

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 380

Short Title: Aerial Adventure Courses/Sanders' Law. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Davis, Howard, Setzer, and Lucas (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Judiciary, if favorable, Insurance, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

March 20, 2019

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO REGULATE AERIAL ADVENTURE COURSES AND TO PROVIDE THAT  
3 THE ACT SHALL BE ENTITLED "SANDERS' LAW."

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known as "Sanders' Law."

6 **SECTION 2.** Chapter 95 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article  
7 to read:

8 "Article 14C.

9 "Aerial Adventure Course Safety.

10 **"§ 95-112.1. Short title and legislative purpose.**

11 (a) This Article shall be known as the "Aerial Adventure Course Safety Act of North  
12 Carolina."

13 (b) The General Assembly finds that a large number of North Carolinians and visitors to  
14 our State enjoy participation in aerial adventure courses and participation is growing rapidly.

15 (c) The General Assembly finds that there are inherent risks in aerial adventure courses  
16 which should be understood by each participant and which are essentially impossible to eliminate  
17 by the aerial adventure course operator.

18 (d) The General Assembly finds that, although most aerial adventure courses are operated  
19 in a safe manner, those which are not impose a substantial probability of serious and preventable  
20 injury to the public. Protection of the public from exposure to such unsafe conditions and the  
21 prevention of injuries is in the best interest and welfare of the people of the State.

22 (e) It is the intent of this Article that aerial adventure courses are designed, constructed,  
23 assembled or disassembled, maintained, and operated so as to prevent injuries.

24 **"§ 95-112.2. Scope.**

25 (a) This Article governs the design, construction, installation, plans review, testing,  
26 inspection, certification, operation, use, maintenance, alteration, and relocation of aerial  
27 adventure courses in this State.

28 (b) This Article does not apply to an aerial adventure course that is (i) installed at a private  
29 residence that is not open to the public and for which no fee is charged or (ii) operated by a  
30 government entity solely for law enforcement, fire and rescue, or military training purposes.

31 **"§ 95-112.3. Definitions.**

32 The following definitions apply in this Article:

33 (1) ACCT. – Association for Challenge Course Technology.

34 (2) ANSI. – American National Standards Institute.



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- 1           (3)   Aerial adventure course. – A facility or facilities patronized by either public,  
2           member, or private patrons, including the following: (i) ropes courses, (ii)  
3           challenge courses, (iii) adventure courses, (iv) adventure parks, (v) zip lines,  
4           (vi) zip line tours, (vii) canopy tours, and (viii) high challenge courses,  
5           consisting of one or more elevated walkways, platforms, zip lines, nets, ropes,  
6           or other elements that require the use of fall hazard safety equipment; provided  
7           that:  
8           a.     The term includes multiple aerial adventure courses at an operator  
9           location, which are registered as one device, and shall be inspected and  
10          listed on the permit to operate as one device by the inspector.  
11          b.     The term does not include low ropes courses and climbing walls.  
12          (4)   Annual gross volume. – The gross receipts resulting from all types of sales  
13          made and business done by operation of a regulated device during a 12-month  
14          period.  
15          (5)   Annual inspection report. – The documentation of the annual aerial adventure  
16          course inspection conducted by an inspector.  
17          (6)   Bureau. – Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau of the North Carolina  
18          Department of Labor.  
19          (7)   Challenge course standards. – Any standard adopted pursuant to  
20          G.S. 95-112.5.  
21          (8)   Chief. – The Chief of the Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau of the  
22          North Carolina Department of Labor.  
23          (9)   Commissioner. – Commissioner of Labor of North Carolina.  
24          (10)   ERCA. – European Ropes Course Association.  
25          (11)   Inspector – A third-party qualified person that has received ACCT Inspector  
26          Certification Exam (ICE) certification or its equivalent and that is not  
27          employed or affiliated with the builder, designer, or owner of the operation.  
28          (12)   Operator. – Any person, partnership, corporation, or other commercial entity,  
29          and their agents, officers, employees, or representatives, who has operational  
30          responsibility for any regulated device.  
31          (13)   Owner. – Any person who owns a regulated device, the authorized agent of  
32          that person, or any person who is leasing the regulated device from that  
33          person.  
34          (14)   Participant. – Any person who engages in activities on a regulated device  
35          individually or in a group activity supervised by an operator of a regulated  
36          device.  
37          (15)   Person. – Any individual, association, partnership, firm, corporation, private  
38          organization, or other entity, however organized. The term "person" also shall  
39          include the State of North Carolina or any political subdivision thereof or any  
40          unit of local government.  
41          (16)   PRCA. – Professional Ropes Course Association.  
42          (17)   Qualified person. – An individual who, by possession of a recognized degree,  
43          certificate, or professional standing; or who, by possession of extensive  
44          knowledge, training, and/or experience in the subject field; has successfully  
45          demonstrated ability in design, analysis, evaluation, installation, inspection,  
46          specification, testing, or training in the subject work, project, or product, to  
47          the extent established by this standard.  
48          (18)   Registration. – The filing of a properly completed application with the State  
49          of North Carolina and approval of the application by the State of North  
50          Carolina.

1           (19) Regulated device. – An aerial adventure course subject to the provisions of  
2           this Article as set forth in G.S. 95-112.2.

3 **"§ 95-112.4. Powers and duties of Commissioner.**

4 The Commissioner of Labor is hereby empowered to do all of the following:

- 5           (1) To delegate to the Chief of the Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau in the  
6           exercise of powers, duties, and responsibilities set forth in the Article.  
7           (2) To adopt, modify, or revoke such rules as are necessary for the purpose of  
8           carrying out the provisions of this Article.  
9           (3) To enforce rules adopted under authority of this Article.  
10          (4) To require inspection and testing for all new, modified, and relocated  
11          regulated devices. Regulated devices shall be inspected at least once annually.  
12          (5) To require maintenance and periodic inspections and tests of all regulated  
13          devices.  
14          (6) To issue permits to operate which certify that the regulated devices are found  
15          to be in compliance with this Article and the rules adopted thereunder.  
16          (7) To institute proceedings in the civil courts of this State when a provision of  
17          this Article or the rules adopted thereunder has been violated.  
18          (8) To order the payment of all civil penalties provided by this Article. The clear  
19          proceeds of funds collected pursuant to a civil penalty order shall be remitted  
20          to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.  
21          (9) To charge reasonable fees for the issuance of permits to operate regulated  
22          devices.

23 **"§ 95-112.5. Adoption of standards.**

24 The following standards and subsequent amendments and editions are adopted and  
25 incorporated by reference. The design, manufacture, installation, operation, and maintenance of  
26 all regulated devices must conform to one of the following standards, except where otherwise  
27 specifically provided in this Article or in rules adopted pursuant to this Article:

- 28          (1) The Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) ANSI/ACCT  
29          03-2016 Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standard.  
30          (2) The Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA) ANSI/PRCA  
31          1.0-.3-2014 Ropes Challenge Course Installation, Operation & Training  
32          Standard.  
33          (3) The European Ropes Course Association (ERCA) European Ropes Course  
34          Standard (EN 15567-2:2014).  
35          (4) The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2959-14 Standard  
36          Practice for Special Requirements for Aerial Adventure Courses.

37 **"§ 95-112.6. Registration required; applications; submission and processing.**

38          (a) Registration with the State Required. – All commercial and noncommercial operators  
39 of aerial adventure courses must register with the Commissioner and are subject to an annual fee  
40 that compensates the State for the cost of administering this Article. No aerial adventure course  
41 shall open to the public and operate until the operator of the aerial adventure course has first  
42 registered and obtained a permit for operation from the State.

43          (b) Application for Registration/Submission and Processing. – The aerial adventure  
44 course application shall be submitted annually at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the  
45 current permit on the form prescribed by the Commissioner and shall include the following  
46 registration requirements:

- 47               (1) The name, physical address, electronic mail address, and Internet Web site of  
48               the owner and the operator.  
49               (2) The name of all liability insurance carriers and the insurance policy numbers.

1           (3) A certificate of inspection for the aerial adventure course showing the  
2           inspector's name, the owner/operator name, and other information as required  
3           by these rules.

4           (4) A signed certification that any modifications or additions to a regulated device  
5           are in compliance with the applicable challenge course standards.

6           Upon receipt of an application, the Commissioner of Labor shall review the application. The  
7           Commissioner of Labor shall approve the application, register the aerial adventure course, and  
8           issue a permit to operate upon determining that the provisions of this Article have been met. The  
9           submittal of a registration application does not guarantee the registration of any aerial adventure  
10           course. The owner or operator must obtain a permit from the State of North Carolina prior to  
11           opening any regulated device to the public.

12           (c) The operator of the regulated device shall post a copy of the permit to operate in close  
13           proximity to the entry to the regulated device where it is readily visible to participants.

14           **"§ 95-112.7. Annual inspections required.**

15           An annual inspection of all aerial adventure physical elements shall be conducted in  
16           accordance with the applicable challenge course standards and shall be performed as often as  
17           circumstances require, but no less than once every 12 months. The annual inspection report shall  
18           provide verification of the completion of all necessary corrective measures and shall be submitted  
19           to the Commissioner for approval.

20           **"§ 95-112.8. Pre-opening inspection and test; training; emergency evacuation plan;**  
21           **records; revocation of permit to operate.**

22           (a) An owner of a regulated device shall conduct a pre-opening inspection and test of the  
23           regulated device in accordance with challenge course standards, prior to admitting the  
24           participants, each day the regulated device is intended to be used.

25           (b) An owner of a regulated device shall train employees on the operation of the regulated  
26           device in accordance with the applicable challenge course standards.

27           (c) An owner of a regulated device shall have an emergency evacuation plan for the  
28           regulated device in accordance with challenge course standards.

29           (d) An owner of a regulated device shall maintain for at least the previous 12 months a  
30           signed record of the required pre-opening inspection and test, training provided to employees,  
31           emergency evacuation plan, and such other pertinent information as the Commissioner may  
32           require by rule or regulation.

33           (e) The Commissioner may refuse to issue or renew or may revoke, suspend, or amend  
34           the permit to operate for any regulated device upon failure by the owner or the owner's authorized  
35           agent to make the required pre-opening inspection and test, to train employees, to maintain an  
36           emergency evacuation plan, or to maintain the required records.

37           **"§ 95-112.9. Operation without permit; operation not in accordance with Article or rules**  
38           **and regulations; operation after refusal to issue a permit.**

39           (a) No person shall operate or permit to be operated or use any regulated device without  
40           a valid permit to operate.

41           (b) No person shall operate or permit to be operated or use any regulated device otherwise  
42           than in accordance with this Article and the rules and regulations adopted thereunder.

43           (c) No person shall operate or permit to be operated or use any regulated device after the  
44           Commissioner has refused to issue the permit to operate.

45           **"§ 95-112.10. Accidents; reporting.**

46           (a) The owner of any regulated device shall notify the Commissioner of any of the  
47           following occurrences involving such device within 24 hours of the occurrence:

48           (1) Any occurrence resulting in death or injury requiring medical treatment, other  
49           than first aid, by a physician. First aid means the one-time treatment or  
50           observation of scratches, cuts not requiring stitches, burns, splinters, and  
51           contusions, or a diagnostic procedure, including examination and X-rays,

1 which does not ordinarily require medical treatment even though provided by  
2 a physician or other licensed personnel.

3 (2) Any occurrence resulting in damage to the regulated device indicating a  
4 substantial defect in design, mechanics, structure, or equipment affecting the  
5 future safe operation of the device. No reporting is required in the case of  
6 normal wear and tear.

7 (b) An owner or operator shall keep a record of every accident or fatality with the permit  
8 to operate, which shall be readily accessible to the general public. The record shall include the  
9 following information:

10 (1) The date of every accident or fatality.

11 (2) A description of the type of accident.

12 (3) The number of people injured or killed.

13 (4) A description of the types of injuries.

14 **"§ 95-112.11. Operator age requirement; operator impairment.**

15 (a) Any operator of a regulated device shall be at least 18 years of age. An operator shall  
16 be in attendance at all times the regulated device is in operation.

17 (b) No person shall operate a regulated device while under the influence of alcohol or any  
18 other impairing substance as defined by G.S. 20-4.01(14a). It shall be a violation of this  
19 subsection to knowingly permit the operation of any regulated device while the operator is under  
20 the influence of an impairing substance.

21 **"§ 95-112.12. Liability insurance.**

22 (a) Insurance Required. – Any person cannot own or operate a regulated device unless  
23 the person carries insurance coverage provided by an accepted insurer of at least one million  
24 dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence and two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in the aggregate against  
25 liability for injury to persons or property arising out of the operation of such facility or use of  
26 such device. The insurance contract cannot include per person sublimits to liability. A person  
27 required to be insured under this section must immediately notify the Commissioner upon receipt  
28 of notice of cancellation, suspension, or nonrenewal of the policy.

29 (b) Proof of Insurance. – Any person operating a regulated device must provide proof of  
30 insurance coverage upon request by the Commissioner. Upon failure of the person to provide  
31 proof of insurance, the Commissioner must prevent or stop operation of the regulated device until  
32 the person provides proof of the required insurance coverage.

33 (c) Acceptable Insurer. – The insurance contract must be provided by an insurer or surety  
34 that is acceptable to the Commissioner and authorized to transact business in this State. The  
35 Commissioner cannot accept any commercial general liability insurance policy unless it obligates  
36 the insurer to give written notice to the person at least 30 days before any proposed cancellation,  
37 suspension, or nonrenewal of the policy.

38 **"§ 95-112.13. Exceptions.**

39 (a) This Article does not apply to a regulated device installed at a private residence that  
40 is not open to the public and for which no fee is charged.

41 (b) A regulated device owned or operated by the State, a unit of local government, or any  
42 political subdivision thereof is not subject to the liability insurance requirements of  
43 G.S. 95-112.12.

44 **"§ 95-112.14. Violations; civil penalties; appeal; criminal penalties.**

45 (a) Any person who violates G.S. 95-112.9(a) or (b) (Operation without permit; operation  
46 not in accordance with Article or rules and regulations; operation after refusal to issue a permit)  
47 is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$1,250) for  
48 each section of this Article or rule or regulation adopted pursuant to this Article violated and for  
49 each day each regulated device is so operated or used.

50 (b) Any person who violates G.S. 95-112.10 (Accidents, reporting), G.S. 95-112.11(a)  
51 (Operators; age requirement), or G.S. 95-112.12 (Liability insurance) is subject to a civil penalty

1 not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for each day each regulated device is  
2 so operated or used.

3 (c) Any person who violates G.S. 95-112.9(b) (Operator impairment) is subject to a civil  
4 penalty not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each day each regulated device is so  
5 operated or used.

6 (d) In determining the amount of any penalty ordered under authority of this section, the  
7 Commissioner shall give due consideration to the appropriateness of the penalty with respect to  
8 the annual gross volume of the person being charged, the gravity of the violation, the good faith  
9 of the person, and the record of previous violations.

10 (e) The determination of the amount of the penalty by the Commissioner is final unless  
11 within 15 days after receipt of notice thereof by certified mail with return receipt, by signature  
12 confirmation as provided by the U.S. Postal Service, by a designated delivery service authorized  
13 pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2) with delivery receipt, or via hand delivery, the person against  
14 whom such action was taken files a petition for a contested case under Chapter 150B of the  
15 General Statutes.

16 (f) The Commissioner may file in the office of the clerk of the superior court of the  
17 county wherein the person, against whom a civil penalty has been ordered, resides, or if a  
18 corporation is involved, in the county wherein the corporation maintains its principal place of  
19 business, or in the county wherein the violation occurred, a certified copy of a final order of the  
20 Commissioner unappealed from, or of a final order of the Commissioner affirmed upon appeal.  
21 The clerk of court shall enter judgment and notify the parties. Such judgment shall have the same  
22 effect, and all proceedings in relation thereto shall thereafter be the same, as though said  
23 judgment had been rendered in a suit duly heard and determined by the superior court of the  
24 General Court of Justice.

25 (g) Except as provided under subsection (h) of this section, any person who willfully  
26 violates any provision of this Article is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor, which may include a  
27 fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); except that if the conviction is for a violation  
28 committed after a first conviction of the person, the person shall be guilty of a Class 1  
29 misdemeanor, which may include a fine of not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000).

30 (h) Any person who willfully violates any provision of this Article, and that violation  
31 causes the serious injury or death of any person, then the person is guilty of a Class E felony,  
32 which shall include a fine.

33 (i) Nothing in this section prevents any prosecuting officer of the State of North Carolina  
34 from proceeding against a person who violates this Article on a prosecution charging any degree  
35 of willful or culpable homicide.

36 **"§ 95-112.15. Legal representation.**

37 It shall be the duty of the Attorney General of North Carolina, when requested, to represent  
38 the Department of Labor in actions or proceedings in connection with this Article or the rules  
39 adopted thereunder.

40 **"§ 95-112.16. Confidentiality of trade secrets.**

41 All information reported to or otherwise obtained by the Commissioner or the  
42 Commissioner's agents or representatives in connection with any inspection or proceeding under  
43 this Article or the rules and regulations adopted thereunder which contains or might reveal a trade  
44 secret shall be considered confidential, except as to carrying out this Article and the rules adopted  
45 thereunder or when it is relevant in any proceeding under the same. In any proceeding, the  
46 Commissioner or the court shall issue orders as may be appropriate to protect the confidentiality  
47 of trade secrets.

48 **"§ 95-112.17. Construction of Article; rules; severability.**

49 This Article and the rules adopted thereunder shall receive a liberal construction to the end  
50 that the welfare of the people may be protected. If any provisions of either or the application  
51 thereof to any person or circumstances is held to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect those

1 provisions or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application,  
2 and, to that end, the provisions of this Article are severable."

3         **SECTION 3.** The Department of Labor may adopt rules, including temporary rules,  
4 design and distribute forms, begin accepting applications, and establish and collect fees in order  
5 that a device subject to the provisions of this act that is existing on or before December 1, 2019,  
6 is in compliance with the provisions of this act and has received a permit to operate from the  
7 Department of Labor by that date.

8         **SECTION 4.** Article 47 of Chapter 66 of the General Statutes is repealed.

9         **SECTION 5.** Section 2 and Section 4 of this act become effective July 1, 2020.  
10 G.S. 95-112.14(g) and (h), as enacted by Section 2 of this act, apply to violations occurring on  
11 or after July 1, 2020. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.