Chapter 61 Animals

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Chapter 61 Animals

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Clarke County 01-19-1988 as Ch. 3 of the 1987 Code. Amendments noted where applicable.]

General References

Chapter 1 General Provisions

Chapter 120 Noise

Chapter 124 Nuisances

Code Of Virginia References

- § 3.2 Agriculture, Animal Care, and Food. Chapter 65. Comprehensive Animal Care
- § 3.2-6503. Care of companion animals by owner; penalty
- § 3.2-6503.1. Care of agricultural animals by owner; penalty
- § 3.2-6522. Rabid animals
- § 3.2-6537. Ordinances; penalties.
- § 3.2-6540. Control of dangerous dogs; penalties
- § 3.2-6554. Disposal of dead companion animals.
- § 3.2-6555. Position of animal control officer created
- § 3.2-6570. Cruelty to animals; penalty
- § 3.2-6587. Unlawful acts; penalties
- § 18.2-144. Maiming, killing or poisoning animals or fowl
- § 18.2-403.1 et seq. Offenses involving animals Class 1 misdemeanors
- § 18.2-403.2 et seq. Offenses involving animals Class 3 misdemeanors.
- § 18.2-403.3. Offenses involving animals Class 4 misdemeanors.
- § 18.2-510 Burial or cremation of animals or fowls which have died.
- § 32.1-48.1 et seq. Regulation of State Health Commissioner declaring existence of rabies; display and publication

§ 55-202 et seq. - Estray, or boat adrift, to be valued and described

§ 55-306. Damages for trespass by animals; punitive and double damages.

§ 55-308. - Impounding animals

§ 55-310 et seq. - How governing body of county may make local fence law.

Article I General Provisions

§ 61-1. Violations and penalties.

Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.

§ 61-2. Position of Animal Warden created.

The Board of Supervisors shall appoint an officer, to be known as the "Animal Warden," who shall have the power to enforce the comprehensive animal laws of the state, all ordinances enacted pursuant to those laws and all laws for the protection of domestic animals. The Board may also appoint one or more Deputy Animal Wardens to assist the Animal Warden in dog inspection activities and in dog law enforcement.

§ 61-3. Lawful fences declared; livestock running at large.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Code of Virginia, § 55-310, the Board of Supervisors hereby declares that all fences and the boundary line of each lot or tract of land on each side of each public road in the county shall be lawful fences as to any or all of the animals mentioned in the Code of Virginia, § 55-306. It shall be unlawful for the owner or manager of any horse, mule, cattle, hog, sheep or goat to permit any such animal, as to which the fences or boundaries of lots or tracts of land are made lawful fences by this section, to run at large beyond the limits of his own lands within the county.

§ 61-4. Straying fowl and livestock.

It shall be unlawful for any person to allow or permit any fowl or livestock of any description to stray to any highway or public property or private premises of another. All fowl and livestock shall be sufficiently confined or fenced up by the owner or person exercising control over such fowl and livestock,

§61-5. Maintenance of places where animals are kept.

Each stable, pen, coop or other place where any animal or fowl is kept shall be maintained at all times in a safe and sanitary condition and so as not to constitute a nuisance. Solid and liquid waste matter shall be removed as frequently as may be necessary to prevent offensive

odors or to prevent accumulations constituting a hazard to the health or safety of any person.

§ 61-6. Dangerous animals⁸

No person shall suffer or permit any animal belonging to him or under his control and known to be dangerous or reasonably suspected of being dangerous to go at large within the county. If the owner or such person having control, upon notice that such animal is at large, fails to take it into custody forthwith and its running at large creates a danger to the public or to any person or property, the animal shall be killed forthwith by order of the Sheriff when deemed necessary for public safety.

§ 61-7. Cruelty.

- A. Any person who performs any of the following, causes any of the following or as the owner of an animal permits any of the following to be done by another shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor:
 - 1) Overrides, overdrives, overloads, tortures, ill-treats, willfully inflicts inhumane injury or pain not connected with bona fide scientific or medical experimentation, cruelly or unnecessarily beats, maims, mutilates or kills any animal, whether belonging to himself or another.
 - 2) Deprives any animal of necessary sustenance, food, drink or shelter.
 - 3) Willfully sets on foot, instigates, engages in or in any way furthers any act of cruelty to any animal.
 - 4) Carries in or upon any vehicle, vessel or otherwise any animal in a cruel, brutal or inhumane manner so as to produce torture or unnecessary suffering.
- B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the dehorning of cattle.
- C. For the purposes of this section, the word "animal" shall be construed to include birds and fowl.

§ 61-8. Abandonment.

No person shall abandon any animal. "Abandonment" for the purposes of this section is defined as deserting, forsaking or intending to absolutely give up an animal without securing another owner or without providing the necessities set out in the Code of Virginia, § 3.2-6504.1 Violation of this section shall be punishable as a Class 3 misdemeanor.

§ 61-9. Dead or infirm animals in public places; penalty.9

If any person casts any dead animal or fowl into a road or knowingly permits any dead animal or fowl to remain unburied upon his property when offensive to the public or, having in custody any maimed, diseased, disabled or infirm animal or fowl, leaves it to lie or be in a street, road or public place, he shall be fined in accordance with the fines for a Class 3 misdemeanor.

§ 61-10. Burial or cremation of dead animals.

- A. When the owner of any animal or grown fowl which has died knows of such death, such owner shall forthwith have its body cremated or buried, and, if he fails to do so, any Judge of a general district court, after notice to the owner, if he can be ascertained, shall cause any such dead animal or fowl to be cremated or buried by an officer or other person designated for the purpose. Such officer or other person shall be entitled to recover from the owner of every such animal so cremated or buried the actual cost of the cremation or burial, not to exceed \$75, and of the owner of every such fowl so cremated or buried the actual cost of the cremation or burial, not to exceed \$5, to be recovered in the same manner as officers' fees are recovered, free from all exemptions in favor of such owner. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.
- B. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to require the burial or cremation of the whole or portions of any animal or fowl which is to be used for food or in any commercial manner.

Article II Dogs [Added 07-18-1995]

§ 61-11. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

ANIMAL WARDEN Includes the Animal Control Officer or any

duly authorized representative of the Animal

Control Officer.

DANGEROUS DOG A canine or canine crossbreed which has

bitten, attacked or inflicted injury on a person or companion animal, other than a

dog, or killed a companion animal.

KENNEL An enclosure wherein dogs are kept other

than in a residential setting and from which

they cannot escape.

OWN To act, or to have the authority to act, as an

owner.

OWNER Any person having a right of property in a

dog, any person who keeps or harbors a dog

or has it in his care or who acts as its

custodian and any person who permits a dog to remain on or about any premises occupied

by him.

VICIOUS DOG A canine or canine crossbreed which has

killed a person; inflicted serious injury to a person, including multiple bites, serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health or serious impairment of a bodily function; or continued to exhibit that behavior which resulted in a previous finding by a court that it is a dangerous dog, provided that its owner

has been given notice of that finding.

§ 61-12. Rights of owners.

- A. All dogs in this county shall be deemed personal property and may be the subject of larceny and malicious or unlawful trespass. Owners may maintain any action for the killing of any such dogs or injury thereto or unlawful detention or use thereof as in the case of other personal property. The owner of any dog which is injured or killed contrary to the provisions of this chapter by any person shall be entitled to recover the value thereof or the damage done thereto in an appropriate action at law from such person.
- B. An Animal Warden or other officer finding a stolen dog or a dog held or detained contrary to law shall have authority to seize and hold such dog pending action before a general district court or other court. If no such action is instituted within seven days, the Animal Warden or other officer shall deliver the dog to its owner.
- C. The presence of a dog on the premises of a person other than its legal owner shall raise no presumption of theft against the owner of such premises, but it shall be his duty to notify the Animal Warden, who shall take such dog in charge and notify its legal owner to remove him. The legal owner of the dog shall pay a reasonable charge, established by ordinance, for the keeping of such dog while in the possession of the Animal Warden.

§ 61-13. Unlawful acts.

The following shall be unlawful acts and constitute Class 4 misdemeanors:

- A. Any person making a false statement in order to secure a dog license to which he is not entitled.
- B. Any dog owner failing to pay the license tax required by Article III of this chapter before February 1 for the year in which it is due. In addition, the court may order confiscation and the proper disposition of the dog.
- C. Any dog owner allowing a dog to run at large in violation of this article.
- D. Any person violating any other provision of this article, except as may be otherwise provided in this article.

§ 61-14. Poisoning, injuring or killing.

It shall be unlawful for any person to administer poison to any dog, expose poison where it may be taken by any dog, injure, disfigure, disable or kill any dog, except as otherwise provided in this article or state law.

§ 61-15. Nuisances.

A. Definitions. The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

PUBLIC NUISANCE DOG -- Any dog which:

- 1) Is repeatedly found running at large;
- 2) Damages the property of any person other than its owner;
- 3) Is vicious;
- 4) Causes unsanitary conditions or enclosures or surroundings;
- 5) Causes fouling of air by odors;
- 6) By loud, frequent or habitual barking or howling, causes annoyance and disturbs the peace and quiet of any person or neighborhood;
- 7) Molests passersby or passing vehicles;

- 8) Attacks other animals; or
- 9) Has been designated by the Animal Warden to be a public nuisance dog by virtue of causing a menace to the public health, safety or welfare.

PUBLIC NUISANCE DOG HOLDING FACILITY -- Any holding facility harboring a public nuisance dog.

- B. Public nuisance dogs or public nuisance dog holding facilities shall be unlawful.
- C. The Animal Warden may, on receipt of a written complaint or at his own discretion, declare a dog or dog holding facility to be a public nuisance. The owners or custodians of any dog or dog holding facility in violation of this section shall be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.

§ 61-16. Vicious dogs running at large.

It shall be unlawful for the owner of any vicious dog to permit such dog to run at large. For the purposes of this section, every dog who is known to have bitten a person or viciously attacked a person shall be deemed a vicious dog.

§ 61-17. Diseased or female dog at large.

It shall be unlawful for:

- A. The owner of any dog with a contagious or infectious disease to permit such dog to stray from his premises if such disease is known to the owner.
- B. The owner of any female dog to permit such dog to stray from his premises while such dog is known to such owner to be in season.

§ 61-18. Dangerous or vicious dogs.

A. Any Animal Warden who has reason to believe that a canine or canine crossbreed within his jurisdiction is a dangerous dog or vicious dog shall apply to a Magistrate of the jurisdiction for the issuance of a summons requiring the owner or custodian, if known, to appear before a general district court at a specified time. The summons shall advise the owner of the nature of the proceeding and the matters at issue. The Animal Warden or owner shall confine the animal until such time as evidence shall be heard and a verdict rendered. The court, through its contempt powers, may compel the owner, custodian or harborer of the animal to produce the animal. If, after hearing the evidence, the court finds that the animal is a dangerous dog, the court shall order the animal's owner to comply with the provisions of this article. If, after hearing the evidence, the court finds that the animal is a vicious dog, the court shall order the animal euthanized in accordance with the provisions of § 3.2-6562. Capturing, confining, and euthanizing

- companion animals by animal control officers; approval of drugs used. of the Code of Virginia.
- B. No canine or canine crossbreed shall be found to be a dangerous dog or vicious dog solely because it is a particular breed, nor shall the local governing body prohibit the ownership of a particular breed of canine or canine crossbreed. No animal shall be found to be a dangerous dog or vicious dog if the threat, injury or damage was sustained by a person who was committing, at the time, a crime upon the premises occupied by the animal's owner or custodian; committing, at the time, a willful trespass or other tort upon the premises occupied by the animal's owner or custodian; or provoking, tormenting or physically abusing the animal; or can be shown to have repeatedly provoked, tormented, abused or assaulted the animal at other times. No police dog which was engaged in the performance of its duties as such at the time of the acts complained of shall be found to be a dangerous dog or a vicious dog. No animal which, at the time of the acts complained of, was responding to pain or injury or was protecting itself, its kennel, its offspring or its owner or owner's property shall be found to be a dangerous dog or a vicious dog.
- C. The owner of any animal found by a court to be a dangerous dog shall, within 10 days of such finding, obtain a dangerous dog registration certificate from the Animal Warden for a fee of \$50 in addition to other fees that may be authorized by law. The local Animal Warden shall also provide the owner with a uniformly designed tag which identifies the animal as a dangerous dog. The owner shall affix the tag to the animal's collar and ensure that the animal wears the collar and tag at all times. All certificates obtained pursuant to this subdivision shall be renewed annually for the same fee and in the same manner as the initial certificate was obtained.
- D. All certificates or renewals thereof required to be obtained under this section shall only be issued to persons 18 years of age or older who present satisfactory evidence of the animal's current rabies vaccination, if applicable, and that the animal is and will be confined in a proper enclosure or is and will be confined inside the owner's residence or is and will be muzzled and confined inside the owner's fenced-in yard until the proper enclosure is constructed. In addition, owners who apply for certificates or renewals thereof under this section shall not be issued a certificate or renewal thereof unless they present satisfactory evidence that their residence is and will continue to be posted with clearly visible signs warning both minors and adults of the presence of a dangerous dog on the property and the animal has been permanently identified by means of a tattoo on the inside thigh or by electronic implantation.
- E. While on the property of its owner, an animal found by a court to be a dangerous dog shall be confined indoors or in a securely enclosed and locked structure of sufficient height and design to prevent its escape or direct contact with or entry by minors, adults or other animals. The structure shall be designed to provide the animal with shelter from the elements of nature. When off its owner's property, an animal found by a court to be

- a dangerous dog shall be kept on a leash and muzzled in such a manner so as not to cause injury to the animal or interfere with the animal's vision or respiration, but so as to prevent it from biting a person or another animal.
- F. If the owner of an animal found by a court to be a dangerous dog is a minor, the custodial parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for complying with all requirements of this section.
- G. After an animal has been found by a court to be a dangerous dog, the animal's owner shall immediately, upon learning of the same, notify the local animal control authority if the animal is loose or unconfined; bites a person or attacks another animal; is sold, given away or dies; or has been moved to a different address.
- H. The owner of any animal which has been found by a court to be a dangerous dog who willfully fails to comply with the requirements of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- I. All fees collected pursuant to this section, less the costs incurred by the animal control authority in producing and distributing the certificates and tags required by this section, shall be paid into a special dedicated fund in the treasury of the county for the purpose of paying the expenses of any training course required under § 3.2-6557. Animal control officers and humane investigators; limitations; records; penalties. of the Code of Virginia.

Article III Dog Licensing

§ 61-19. License required; exemptions; tags.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to own a dog four months old or older in the county unless the dog is licensed pursuant to § 3.2-6524. Unlicensed dogs prohibited; ordinances for licensing cats. et seq. of the Code of Virginia and an annual fee has been paid for such dog or for a kennel at the office of the Treasurer. The owner shall submit evidence acceptable to the Treasurer when a dog has been neutered or spayed.¹⁰
- B. No such fee shall be levied on any dog that is trained and serves as a guide dog for a blind person or that is trained and serves as a hearing dog for a deaf or hearing impaired person. As used in this section, "hearing dog" means a dog trained to alert its owner by touch to sounds of danger and sounds to which the owner should respond.
- C. The Treasurer shall purchase necessary tags and receipt books to be paid for by the county, shall maintain necessary records and accounts and shall dispose of unsold tags when authorized by the Board of Supervisors. The tag shall be of such material and in such form as prescribed by the Treasurer and approved by the Board of Supervisors and shall be stamped or otherwise permanently marked with the words "Clarke County, Virginia," the sex of the dog, the calendar year for which issued and a serial number.

§ 61-20. Application.

- A. Any resident of this county may obtain a dog license by making oral or written application to the Treasurer, accompanied by the amount of the fee and a certificate of vaccination as required by this article. The Treasurer shall have authority to license only dogs of resident owners or custodians who reside within the boundary limits of this county and may require information to this effect from any applicant. Upon receipt of proper application, together with the amount of the fee and display of the certificate of vaccination as required by this article, the Treasurer shall issue a license receipt for the amount of the fee, on which he shall record the name and address of the owner or custodian, the date of payment, the year for which issued, the serial number of the tag and whether the license is for a male, unsexed female, female or kennel dog, and deliver the metal license tags or plates provided for in this article to such owner or custodian.
- B. The information received under Subsection A of this section shall be retained by the Treasurer, open to public inspection, during the period for which such license is valid. The Treasurer may establish substations in convenient locations in the county and appoint agents for the collection of the license tax and issuance of such licenses.

§ 61-21. Certificate of inoculation or vaccination.

No license tag shall be issued for any dog unless there is presented to the Treasurer at the time application for a license is made a certificate of inoculation or vaccination issued for such dog under the provisions of this article, which discloses that such dog is currently immune to rabies, or other evidence satisfactory to the Treasurer, showing that the dog has been inoculated or vaccinated against rabies by a currently licensed veterinarian. ¹¹

§ 61-22. Payment of fee¹²

- A. On or before January 1 and not later than January 31 of each year, the owner of any dog four months old or older shall pay the fee provided for in § 61-19.
- B. If a dog shall become four months of age or if a dog over four months of age unlicensed by this county shall come into the possession of any person in this county between January 1 and October 31 of any year, the fee for the current calendar year shall be paid forthwith by the owner.
- C. If a dog shall become four months of age or if a dog over four months of age unlicensed by this county shall come into the possession of any person in this county between November 1 and December 31 of any year, the fee for the succeeding calendar year shall be paid forthwith by the owner and shall protect the dog from the date of payment.

§ 61-23. Effect of payment of fee subsequent to summons.

Payment of the fee required in this article subsequent to a summons to appear before a court for failure to pay it within the time required shall not operate to relieve such owner from the penalties provided.

§ 61-24. Disposition of fees; liability for claims.

Fees collected by the Treasurer pursuant to the provisions of this article shall be paid by him into the general fund of the county treasury, and the limit of the county's liability for payment of claims that may arise against such fees in any fiscal year shall be the amount of revenue derived from such fees during the preceding fiscal year.

§ 61-25. Receipts; wearing of tags required; exemptions.

- A. Dog license receipts shall be carefully preserved by the licensees and exhibited promptly on request for inspection by any Animal Warden or other officer.
- B. ¹³Dog license tags shall be securely fastened to a substantial collar by the owner or custodian and worn by such dog. It shall be unlawful for the owner to permit any licensed dog four months old or older to run or roam at large at any time without a license tag. The owner of the dog may remove the collar and license tag required by this section when the dog:
 - Is engaged in lawful hunting;
 - 2) Is competing in a dog show;
 - 3) Has a skin condition which would be exacerbated by the wearing of a collar;
 - 4) Is confined; or
 - 5) Is under the immediate control of its owner.

§ 61-26. Kennel dogs.

The owner of a kennel shall securely fasten the license tag to the kennel enclosure in full view and keep one of the identification plates provided therewith attached to the collar of each dog authorized to be kept enclosed in the kennel. Any identification plates not so in use must be kept by the owner or custodian and promptly shown to any Animal Warden or other officer upon request. A kennel dog shall not be permitted to stray beyond the limits of the enclosure, but this shall not prohibit removing dogs therefrom temporarily while under the control of the owner or custodian for the purpose of exercising, hunting, breeding, trial or show. A kennel shall not be operated in such manner as to defraud the county of the license tax applying to dogs which cannot be legally covered thereunder or to in any manner violate other provisions of this article.

§ 61-27. Unlawful acts.

It shall be unlawful for any person:

- A. Except the owner or custodian, to remove a legally acquired license tag from a dog.
- B. To conceal or harbor any dog on which the license tax has not been paid, or to conceal a mad dog to keep it from being killed.

§ 61-28. Effect of dog not wearing tag as evidence.

Any dog not wearing a collar bearing a license tag of the proper calendar year shall prima facie be deemed to be unlicensed, and in any proceedings under this article the burden of proof of the fact that the dog has been licensed, or is otherwise not required to bear a tag at the time, shall be on the owner of the dog.

§ 61-29. Fees. Added 1993-04-20 ¹⁴

The daily shelter fee, finder's fee and all license fees are on file in the office of the County Administrator.

Article IV Rabies Control

[Amended at time of adoption of Code. (See Chapter 1 General Provisions)

§ 61-30. Vaccination or inoculation required.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to own or harbor any dog or cat four months or more of age within the county unless such dog or cat shall have been vaccinated or inoculated, by a currently licensed veterinarian, against rabies with a serum and in a manner approved by the State Board of Health and such vaccination or inoculation is currently effective to produce immunity to rabies as determined by the State Board of Health by reason of the type and dose of such vaccination or inoculation.
- B. Any person bringing a dog or cat within the county to be kept within the county shall comply with the requirements of Subsection A of this section within 30 days.

§ 61-31. Certificate of inoculation or vaccination.

Upon the inoculation or vaccination of a dog or cat by a currently licensed veterinarian under the provisions of this article, the veterinarian shall issue to the person procuring such inoculation or vaccination a certificate bearing the signature of the veterinarian and stating that he is a veterinarian currently licensed by the state and setting forth the name and

address of the owner or custodian of the dog or cat, a brief description of the dog or cat, the type and dose of inoculation or vaccination used, the date of inoculation or vaccination and the period of time thereafter during which such dog or cat is deemed to be immune to rabies. The veterinarian shall retain a duplicate or carbon copy of such certificate for so long as the immunity to rabies caused by such inoculation or vaccination is deemed to be effective.

§ 61-32. Impoundment, redemption and disposal of dog or cats at large without inoculation tags.

- A. Any dog or cat four months or more of age found off the premises of its owner and not under the immediate control of a responsible person shall be impounded by the Animal Warden, and such dog or cat shall be held for a period of seven days. The dog or cat may be returned to its owners upon proof of ownership, vaccination of the dog or cat or proof of prior vaccination currently effective, procurement of a dog license if not currently licensed, payment of an impounding fee and payment of the costs of care and feeding of the dog or cat while impounded.
- B. At the expiration of the seven-day period, any dog or cat not so claimed by the owner may be disposed of by giving it into possession of any person who will have the dog or cat inoculated or vaccinated pursuant to this article and, if such dog does not wear a license tag, will obtain a dog license pursuant to this article, and, if not so disposed of, such dog or cat shall be disposed of as authorized by the Code of Virginia, § 3.2-6546. County or city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals; affiliation with foster care providers; penalties; injunctive relief., by the Animal Warden or other person designated for such purpose.

§ 61-33. Rabies emergencies.

- A. Whenever, in the judgment of the Health Officer serving this county, a rabies emergency exists in the county or in any area thereof, the Health Officer shall issue a proclamation declaring such emergency to exist throughout all or a defined area of the county; and such proclamation shall require that all dogs or cats within the county or such defined area of the county be confined to the premises of their owners or custodians or, if held on leash by responsible persons, that they be securely muzzled; and it shall be unlawful for any person to violate any provisions of such proclamation while it is in force.
- B. Each proclamation issued pursuant to this section shall be published as soon as possible in a newspaper of general circulation within the county, and copies thereof shall be provided to radio and television stations within the county. The original proclamation shall be filed in the office of the Health Officer.
- C. When, in the judgment of the Health Officer serving this county, a proclaimed emergency ceases to exist, the Health Officer shall so proclaim, and the foregoing provisions of this section shall apply as to publication, release to radio and television stations and filing.

Amendments Chapter 61

1995-07-18 Article II Dogs -Added 7-18-1995

References

⁷ Editor's Note: See Ch. 124, Nuisances.

⁸ Editor's Note: See Art. II, Dogs, of this Chapter.

⁹ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (See Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

¹⁰ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (See Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art I).

¹¹ Editor's Note: See Art IV, Rabies, of this chapter.

¹² Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (See Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

¹³ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (See Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

¹⁴ Editor's Note Amended at time of adoption of Code (See Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).