

§ 14-159.4. Cutting, mutilating, defacing, or otherwise injuring property to obtain nonferrous metals.

(a) **Definition of Nonferrous Metals.** – For purposes of this section, the term "nonferrous metals" means metals not containing significant quantities of iron or steel, including, but not limited to, copper wire, copper clad steel wire, copper pipe, copper bars, copper sheeting, aluminum other than aluminum cans, a product that is a mixture of aluminum and copper, catalytic converters, lead-acid batteries, and stainless steel beer kegs or containers.

(b) **Prohibited Act.** – It is unlawful for a person to willfully and wantonly cut, mutilate, deface, or otherwise injure any personal or real property of another, including any fixtures or improvements, for the purpose of obtaining nonferrous metals in any amount.

(c) **Punishment.** – Violations of this section are punishable as follows:

- (1) **Default.** – If the direct injury is to property, and the amount of loss in value to the property, the amount of repairs necessary to return the property to its condition before the act, or the property loss (including fixtures or improvements) is less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), a violation shall be punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. If the applicable amount is one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more, but less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), a violation shall be punishable as a Class H felony. If the applicable amount is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more, a violation shall be deemed an aggravated offense and shall be punishable as a Class F felony.
- (2) **When person suffers serious injury.** – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in a serious injury to another person is punishable as a Class A1 misdemeanor.
- (3) **When person suffers a serious bodily injury.** – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in serious bodily injury to another person is punishable as a Class F felony. For purposes of this subdivision, "serious bodily injury" is as defined in G.S. 14-32.4.
- (4) **When person is killed.** – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in the death of another person is punishable as a Class D felony.
- (5) **When critical infrastructure affected.** – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation of this section that results in the disruption of communication or electrical service to critical infrastructure or to more than 10 customers of the communication or electrical service is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(d) **Liability.** – This section does not create or impose a duty of care upon the owner of personal or real property that would not otherwise exist under common law. A public or private owner of personal or real property shall not be civilly liable:

- (1) To a person who is injured while committing or attempting to commit a violation of this section.
- (2) To a person who is injured while a third party is committing or attempting to commit a violation of this section.
- (3) For a person's injuries caused by a dangerous condition created as a result of a violation of this section, when the owner does not know and could not have reasonably known of the dangerous condition. (2012-46, s. 31.)