard to the portion of the trust property attributable to that settlor's contribution.

(c) The settlor may revoke or amend a revocable trust:

- (1) By substantial compliance with a method provided in the terms of the trust; or
- (2) If the terms of the trust do not provide a method or the method provided in the terms is not expressly made exclusive, by:
 - a. A later will or codicil that expressly refers to the trust or specifically devises property that would otherwise have passed according to the terms of the trust; or
 - b. By oral statement to the trustee if the trust was created orally; or
 - c. Any other written method delivered to the trustee manifesting clear and convincing evidence of the settlor's intent.

(d) Upon revocation of a revocable trust, the trustee shall deliver the trust property as the settlor directs.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 2007-106, s. 21, effective October 1, 2007.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 2007-106, s. 22, effective October 1, 2007.

(g) A trustee who does not know that a trust has been revoked or amended is not liable to the settlor or settlor's successors in interest for distributions made and other actions taken on the assumption that the trust had not been amended or revoked. (2005-192, s. 2; 2007-106, ss. 21, 22.)

§ 36C-6-602.1. Exercise of settlor's powers with respect to revocable trust by agent or guardian.

(a) An agent acting under a power of attorney may exercise any of the following powers of the settlor with respect to a revocable trust only to the extent expressly authorized by the terms of the trust or the power of attorney:

- (1) Revocation of the trust.
- (2) Amendment of the trust.
- (3) Additions to the trust.
- (4) Direction to dispose of property of the trust.
- (5) The creation of the trust, notwithstanding G.S. 36C-4-402(a)(1) and (2).

The exercise of the powers described in this subsection shall not alter the designation of beneficiaries to receive property on the settlor's death under that settlor's existing estate plan.

(b) A general guardian or a guardian of the estate of the settlor may exercise the powers of the settlor with respect to a revocable trust as provided in G.S. 35A-1251(24). (2007-106, s. 23.)

§ 36C-6-603. Settlor's control of revocable trust.

(a) While a trust is revocable, rights of the beneficiaries are subject to the control of, and the duties of the trustee are owed exclusively to, the settlor. If a trustee is a settlor, the trustee's actions are presumed to be taken at the direction of the settlor.

(b) If a revocable trust has more than one settlor, the duties of the trustee are owed to all of the settlors. (2005-192, s. 2; 2007-106, s. 24.)

§ 36C-6-604. Limitation on action contesting validity of revocable trust; distribution of trust property.

(a) A person may commence a judicial proceeding to contest the validity of a trust that was revocable at the settlor's death within the earlier of the following:

- (1) Three years after the settlor's death.
- (2) 120 days after the trustee sent the person a copy of the trust instrument and written notice pursuant to G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, informing the person of the trust's existence, of the trustee's name and address, and of the time allowed for commencing a proceeding.

(b) Upon the death of the settlor of a trust that was revocable at the settlor's death, the trustee may proceed to administer the trust and distribute the trust property in accordance with the terms of the trust and shall not be subject to liability for doing so, except that the trustee shall not distribute trust property to any beneficiary in contravention of the rights of any person who may be affected by the outcome of a pending or possible judicial proceeding if, at the time the distribution is made, any of the following apply:

- (1) The trustee knows of a pending judicial proceeding contesting the validity of all or part of the terms of the trust or contesting the identity of the beneficiaries eligible to receive distributions therefrom.
- (2) A potential contestant has notified the trustee in writing of a possible judicial proceeding to contest the validity of all or part of the terms of the trust or to contest the identity of the beneficiaries eligible to receive distribution therefrom, and a judicial proceeding is commenced within 60 days after the contestant sent the notification.

(b1) Any distribution in contravention of the provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall constitute a breach of trust by the trustee. Upon motion of a party and after notice to interested parties, a court, on good cause shown, may make an exception to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section and authorize the trustee to distribute trust assets to a beneficiary, subject to any conditions the court, in the court's discretion, may impose, including the posting of a bond by the beneficiary.

(c) A beneficiary of a trust that is determined to have been invalid, or whose interest in a trust has been determined to be invalid, is liable to return any distribution received. If the beneficiary refuses to return the distribution after being ordered by the court, the beneficiary shall be liable for all costs incurred for recovery of the distribution, including attorneys' fees. (2005-192, s. 2; 2011-344, s. 13; 2012-18, s. 3.11; 2025-33, s. 11.1.)

§ 36C-6-605. Failure of disposition of property of a trust by lapse or otherwise.

(a) If a beneficiary under a revocable trust predeceases the execution of the trust or the settlor or is treated as having predeceased the settlor, and if the beneficiary is a grandparent of or a descendant of a grandparent of the settlor, then the issue of the predeceased beneficiary who survive the settlor shall take in place of the deceased beneficiary. The deceased beneficiary's issue shall take the deceased beneficiary's share in the same manner that the issue would take as heirs of the deceased beneficiary under the intestacy provisions in effect at the time of the settlor's death. The provisions of this section apply whether the disposition of property is to an individual, to a class, or is a part of the residue of the trust. In the case of the disposition to a class, the issue shall take whatever share the deceased beneficiary would have taken had the deceased beneficiary survived the settlor. In the event the deceased class member leaves no issue, the deceased beneficiary's share shall devolve upon the members of the class who survived the settlor and the issue of any deceased members taking by substitution.

(b) If the provisions of subsection (a) of this section do not apply to the disposition of property that fails, the property shall pass to the beneficiaries in proportion to their share of the residue of the trust. If the disposition is part of the residue of the trust, it shall augment the shares of the other residuary beneficiaries, including the shares of any substitute takers under subsection (a) of this section. If there are no residuary beneficiaries, then the property shall pass by intestacy. (2007-106, s. 25.)

§ 36C-6-606. Revocation of provisions in revocable trust by divorce or annulment; revival.

(a) Unless a contrary intent is expressly indicated in the revocable trust, if the settlor's marriage is dissolved by absolute divorce or annulment after the execution of a revocable trust, then the settlor's former spouse shall be deemed to have predeceased the settlor for all purposes related to the construction, interpretation, or administration of that revocable trust. This section shall apply to all provisions of the settlor's revocable trust, including, but not by way of limitation, any provision conferring a general or special power of appointment on the former spouse and any appointment of the former spouse as executor, trustee, conservator, guardian, or any other fiduciary or nonfiduciary position.

(b) This section shall not apply to a revocable trust if any of the following occur:

(1) The settlor executes a subsequent valid amendment to the revocable trust, such as by date of the revocable trust, and which modifies the revocable trust.

(2) The settlor remarries the former spouse prior to the settlor's death, unless the remarriage is subsequently dissolved by absolute divorce or annulment.

(c) As used in this section, the term "former spouse" includes a purported former spouse. (2007-106, s. 26; 2023-120, s. 2.2.)

§ 36C-6-607. Modification or termination of a revocable trust.

(a) A revocable trust may be modified or terminated by the court pursuant to any of the methods for modification or termination of an irrevocable trust set forth in G.S. 36C-4-411(b) or (c), 36C-4-412, 36C-4-415, or 36C-4-416.

(b) The settlor is a necessary party to any proceeding brought to modify or terminate a revocable trust. (2007-106, s. 26.1.)