

§ 7A-305. Costs in civil actions.

(a) In every civil action in the superior or district court, except for actions brought under Chapter 50B of the General Statutes, shall be assessed:

- (1) For the use of the courtroom and related judicial facilities, the sum of twelve dollars (\$12.00) in cases heard before a magistrate, and the sum of sixteen dollars (\$16.00) in district and superior court, to be remitted to the county in which the judgment is rendered, except that in all cases in which the judgment is rendered in facilities provided by a municipality, the facilities fee shall be paid to the municipality. Funds derived from the facilities fees shall be used in the same manner, for the same purposes, and subject to the same restrictions, as facilities fees assessed in criminal actions.
- (1a) For the upgrade, maintenance, and operation of the judicial and county courthouse telecommunications and data connectivity, the sum of four dollars (\$4.00), to be credited to the Court Information Technology Fund.
- (2) For support of the General Court of Justice, the sum of one hundred eighty dollars (\$180.00) in the superior court and the sum of one hundred thirty dollars (\$130.00) in the district court except that if the case is assigned to a magistrate the sum shall be eighty dollars (\$80.00). If a case is designated as a mandatory complex business case under G.S. 7A-45.4, upon assignment to a Business Court Judge, the party filing the designation shall pay an additional one thousand one hundred dollars (\$1,100) for support of the General Court of Justice. If a case is designated as a complex business case under Rule 2.1 and Rule 2.2 of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts, upon assignment to a Business Court Judge, the plaintiff shall pay an additional one thousand one hundred dollars (\$1,100) for support of the General Court of Justice. Sums collected under this subdivision shall be remitted to the State Treasurer. The State Treasurer shall remit the sum of ninety-five cents (\$.95) of each fee collected under this subdivision to the North Carolina State Bar for the provision of services described in G.S. 7A-474.19.

(a1) Costs apply to any and all additional and subsequent actions filed by amendment or counterclaim to the original action brought under Chapter 50B of the General Statutes, unless such additional and subsequent amendment or counterclaim to the action is limited to requests for relief authorized by Chapter 50B of the General Statutes.

(a2) In every action for absolute divorce filed in the district court, a cost of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) shall be assessed against the person filing the divorce action. Costs collected by the clerk pursuant to this subsection shall be remitted to the State Treasurer, who shall deposit seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) to the Domestic Violence Center Fund established under G.S. 50B-9. Costs assessed under this subsection shall be in addition to any other costs assessed under this section.

(a3), (a4) Repealed by Session Laws 2008-118, s. 2.9(c), effective July 1, 2008.

(a5) In every civil action in the superior or district court wherein a party files a pleading containing one or more counterclaims, third-party complaints, or cross-claims, except for counterclaim and cross-claim actions brought under Chapter 50B of the General Statutes for which costs are assessed pursuant to subsection (a1) of this section, the following shall be assessed:

- (1) For the use of the courtroom and related judicial facilities, the sum of twelve dollars (\$12.00) in cases heard before a magistrate, and the sum of sixteen dollars (\$16.00) in district and superior court, to be remitted to the municipality providing the facilities in which the judgment is rendered. If a

municipality does not provide the facilities in which the judgment is rendered, the sum is to be remitted to the county in which the judgment is rendered. Funds derived from the facilities' fees shall be used in the same manner, for the same purposes, and subject to the same restrictions as facilities' fees assessed in criminal actions.

- (2) For the upgrade, maintenance, and operation of the judicial and county courthouse phone systems, the sum of four dollars (\$4.00), to be credited to the Court Information Technology Fund.
- (3) For support of the General Court of Justice, the sum of one hundred eighty dollars (\$180.00) in the superior court, except that if a case is assigned to a special superior court judge as a complex business case under G.S. 7A-45.3, filing fees shall be collected and disbursed in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, and the sum of one hundred thirty dollars (\$130.00) in the district court, except that if the case is assigned to a magistrate, the sum shall be eighty dollars (\$80.00). Sums collected under this subdivision shall be remitted to the State Treasurer. The State Treasurer shall remit the sum of ninety-five cents (\$.95) of each fee collected under this subdivision to the North Carolina State Bar for the provision of services described in G.S. 7A-474.19.

(b) On appeal, costs are cumulative, and when cases heard before a magistrate are appealed to the district court, the General Court of Justice fee and the facilities fee applicable in the district court shall be added to the fees assessed before the magistrate. When an order of the clerk of the superior court is appealed to either the district court or the superior court, no additional General Court of Justice fee or facilities fee shall be assessed.

(b1) When a defendant files an answer in an action filed as a small claim which requires the entire case to be withdrawn from a magistrate and transferred to the district court, the difference between the General Court of Justice fee and facilities fee applicable to the district court and the General Court of Justice fee and facilities fee applicable to cases heard by a magistrate shall be assessed. The defendant is responsible for paying the fee.

(c) The clerk of superior court, at the time of the filing of the papers initiating the action or the appeal, shall collect as advance court costs, the facilities fee, General Court of Justice fee, and the divorce fee imposed under subsection (a2) of this section, except in suits by an indigent. The clerk shall also collect the fee for discovery procedures under Rule 27(a) and (b) at the time of the filing of the verified petition.

(d) The following expenses, when incurred, are assessable or recoverable, as the case may be. The expenses set forth in this subsection are complete and exclusive and constitute a limit on the trial court's discretion to tax costs pursuant to G.S. 6-20:

- (1) Witness fees, as provided by law.
- (2) Jail fees, as provided by law.
- (3) Counsel fees, as provided by law.
- (4) Expense of service of process by certified mail and by publication.
- (5) Costs on appeal to the superior court, or to the appellate division, as the case may be, of the original transcript of testimony, if any, insofar as essential to the appeal.
- (6) Fees for personal service and civil process and other sheriff's fees, as provided by law. Fees for personal service by a private process server may be recoverable in an amount equal to the actual cost of such service or fifty dollars (\$50.00), whichever is less, unless the court finds that due to difficulty of service a greater amount is appropriate.

- (7) Fees of mediators appointed by the court, mediators agreed upon by the parties, guardians ad litem, referees, receivers, commissioners, surveyors, arbitrators, appraisers, and other similar court appointees, as provided by law. The fee of such appointees shall include reasonable reimbursement for stenographic assistance, when necessary.
- (8) Fees of interpreters, when authorized and approved by the court.
- (9) Premiums for surety bonds for prosecution, as authorized by G.S. 1-109.
- (10) Reasonable and necessary expenses for stenographic and videographic assistance directly related to the taking of depositions and for the cost of deposition transcripts.
- (11) Reasonable and necessary fees of expert witnesses solely for actual time spent providing testimony at trial, deposition, or other proceedings.
- (12) The fee assessed pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section upon assignment of a case to a special superior court judge as a complex business case.

Nothing in this subsection or in G.S. 6-20 shall be construed to limit the trial court's authority to award fees and expenses in connection with pretrial discovery matters as provided in Rule 26(b) or Rule 37 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, and no award of costs made pursuant to this section or pursuant to G.S. 6-20 shall reverse or modify any such orders entered in connection with pretrial discovery.

(e) Nothing in this section shall affect the liability of the respective parties for costs as provided by law.

(f) For the support of the General Court of Justice, the sum of twenty dollars (\$20.00) shall accompany any filing of a notice of hearing on a motion not listed in G.S. 7A-308 that is filed with the clerk. No costs shall be assessed to a notice of hearing on a motion containing as a sole claim for relief the taxing of costs, including attorneys' fees, to a motion filed pursuant to G.S. 1C-1602 or G.S. 1C-1603, or to a motion filed by a child support enforcement agency established pursuant to Part D of Title IV of the Social Security Act. No more than one fee shall be assessed for any motion for which a notice of hearing is filed, regardless of whether the hearing is continued, rescheduled, or otherwise delayed. (1965, c. 310, s. 1; 1967, c. 108, s. 10; c. 691, s. 30; 1971, c. 377, ss. 23, 24; c. 1181, s. 1; 1973, c. 503, ss. 12-14; c. 1267, s. 3; 1975, c. 558, s. 3; 1975, 2nd Sess., c. 980, ss. 2, 3; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1234, s. 1; 1981, c. 555, s. 6; c. 691, s. 2; 1983, c. 713, ss. 4-6; 1989, c. 786, s. 2; 1991, c. 742, s. 15(b); 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 811, s. 2; 1993, c. 435, s. 6; 1995, c. 275, s. 2; 1998-212, s. 29A.12(b); 1998-219, ss. 2, 3; 2000-109, s. 4(b); 2001-424, s. 22.14(b); 2002-126, ss. 29A.4(b), 29A.6(e); 2004-186, s. 4.3; 2005-276, s. 43.1(b); 2005-405, s. 5; 2005-425, s. 1.2; 2007-212, s. 3; 2007-293, s. 2; 2007-323, ss. 30.8(b), 30.10(a), 30.11(a), (c); 2007-345, ss. 9.1(a), (c); 2008-107, ss. 29.1(a), 29.8(b); 2008-118, s. 2.9(c); 2008-193, s. 2; 2009-451, s. 15.20(d), (e); 2010-31, ss. 15.5(b), 15.8(a); 2010-123, s. 6.1; 2011-145, s. 31.23(b); 2012-142, s. 16.5(c); 2013-225, ss. 2, 3, 4(a); 2013-360, ss. 18B.17(a), 30.2(a), 30.2(a1); 2013-363, s. 7.1; 2014-102, s. 4; 2015-241, s. 18A.23(c); 2017-57, s. 18B.10(b); 2017-197, s. 5.4A(a).)