

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 590

Short Title: Interior Design Profession Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Riddell, McElraft, Saine, and S. Martin (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Regulatory Reform, if favorable, Finance

April 6, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR THE VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION
3 OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE PROFESSION OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND TO ALLOW
4 REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL INTERIOR DESIGNERS TO OBTAIN PERMITS
5 FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.** The General Statutes are amended by adding a new Chapter to read:

8 **"Chapter 93F.**

9 **"Interior Design.**

10 **"§ 93F-1. Title.**

11 This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Interior Design Profession Act."

12 **"§ 93F-2. Purpose.**

13 It is the purpose and intent of this act to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the
14 public by establishing standards for education and expertise for the practice of interior design
15 and to ensure a high standard of professional conduct on the part of registered interior
16 designers.

17 **"§ 93F-3. Definitions.**

18 In this Chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply:

19 (1) Department. – The North Carolina Department of Insurance.

20 (2) Interior alteration or construction. – One or more projects for an interior
21 space or area within a proposed or existing building or structure that
22 includes, but is not limited to, the construction, modification, or renovation,
23 including rehabilitation or historic preservation, of a structure which would
24 involve changing or altering one or more of the following:

25 a. The design function or layout of rooms, including in a way that
26 requires assessment rearrangements to be performed.

27 b. The physical state of permanent fixtures or equipment.

28 c. The interior space or area to require verification of compliance with
29 building codes, fire codes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or
30 other State or local regulations.

31 d. Interior office systems furniture.

32 e. Nonstructural elements of the interior space or area.

33 (3) Interior decorator. – A person engaged in the performance of one or more of
34 the following:



- 1 a. The selection or assistance with the selection, including the provision
2 of computer-aided drawings, of furniture, fixtures, or equipment that
3 do not affect the safety, health, or welfare of the public as defined by
4 any building code or other law, ordinance, rule, or regulation
5 governing the interior alteration or construction of a proposed or
6 existing building or structure.
- 7 b. The installation, assistance in installation, staging, or delivery
8 services used for interior decoration.
- 9 (4) Interior life safety. – The analysis, development, interpretation, review, and
10 employment of space plans or interior components for existing or proposed
11 interior spaces to provide for compliance with any building code or other
12 law, ordinance, or regulation to eliminate, reduce, or control life- or
13 health-threatening situations, including egress or ingress to ensure access to
14 horizontal fire exit ways leading to predetermined vertical fire exit ways.
- 15 (5) Interior technical submissions. – Designs, drawings, specifications, studies,
16 and other technical reports and calculations that are signed and sealed by a
17 registered interior designer in compliance with applicable laws and that
18 establish the scope of the interior design project, including the standard of
19 quality for materials, skilled labor, equipment, and construction systems.
- 20 (6) Licensed design professional. – A person who is licensed as an architect,
21 landscape architect, engineer, or land surveyor pursuant to Chapters 83A,
22 89A, or 89C of the General Statutes.
- 23 (7) Multi-disciplinary interior design firm. – A business entity offering the
24 practice of interior design and at least one other service involving a licensed
25 design professional.
- 26 (8) NCIDQ. – The National Council for Interior Design Qualification.
- 27 (9) Nonstructural element. – An element which does not require structural
28 bracing and which is something other than a load-bearing element of a
29 structure which is essential to its structural integrity.
- 30 (10) Practice of interior design. – Includes the following professional activities:
- 31 a. Programming, planning, pre-design analysis, and conceptual design,
32 including the selection of materials, furniture, fixtures, and
33 equipment.
- 34 b. Interior alteration or construction and interior life safety, including
35 interior construction documentation and interior technical
36 submissions.
- 37 c. The preparation of a physical plan of space within a proposed or
38 existing building or structure, including determinations of (i) internal
39 circulation systems or patterns, (ii) the location of internal exit
40 requirements based on occupancy loads, and (iii) assessment and
41 analysis of interior life safety factors for compliance with State and
42 local government building codes.
- 43 d. Reviewing, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting building codes,
44 fire codes, accessibility standards, including the Americans with
45 Disabilities Act, or other federal, State, or local regulations, codes,
46 and standards.
- 47 e. The rendering of designs, plans, drawings, specifications, contract
48 documents, or other technical submissions and the administration of
49 interior construction and contracts relating to nonstructural elements
50 in interior alteration or construction of a proposed or existing
51 building or structure.

1 (11) Registered interior designer. – A person who holds a certificate of
2 registration pursuant to this Chapter as an interior designer.

3 **"§ 93F-4. Application for registration.**

4 (a) An applicant for registration shall be registered upon satisfactory proof to the
5 Department that the applicant is of good moral character and meets the following requirements:

6 (1) Submission of a signed application in a form to be established by the
7 Department.

8 (2) Passage of the examination administered by the NCIDQ.

9 (3) Submission of a statement of personal qualification that includes at least all
10 of the following information about the applicant:

11 a. Full legal name and name submitted for registration.

12 b. Date of birth.

13 c. Personal and business mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and
14 e-mail addresses.

15 d. State and county of residence.

16 e. Employer's name, address, and telephone number.

17 f. All issuances, denials, revocations, suspensions, or restrictions of a
18 license, certificate, or registration pertaining to the practice of
19 interior design in this State or any other jurisdiction.

20 (4) Payment of the application fee established by the Department pursuant to
21 this Chapter, but not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

22 (b) The Department may require new applicants who passed the NCIDQ examination
23 more than 24 months prior to submission of a registration application pursuant to this section to
24 submit proof of completion of continuing education coursework in an amount and format
25 consistent with the continuing education requirements established pursuant to this Chapter.

26 **"§ 93F-5. Expiration and renewals; continuing education.**

27 (a) Registrations shall expire two years following issuance or renewal and shall become
28 invalid after that date unless renewed. A registrant may apply for renewal of a registration no
29 earlier than 10 weeks prior to the expiration date of the current registration.

30 (b) The Department shall issue a renewal of registration to an applicant upon proof
31 satisfactory to the Department that the applicant is of good moral character and meets all of the
32 following requirements:

33 (1) Submission of a signed application for renewal in a form to be established
34 by the Department.

35 (2) Submission of proof of completion of at least 24 continuing education units
36 by providing the following information:

37 a. The name and address of the continuing education provider.

38 b. The dates attended and hours of credit claimed.

39 c. The physical location, title, and subject-matter description of the
40 continuing education unit and the names of the instructors.

41 d. Documentation of successful completion of the continuing education
42 units from the providers.

43 e. Documentation that at least 12 continuing education units focused on
44 one or more of the following subject matters:

45 1. Any single area of practice for an interior designer as defined
46 in this Chapter.

47 2. Any topic that advances consumer protection in the built
48 environment.

49 3. Health and wellness of building occupants.

50 4. Public safety, including application of State and local fire
51 codes, building codes, and regulations.

- 1 5. Resiliency.
- 2 6. Sustainability.
- 3 7. Application of federal, State, and local laws pertaining to
- 4 accessibility standards, including the Americans with
- 5 Disabilities Act.

6 (3) Payment of the renewal fee established by the Department pursuant to this
7 Chapter.

8 (c) The Department may, at its discretion, grant an extension of an expired registration
9 for a period not exceeding one year for applicants seeking renewal of registration who have
10 failed to submit a completed application or satisfy the continuing education requirements
11 because of circumstances of emergency or hardship. An extension granted pursuant to this
12 subsection shall not relieve the applicant from compliance with the continuing education
13 requirements or any other obligation imposed by this Chapter.

14 **"§ 93F-6. Reciprocity.**

15 The Department shall issue a registration to an applicant who, at the time of application,
16 holds a valid license, certificate, or registration as an interior designer issued by another state or
17 a political territory or jurisdiction acceptable to the Department if, in the Department's
18 determination, the requirements for that license, certificate, or registration are substantially the
19 same as the requirements for registration pursuant to this Chapter. In addition to the application
20 requirements provided in G.S. 93F-4, applicants seeking reciprocal registration shall pay to the
21 Department an additional fee not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00).

22 **"§ 93F-7. Disqualifications for registration.**

23 (a) The Department may either refuse to issue or to renew, or may suspend or revoke a
24 registration for any one or combination of the following reasons:

- 25 (1) Fraud or material misrepresentation in procuring the registration.
- 26 (2) Habitual intoxication or addiction to the use of drugs.
- 27 (3) Use of the title "registered interior designer" under a name other than his or
28 her own.
- 29 (4) Knowingly allowing another to wrongfully use the title "registered interior
30 designer," or professional connection or association with any person or
31 business entity holding itself out in any manner contrary to the provisions of
32 this Chapter or its rules.
- 33 (5) Signing or affixing the registered interior designer's seal or knowingly
34 permitting the registered interior designer's seal to be affixed to any
35 technical submissions not prepared by the registered interior designer or
36 under that registered interior designer's direct supervision and control.
- 37 (6) Improper, unprofessional, or dishonorable conduct of a character likely to
38 deceive, defraud, or harm the public.
- 39 (7) Conviction of the applicant or registrant of any crime that is a felony, if the
40 Department determines, after investigation, that such person has not been
41 sufficiently rehabilitated to warrant the public trust.
- 42 (8) Revocation by another state or a political territory or jurisdiction of an
43 interior design license, certification, or registration if at least one of the
44 grounds for that revocation is the same as or the equivalent of one of the
45 grounds for revocation set forth in this Chapter or by the Department.
- 46 (9) Mental incompetence as declared by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 47 (10) A violation of any provision of this Chapter or its rules, or aiding or assisting
48 another person in violating any provision of this Chapter or its rules.
- 49 (11) Failure to provide information in response to a written request made by the
50 Department within 30 days after receipt of the written request.

1 **(b)** At any time after suspension, revocation, or the taking of any other disciplinary
2 action with regard to any registration, the Department may reinstate the registration, or take any
3 other action to reinstate the registration to good standing.

4 **"§ 93F-8. Misdemeanors.**

5 Each of the following acts constitutes a Class 2 misdemeanor:

- 6 **(1)** The affixing of a registered interior designer's signature or seal to any
7 interior technical submissions without the permission of the registrant.
8 **(2)** Using or attempting to use an expired, inactive, suspended, or revoked
9 registration or seal or the registration or seal of another, or impersonating
10 another registrant.
11 **(3)** Obtaining or attempting to obtain a registration by fraud.
12 **(4)** The making of any willfully false oath or affirmation in any matter or
13 proceeding where an oath or affirmation is required by this Chapter.
14 **(5)** Willfully preventing an individual from obtaining a building permit from a
15 local government in this State, provided that the individual seeking to obtain
16 the permit is a registered interior designer of this State.

17 **"§ 93F-9. Civil penalties; disciplinary costs.**

18 **(a)** The Department may assess a civil penalty not in excess of one thousand dollars
19 (\$1,000) per offense for the violation by a registrant of any of the reasons provided in
20 G.S. 93F-7. The clear proceeds of any civil penalty assessed under this section shall be remitted
21 to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

22 **(b)** Before imposing and assessing a civil penalty, the Department shall consider the
23 following factors:

- 24 **(1)** The nature, gravity, and persistence of the particular violation.
25 **(2)** The appropriateness of the imposition of a civil penalty when considered
26 alone or in combination with other punishment.
27 **(3)** Whether the violation was willful and malicious.
28 **(4)** Any other factors that would tend to mitigate or aggravate the violations
29 found to exist.

30 **(c)** The Department shall establish a schedule of civil penalties for violations of this
31 Chapter and rules adopted by the Department.

32 **(d)** The Board may, in a disciplinary proceeding, charge costs, including reasonable
33 attorneys' fees, to the licensee against whom the proceedings were brought.

34 **"§ 93F-10. Enjoining illegal practices.**

35 The Department may apply to the superior court for an injunction to restrain any person
36 from violating the provisions of this Chapter or its rules. Actions under this section shall be
37 brought in the county where the defendant resides or maintains his or her principal place of
38 business or where the alleged acts occurred.

39 **"§ 93F-11. Authority and duties of registrants.**

40 **(a)** A registered interior designer shall possess the authority to sign and seal interior
41 technical submissions covering the scope of the practice of interior design and shall have the
42 authority to submit them to a State or local government entity for the purpose of obtaining
43 requisite permits for an interior alteration or construction project. Only a registered interior
44 designer, or those under the registrant's supervision and control, may sign and seal interior
45 technical submissions within the scope of the practice of interior design defined by this
46 Chapter.

47 **(b)** A registered interior designer shall have a reproducible seal or facsimile, the print of
48 which shall contain the full name and registration number of the registered interior designer on
49 file with the Department, the registrant's business city and state, and the words "Registered
50 Interior Designer, North Carolina". The seal shall be created and granted to each registered
51 interior designer by the Department.

1 (c) The registered interior designer shall affix the signature, current date, date of
2 registration expiration, and seal to the first sheet of any bound set or loose sheets of interior
3 technical submissions utilized as contract documents between the parties to the contract or
4 prepared for the review and approval of any State or local government entity having
5 jurisdiction, by that registered interior designer or under that registered interior designer's
6 supervision and control.

7 (d) The registered interior designer exercising supervision and control under which the
8 documents or portions of the documents were prepared shall be identified on the documents or
9 portions of the documents by name and registration number.

10 (e) The sheet of interior technical submissions in which the seal is affixed shall indicate
11 those documents or parts thereof for which the seal shall apply. The seal and dates may be
12 electronically affixed. The registrant may provide, at the registrant's sole discretion, an original
13 signature in the registrant's handwriting, a scanned copy of the document bearing an original
14 signature, or a signature generated by a computer. All interior technical submissions issued by
15 any business entity of this State shall also contain the corporate or assumed business name in
16 addition to any other seal requirements as set forth in this section. The signature, current date,
17 date of registration expiration, and seal shall be evidence of the authenticity of any document or
18 interior technical submissions.

19 (f) No registered interior designer shall affix, or permit to be affixed, his or her
20 registration number, seal, or signature to any study, plan, specification, drawing, report, or
21 other document which depicts work which the registrant is not competent to perform.

22 (g) A registered interior designer under the laws of this State shall not sign and seal
23 interior technical submissions that were not prepared by or under his or her supervision and
24 control with the exception of any of the following circumstances:

25 (1) The registered interior designer may sign and seal those portions of the
26 interior technical submissions that were prepared by or under the supervision
27 and control of other individuals who are also registered interior designers,
28 provided that the registered interior designer has reviewed in whole or in
29 part such portions and has either coordinated their preparation or integrated
30 them into the registrant's work.

31 (2) A partner or corporate officer of a business entity registered in this State,
32 who is either a registered interior designer or another licensed design
33 professional under the laws of this State, and who has professional
34 knowledge of the content of the interior technical submissions and intends to
35 be responsible for the adequacy of the interior technical submissions, may
36 sign and seal interior technical submissions that are prepared by or under the
37 supervision and control of a registered interior designer of this State and who
38 is in the regular employment of the business entity.

39 (h) Interior technical submissions may be combined with submissions separately
40 prepared under the supervision and control, seal, and signature of other licensed design
41 professionals, but it shall not be mandated pursuant to subsection (j) of this section.

42 (i) All interior technical submissions intended for use in an interior alteration or
43 construction in this State shall be prepared and administered in accordance with standards of
44 reasonable professional skill and diligence. Care shall be taken to reflect the requirements of
45 State law and, where applicable, federal law and local government building ordinances
46 pertaining to the required contents of such submissions.

47 (j) A registered interior designer may choose to submit interior technical submissions,
48 as may be required to obtain a building permit, separately or as part of a larger submission of
49 documents compiled by one or more other registered interior designers or other licensed design
50 professionals.

1 (k) A registered interior designer shall have supervisory authority to assemble, compile,
2 and submit all documents required to obtain a building permit for interior alteration or
3 construction, including those prepared, signed, and sealed by one or more other registered
4 interior designers or licensed design professionals.

5 **"§ 93F-12. Departmental powers and duties.**

6 The Department has the following powers and duties pursuant to this Chapter:

- 7 (1) To issue certificates of registration to individuals meeting the qualifications
8 to be a registered interior designer.
9 (2) To promulgate rules and regulations required for the administration of this
10 act.
11 (3) To prescribe, by rule, individually identifiable seals to be used by registered
12 interior designers.
13 (4) To take disciplinary action as it deems proper, including, but not limited to,
14 the assessment of civil penalties pursuant to G.S. 93F-9.

15 **"§ 93F-13. Applicability of Chapter.**

16 The following persons are exempt from the provisions of this Chapter while engaged in the
17 proper scope of their professions:

- 18 (1) Interior decorators.
19 (2) Licensed design professionals.
20 (3) Attorneys at law, licensed pursuant to Chapter 84 of the General Statutes."

21 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 83A-9 reads as rewritten:

22 **"§ 83A-9. Partnership practice.**

23 This Chapter neither prevents practice of architecture by a partnership nor requires
24 partnership seals or certificates of practice provided that at least one of the members of the
25 partnership are-is duly licensed to practice architecture, and, provided that the partnership files
26 with the Board and keeps current a list of the partners, their license or registration
27 identifications, and the types of services offered by the partnership."

28 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 153A-357 reads as rewritten:

29 **"§ 153A-357. Permits.**

30 ...

31 (a1) A permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall
32 comply with the State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws and local
33 ordinances and regulations. Nothing in this section shall require a county to review and approve
34 residential building plans submitted to the county pursuant to Section R-110 of Volume VII of
35 the North Carolina State Building Code; provided that the county may review and approve such
36 residential building plans as it deems necessary. No permit may be issued unless the plans and
37 specifications are identified by the name and address of the author thereof; and if the General
38 Statutes of North Carolina require that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a
39 licensed ~~architect or architect~~, licensed engineer, or registered interior designer, no permit may
40 be issued unless the plans and specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a licensed ~~architect~~
41 ~~or of a architect~~, licensed engineer-engineer, or registered interior designer. If a provision of the
42 General Statutes of North Carolina or of any ordinance requires that work be done by a licensed
43 specialty contractor of any kind, no permit for the work may be issued unless the work is to be
44 performed by such a duly licensed contractor.

45 ...

46 (f) No county may withhold issuing a building permit or certificate of occupancy that
47 otherwise would be eligible to be issued under this section to compel, with respect to another
48 property or parcel, completion of work for a separate permit or compliance with land use
49 regulations under this Article unless otherwise authorized by law or unless the county
50 reasonably determines the existence of a public safety issue directly related to the issuance of a
51 building permit or certificate of occupancy. If a county denies or withholds the issuance of a

1 permit, the county shall provide a written explanation and include a copy of the ordinance or
2 other basis for its decision to the person requesting the permit.

3 (g) Violation of this section constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor."

4 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 160A-417 reads as rewritten:

5 **"§ 160A-417. Permits.**

6 ...

7 (a1) A permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall
8 comply with the State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws. Nothing in
9 this section shall require a city to review and approve residential building plans submitted to
10 the city pursuant to Section R-110 of Volume VII of the North Carolina State Building Code;
11 provided that the city may review and approve such residential building plans as it deems
12 necessary. No permits shall be issued unless the plans and specifications are identified by the
13 name and address of the author thereof, and if the General Statutes of North Carolina require
14 that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a licensed ~~architect or architect,~~
15 licensed engineer, or registered interior designer, no permit shall be issued unless the plans and
16 specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a licensed ~~architect or of a architect,~~ licensed
17 ~~engineer-engineer,~~ or registered interior designer. When any provision of the General Statutes
18 of North Carolina or of any ordinance requires that work be done by a licensed specialty
19 contractor of any kind, no permit for the work shall be issued unless the work is to be
20 performed by such a duly licensed contractor.

21 ...

22 (e) No city may withhold issuing a building permit or certificate of occupancy that
23 otherwise would be eligible to be issued under this section to compel, with respect to another
24 property or parcel, completion of work for a separate permit or compliance with land use
25 regulations under this Article unless otherwise authorized by law or unless the city reasonably
26 determines the existence of a public safety issue directly related to the issuance of a building
27 permit or certificate of occupancy. If a city denies or withholds the issuance of a permit, the
28 city shall provide a written explanation and include a copy of the ordinance or other basis for
29 its decision to the person requesting the permit.

30 (f) Violation of this section constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor."

31 **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2017.