



HOUSE BILL 325: Amend Arson Law.

**This Bill Analysis
reflects the
contents of the bill
as it was presented
in committee.**

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	June 27, 2017
Introduced by:	Reps. McNeill, Hurley	Prepared by:	Jennifer H. Bedford
Analysis of:	Fourth Edition		Committee Counsel

OVERVIEW: House Bill 325 would create a new offense for knowingly damaging a building by fire or explosive during the commission of another felony, expand the scope of an unlawful burning resulting in serious injury to include a law enforcement officer or fire investigator, and clarify who is authorized to investigate fires.

CURRENT LAW: There are two degrees of arson. If a dwelling was occupied at the time of the burning, the offense is arson in the first degree and punishable as a Class D felony. If the dwelling burned was unoccupied at the time of the burning, the offense is arson in the second degree and is punishable as a Class G felony.

"Knowingly" is a subjective mental state which requires that the person is aware or conscious of what he or she is doing.

Under G.S. 14-69.3, committing a felony involving arson or an unlawful burning that results in serious bodily injury to a firefighter or emergency medical technician who is discharging or attempting to discharge his or her duties on or near the property is a Class E felony.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 of House Bill 325 would create two new offenses for an unlawful burning during the commission of another felony. Both (i)knowingly damaging and (ii)knowingly aiding, encouraging, or procuring damage to any building or structure described in this Article, while in the commission of a felony, and by means of fire or explosive that results in \$10,000 worth of damage, would be a Class D felony.

Section 2 of House Bill 325 would expand G.S. 14-69.3 to include serious bodily injury to a law enforcement officer or fire investigator.

Section 3 of House Bill 325 would clarify that the Office of the State Fire Marshal is authorized to investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of every fire in which property has been destroyed or damaged, and may make investigate whether the fire was the result of carelessness or design.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Section 1 and 2 of this act would become effective on December 1, 2017, and apply to offenses committed on or after that date. The remainder of this act would be effective when it becomes law.

Karen Cochrane-Brown
Director



Legislative Analysis
Division
919-733-2578