

**§ 14-148. Defacing or desecrating grave sites.**

- (a) It is unlawful to willfully:
  - (1) Throw, place or put any refuse, garbage or trash in or on any cemetery.
  - (2) Take away, disturb, vandalize, destroy or change the location of any stone, brick, iron or other material or fence enclosing a cemetery without authorization of law or consent of the surviving spouse or next of kin of the deceased.
  - (3) Take away, disturb, vandalize, destroy, or tamper with any shrubbery, flowers, plants or other articles planted or placed within any cemetery to designate where human remains are interred or to preserve and perpetuate the memory and name of any person, without authorization of law or the consent of the surviving spouse or next of kin.
- (b) The provisions of this section shall not apply to:
  - (1) Ordinary maintenance and care of a cemetery by the owner, caretaker, or other person acting to facilitate cemetery operations by keeping the cemetery free from accumulated debris or other signs of neglect.
  - (2) Conduct that is punishable under G.S. 14-149.
  - (3) A professional archaeologist as defined in G.S. 70-28(4) acting pursuant to the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 70 of the General Statutes.
- (c) Violation of this section is a Class I felony if the damage caused by the violation is one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more. Any other violation of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor. In passing sentence, the court shall consider the appropriateness of restitution or reparation as a condition of probation under G.S. 15A-1343(b)(9) as an alternative to actual imposition of a fine, jail term, or both. (1840, c. 6; R.C., c. 34, s. 102; Code, s. 1088; Rev., s. 3680; C.S., s. 4320; 1969, c. 987; 1981, c. 752, s. 1; c. 853, s. 4; 1993, c. 539, s. 87; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2007-122, s. 1.)