

§ 166A-19.31. Power of municipalities and counties to enact ordinances to deal with states of emergency.

(a) **Authority to Enact Prohibitions and Restrictions.** – The governing body of any municipality or county may enact ordinances designed to permit the imposition of prohibitions and restrictions within the emergency area during a state of emergency declared pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.22. Authority to impose by declaration prohibitions and restrictions under this section, and to impose those prohibitions and restrictions at a particular time as appropriate, may be delegated by ordinance to the mayor of a municipality or to the chair of the board of county commissioners of a county.

(b) **Type of Prohibitions and Restrictions Authorized.** – The ordinances authorized by this section may permit prohibitions and restrictions:

- (1) Of movements of people in public places, including any of the following:
 - a. Imposing a curfew.
 - b. Directing and compelling the voluntary or mandatory evacuation of all or part of the population from any stricken or threatened area within the governing body's jurisdiction.
 - c. Prescribing routes, modes of transportation, and destinations in connection with evacuation.
 - d. Controlling ingress and egress of an emergency area, and the movement of persons within that area.
 - e. Providing for the closure, within the emergency area, of streets, roads, highways, bridges, public vehicular areas, or other areas ordinarily used for vehicular travel, except to the movement of emergency responders and other persons necessary for recovery from the emergency. In addition to any other notice or dissemination of information, notification of any closure of a road or public vehicular area under the authority of this sub-subdivision shall be given to the Department of Transportation as soon as practicable. The ordinance may designate the sheriff to exercise the authority granted by this sub-subdivision. G.S. 166A-19.70(c) and (d) shall apply to this sub-subdivision.
- (2) Of the operation of offices, business establishments, and other places to or from which people may travel or at which they may congregate.
- (3) Upon the possession, transportation, sale, purchase, and consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- (4) Upon the possession, transportation, sale, purchase, storage, and use of gasoline, and dangerous weapons and substances, except that this subdivision does not authorize prohibitions or restrictions on lawfully possessed firearms or ammunition. As used in this subdivision, the term "dangerous weapons and substances" has the same meaning as it does under G.S. 14-288.1. As used in this subdivision, the term "firearm" has the same meaning as it does under G.S. 14-409.39(2).
- (5) Upon other activities or conditions the control of which may be reasonably necessary to maintain order and protect lives or property during the state of emergency.

The ordinances authorized by this section need not require or provide for the imposition of all of the types of prohibitions or restrictions, or any particular prohibition or restriction, authorized by this section during an emergency but may instead authorize the official or officials who impose those prohibitions or restrictions to determine and impose the prohibitions or restrictions deemed necessary or suitable to a particular state of emergency.

(c) When Ordinances Take Effect. – Notwithstanding any other provision of law, whether general or special, relating to the promulgation or publication of ordinances by any municipality or county, upon the declaration of a state of emergency by the mayor or chair of the board of county commissioners within the municipality or the county, any ordinance enacted under the authority of this section shall take effect immediately unless the ordinance sets a later time. If the effect of this section is to cause an ordinance to go into effect sooner than it otherwise could under the law applicable to the municipality or county, the mayor or chair of the board of county commissioners, as the case may be, shall take steps to cause reports of the substance of the ordinance to be disseminated in a fashion that its substance will likely be communicated to the public in general, or to those who may be particularly affected by the ordinance if it does not affect the public generally. As soon as practicable thereafter, appropriate distribution or publication of the full text of any such ordinance shall be made.

(d) When Prohibitions and Restrictions Take Effect. – All prohibitions and restrictions imposed by declaration pursuant to ordinances adopted under this section shall take effect in the emergency area immediately upon publication of the declaration unless the declaration sets a later time. Publication shall include at least (i) posting of a signed copy of the declaration conspicuously posted on the website of the municipality or county, if the municipality or county has a website, and (ii) submittal of notice and a signed copy of the declaration to the Department of Public Safety WebEOC critical incident management system. Publication may also consist of reports of the substance of the prohibitions and restrictions in the mass communications media serving the emergency area or other effective methods of disseminating the necessary information quickly. As soon as practicable, however, appropriate distribution of the full text of any declaration shall be made. This subsection shall not be governed by the provisions of G.S. 1-597.

(e) Expiration of Prohibitions and Restrictions. – Prohibitions and restrictions imposed pursuant to this section shall expire upon the earliest occurrence of any of the following:

- (1) The prohibition or restriction is terminated by the official or entity that imposed the prohibition or restriction.
- (2) The state of emergency terminates.

(e1) Notice of Expiration of Prohibitions and Restrictions. – At the time prohibitions and restrictions imposed pursuant to this section and states of emergency declared pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.22 expire or terminate, the municipality or county shall do the following:

- (1) Post a notice of the expiration or termination of the prohibition or restriction conspicuously on the website of the municipality or county, if the municipality or county has a website.
- (2) Submit a notice of expiration or termination of the prohibition or restriction to the Department of Public Safety WebEOC critical incident management system.

(f) Intent to Supplement Other Authority. – This section is intended to supplement and confirm the powers conferred by G.S. 153A-121(a), G.S. 160A-174(a), and all other general and local laws authorizing municipalities and counties to enact ordinances for the protection of the public health and safety in times of riot or other grave civil disturbance or emergency.

(g) Previously Enacted Ordinances Remain in Effect. – Any ordinance of a type authorized by this section promulgated prior to October 1, 2012, if otherwise valid, continue in full force and effect without reenactment.

(h) Violation. – Any person who violates any provision of an ordinance or a declaration enacted or declared pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor in accordance with G.S. 14-288.20A. (Former G.S. 14-288.12; 1969, c. 869, s. 1; 1981, c. 412, s. 4(4); c. 747, s. 66; 1989, c. 770, s. 2; 1993, c. 539, s. 194; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2009-146, s. 1. Former G.S. 14-288.13; 1969, c. 869, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 195; 1994, Ex. Sess., c.

24, s. 14(c). Former G.S. 14-288.16; 1969, c. 869, s. 1. Former G.S. 14-288.17; 1969, c. 869, s. 1. 2012-12, s. 1(b); 2019-89, s. 1; 2020-83, s. 11.7; 2022-57, s. 1; 2025-25, s. 29(5).)