

Article 11.

Lis Pendens.

§ 1-116. Filing of notice of suit.

(a) Any person desiring the benefit of constructive notice of pending litigation must file a separate, independent notice thereof, which notice shall be cross-indexed in accordance with G.S. 1-117, in all of the following cases:

- (1) Actions affecting title to real property.
 - (2) Actions to foreclose any mortgage or deed of trust or to enforce any lien on real property.
 - (3) Actions in which any order of attachment is issued and real property is attached.
 - (4) Actions seeking injunctive relief under G.S. 113A-64.1 or G.S. 113A-65 regarding sedimentation and erosion control for any land-disturbing activity that is subject to the requirements of Article 4 of Chapter 113A of the General Statutes.
 - (5) Actions for asset freezing or seizure under G.S. 14-112.3.
- (b) Notice of pending litigation shall contain:
- (1) The name of the court in which the action has been commenced or is pending;
 - (2) The names of the parties to the action;
 - (3) The nature and purpose of the action; and
 - (4) A description of the property to be affected thereby.
- (c) Notice of pending litigation may be filed:
- (1) At or any time after the commencement of an action pursuant to Rule 3 of the Rules of Civil Procedure; or
 - (2) At or any time after real property has been attached; or
 - (3) At or any time after the filing of an answer or other pleading in which the pleading party states an affirmative claim for relief falling within the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

(d) Notice of pending litigation must be filed with the clerk of the superior court of each county in which any part of the real estate is located, not excepting the county in which the action is pending, in order to be effective against bona fide purchasers or lien creditors with respect to the real property located in such county. (C.C.P., s. 90; Code, s. 229; Rev., s. 460; 1917, c. 106; C.S., s. 500; 1949, c. 260; 1959, c. 1163, s. 1; 1967, c. 954, s. 3; 2009-269, s. 1; 2015-182, s. 2.)

§ 1-116.1. Service of notice.

In all actions as defined in G.S. 1-116 in which notice of pendency of the action is filed, a copy of such notice shall be served on the other party or parties as follows:

- (1) If filed by the plaintiff at or after service of summons but before the filing of the complaint, service shall be in the manner provided in Rule 4 of the Rules of Civil Procedure for service of summons.
- (2) If filed by the plaintiff at or after the filing of the complaint, service shall be in the same manner as the complaint.
- (3) All other such notices shall be served in the manner provided in Rule 5 of the Rules of Civil Procedure. (1949, c. 260; 1967, c. 954, s. 3.)

§ 1-117. Cross-index of lis pendens.

Every notice of pending litigation filed under this Article shall be cross-indexed by the clerk of the superior court in a record, called the "Record of Lis Pendens," to be kept by the clerk under G.S. 7A-109. (1903, c. 472; Rev., s. 464; 1919, c. 31; C.S., s. 501; 1959, c. 1163, s. 2; 2017-102, s. 1.)

§ 1-118. Effect on subsequent purchasers.

From the cross-indexing of the notice of lis pendens only is the pendency of the action constructive notice to a purchaser or incumbrancer of the property affected thereby; and every person whose conveyance or incumbrance is subsequently executed or subsequently registered is a subsequent purchaser or incumbrancer, and is bound by all proceedings taken after the cross-indexing of the notice to the same extent as if he were made a party to the action. For the purposes of this section an action is pending from the time of cross-indexing the notice. (C.C.P., s. 90; Code, s. 229; Rev., s. 462; 1919, c. 31; C.S., s. 502.)

§ 1-119. Notice void unless action prosecuted.

(a) The notice of lis pendens is of no avail unless it is followed by the first publication of notice of the summons or by an affidavit therefor pursuant to Rule 4 (j)(1)c of the Rules of Civil Procedure or by personal service on the defendant within 60 days after the cross-indexing.

(b) When an action is commenced by the issuance of summons and permission is granted to file the complaint within 20 days, pursuant to Rule 3 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, if the complaint is not filed within the time fixed by the order of the clerk, the notice of lis pendens shall become inoperative and of no effect. The clerk may on his own motion and shall on the ex parte application of any interested party cancel such notice of lis pendens by appropriate entry on the records, which entry shall recite the failure of the plaintiff to file his complaint within the time allowed. Such applications for cancellation, when made in a county other than that in which the action was instituted, shall include a certificate over the hand and seal of the clerk of the county in which the action was instituted that the plaintiff did not file his complaint within the time allowed. The fees of the clerk may be recovered against the plaintiff and his surety.

(c) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of this section, a notice of lis pendens filed pursuant to G.S. 1-116(a)(5) shall remain effective until the order to freeze or seize assets under G.S. 14-112.3(b1)(3) is terminated or an order directing the sale of real property under G.S. 14-112.3(e1)(1)c. is entered. Notice of lis pendens filed pursuant to G.S. 1-116(5) shall be exempt from filing fees. (C.C.P., s. 90; Code, s. 229; Rev., s. 461; 1919, c. 31; C.S., s. 503; 1967, c. 954, s. 3; 2015-182, s. 3.)

§ 1-120. Cancellation of notice.

The court in which the said action was commenced may, at any time after it is settled, discontinued or abated, on application of any person aggrieved, on good cause shown, and on such notice as is directed or approved by the court, order the notice authorized by this Article to be cancelled of record, by the clerk of any county in whose office the same has been filed or recorded; and this cancellation must be made by an endorsement to that effect on the margin of the record, which shall refer to the order. (C.C.P., s. 90; Code, s. 229; Rev., s. 463; C.S., s. 504.)

§ 1-120.1. Article applicable to suits in federal courts.

The provisions of this Article shall apply to suits affecting the title to real property in the federal courts. (1945, c. 857.)

§ 1-120.2. Filing of notice by cities and counties in certain cases.

The governing body of a city or county may, by ordinance under Article 11 of Chapter 160D of the General Statutes relating to building inspection, or Article 12 of Chapter 160D of the General Statutes relating to minimum housing standards, provide that upon the issuance of a complaint and notice of hearing or order pursuant to it, a notice of lis pendens, with a copy of the complaint and notice of hearing or order attached to it, may be filed in the office of the clerk of superior court of the county where the property is located. When a notice of lis pendens and a copy of the complaint and notice of hearing or order is filed with the clerk of superior court, it shall be indexed and cross-indexed in accordance with the indexing procedures of G.S. 1-117. From the date and time of indexing, the complaint and notice of hearing or order is binding upon the successors and assigns of the owners of and parties in interest in the building or dwelling. A copy of the notice of lis pendens shall be served upon the owners and parties in interest in the building or dwelling at the time of filing in accordance with G.S. 160D-1121 and G.S. 160D-1206. The notice of lis pendens remains in full force and effect until cancelled. The ordinance may authorize the cancellation of the notice of lis pendens under certain circumstances. Upon receipt of notice from the city, the clerk of superior court shall cancel the notice of lis pendens. (1995, c. 158, s. 1; 2021-88, s. 1(a).)