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CHAPTER 15.

BAIL AND RECOGNIZANCES

**SECTION 17‑15‑10.** Person charged with noncapital offense may be released on his own recognizance; conditions of release.

Any person charged with a noncapital offense triable in either the magistrate’s, county or circuit court, shall, at his appearance before any of such courts, be ordered released pending trial on his own recognizance without surety in an amount specified by the court, unless the court determines in its discretion that such a release will not reasonably assure the appearance of the person as required, or unreasonable danger to the community will result. If such a determination is made by the court, it may impose any one or more of the following conditions of release:

(a) Require the execution of an appearance bond in a specified amount with good and sufficient surety or sureties approved by the court;

(b) Place the person in the custody of a designated person or organization agreeing to supervise him;

(c) Place restrictions on the travel, association or place of abode of the person during the period of release;

(d) Impose any other conditions deemed reasonably necessary to assure appearance as required, including a condition that the person return to custody after specified hours.

**SECTION 17‑15‑15.** Deposit of cash percentage in lieu of bond; assignment of deposit; restitution to victim.

(a) In lieu of requiring actual posting of bond as provided in item (a) of Section 17‑15‑10, the court setting bond may permit the defendant to deposit in cash with the clerk of court an amount not to exceed ten percent of the amount of bond set, which amount, when the defendant fulfills the condition of the bond, shall be returned to the defendant by the clerk except as provided in subsection (c).

(b) The cash deposit provided for in subsection (a) shall be assignable at any time after it is posted with the clerk of court by written assignment executed by the defendant and delivered to the clerk. After assignment and after the defendant fulfills the condition of his bond, the clerk shall return the cash deposit to the assignee thereof.

(c) In the event the cash deposit is not assigned but the defendant is required by the court to make restitution to the victim of his crime, such deposit may be used for the purpose of such restitution.

**SECTION 17‑15‑20.** Conditions of appearance recognizance or appearance bond.

Every appearance recognizance or appearance bond will be conditioned on the person charged personally appearing before the court specified to answer the charge or indictment and to do and receive what shall be enjoined by the court, and not to depart the State, and be of good behavior toward all the citizens thereof, or especially toward any person or persons specified by the court.

**SECTION 17‑15‑30.** Matters to be considered in determining conditions of release.

(A) In determining conditions of release that will reasonably assure appearance, or if release would constitute an unreasonable danger to the community, the court may, on the basis of available information, consider the nature and circumstances of the offense charged and the accused’s:

(1) family ties;

(2) employment;

(3) financial resources;

(4) character and mental condition;

(5) length of residence in the community;

(6) record of convictions; and

(7) record of flight to avoid prosecution or failure to appear at other court proceedings.

(B) The court shall consider:

(1) the accused’s criminal record;

(2) all incident reports generated as a result of the offense charged, if available; and

(3) whether the accused is an alien unlawfully present in the United States, and poses a substantial flight risk due to this status.

**SECTION 17‑15‑40.** Order of court shall state conditions imposed and other matters; acknowledgment by person released.

On releasing the person on any of the foregoing conditions, the court shall issue a brief order containing a statement of the conditions imposed, informing the person of the penalties for violation of the conditions of release and stating that a warrant for the person’s arrest will be issued immediately upon any such violation. The person released shall acknowledge his understanding of the terms and conditions of his release and the penalties and forfeitures applicable in the event of violation thereof on a form to be prescribed by the Attorney General.

**SECTION 17‑15‑50.** Amendment of order.

The court may, at any time after notice and hearing, amend the order to impose additional or different conditions of release.

**SECTION 17‑15‑60.** Rules of evidence are inapplicable.

Information of probative value offered in connection with any judicial determination or order pursuant to Sections 17‑15‑10 through 17‑15‑60 need not conform to the rules of evidence as in a court of law.

**SECTION 17‑15‑90.** Wilful failure to appear; penalties.

A person released pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 15, Title 17 who wilfully fails to appear before the court as required must:

(1) if he was released in connection with a charge for a felony or while awaiting sentencing after conviction, be fined not more than five thousand dollars or imprisoned for not more than five years, or both; or

(2) if he was released in connection with a charge for a misdemeanor for which the maximum possible sentence was at least one year, be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

**SECTION 17‑15‑100.** Power to punish for contempt is not affected.

Nothing contained in Sections 17‑15‑10 through 17‑15‑60 shall affect the power of any court of the State to punish for contempt.

**SECTION 17‑15‑140.** Discharge of prosecutor or witness on own recognizance in cases not capital; costs.

When any prosecutor or witness in criminal cases less than capital is committed to jail for inability to give surety on his recognizance to prosecute or testify, the clerk of court of general sessions in which the case is pending may, in his discretion, discharge such prosecutor or witness on his own recognizance. Clerk’s costs, not to exceed one dollar, may be charged for each such recognizance taken.

**SECTION 17‑15‑160.** Recognizances shall be in name of State; signing.

In all recognizances by any person for keeping the peace, good behavior or appearing as a party, surety or witness at any court of criminal jurisdiction within the State the sum of money in which any such person shall be bound shall be made payable to the State and every such recognizance shall be good and effectual in law provided it be signed by every party thereto in the presence of a judge, clerk of a court of common pleas, magistrate or notary public who shall sign the recognizance as a witness.

**SECTION 17‑15‑170.** Proceedings in case of forfeiture of recognizances.

Whenever the recognizance is forfeited by noncompliance with its condition, the Attorney General, solicitor, magistrate, or other person acting for him immediately shall issue a notice to summon every party bound in the forfeited recognizance to appear at the next ensuing court to show cause, if he has any, why judgment should not be confirmed against him. If any person so bound fails to appear or, upon appearing, does not give a reason for not performing the condition of the recognizance as the court considers sufficient, then the judgment on the recognizance is confirmed. A magistrate may confirm judgments of not more than the maximum fine allowable under Section 22‑3‑550 in addition to assessments.

**SECTION 17‑15‑180.** Court may remit forfeiture in certain cases.

If any person shall forfeit a recognizance from ignorance or unavoidable impediment and not from wilful default, the court of sessions may, on affidavit stating the excuse or cause thereof, remit the whole or any part of the forfeiture as may be deemed reasonable.

**SECTION 17‑15‑190.** Money may be deposited with officer of court in lieu of bond, recognizance or undertaking.

Whenever in any criminal proceeding in any of the courts of this State a bond, recognizance or undertaking is authorized or required to be given, the party authorized or required to give it may deposit in lieu thereof a sum of lawful money of the United States of America equal in amount to the bond, recognizance or undertaking so required or authorized to be given. Such sum of money, when deposited as in this section provided, shall be held and taken as equivalent in all respects to the giving of such bond, recognizance or undertaking.

**SECTION 17‑15‑200.** Persons to whom a deposit in lieu of bond, recognizance or undertaking must be paid.

Whenever such bond, recognizance or undertaking is required or authorized to be given in any criminal proceeding:

(1) In the courts of general sessions of this State the sum of money deposited in lieu thereof shall be paid to the clerk of the court of general sessions in which the proceeding is pending;

(2) In the Supreme Court or the court of appeals the sum of money shall be paid to the clerk of the Supreme Court or the court of appeals; and

(3) In a magistrate’s court or other court of inferior jurisdiction such sum of money shall be paid to the clerk of the court of common pleas and general sessions for the county in which such magistrate’s court or other court of inferior jurisdiction shall be.

**SECTION 17‑15‑210.** Receipt for deposit given in lieu of bond, recognizance or undertaking.

Whenever any sum of money is so deposited in lieu of a bond, recognizance or undertaking the party depositing it shall be entitled to a receipt therefor, stating that the sum of money has been deposited and is held for the same purpose as would have been specified and conditioned in the bond, recognizance or undertaking in lieu whereof the sum of money is so deposited.

**SECTION 17‑15‑220.** Return of deposit given in lieu of bond, recognizance or undertaking.

The person so depositing a sum of money in lieu of a bond, recognizance or undertaking shall be entitled upon application to the court wherein such deposit has been made, and subject to the order under which such fund is held, to receive back such sum of money whenever the purposes for which it has been received and deposited have been accomplished and the person would have been entitled to be released without payment or further payment of any sum from all liability on the required bond, recognizance or undertaking had it been given in lieu of such deposit of money.

**SECTION 17‑15‑230.** Requirement that surety company file undertaking with respect to guaranteed arrest bond certificates issued by automobile clubs; acceptance, forfeiture, and enforcement of certificates.

(A)(1) A domestic or foreign surety company qualified to transact business in this State may become a surety by filing with the Department of Insurance an undertaking to become surety of not more than one thousand five hundred dollars with respect to each guaranteed arrest bond certificate issued by an automobile club or association.

(2) The undertaking must be in a form to be prescribed by the department and must state the:

(a) name and address of the automobile club or automobile association with respect to which the surety company undertakes to guarantee the arrest bond certificates;

(b) unqualified obligation of the surety company to pay the fine or forfeiture of not more than one thousand five hundred dollars of a person who, after posting a guaranteed arrest bond certificate which the surety has undertaken to guarantee, fails to make the appearance for which the guaranteed arrest bond certificate was posted.

(B)(1) A guaranteed arrest bond certificate guaranteed by a surety company pursuant to this section must be accepted in lieu of cash bail or other bond of not more than one thousand five hundred dollars as a bail bond, when signed by the person whose signature appears on the certificate, to guarantee the appearance of that person in a court in this State at the time set by the court when the person is arrested for the violation of a motor vehicle law of the State or a motor vehicle ordinance of a municipality of this State. The guaranteed arrest bond certificate does not apply to and must not be accepted in lieu of cash bail or bond when the person has been arrested for an offense of driving under the influence of intoxicating liquors or drugs or for a felony.

(2) A guaranteed arrest bond certificate that is posted as a bail bond in a court is subject to the forfeiture and enforcement provisions with respect to bail bonds in criminal cases provided in this chapter.

**SECTION 17‑15‑240.** Interest on bail bond money.

Court officers authorized by law to receive bail bond money may deposit that money in interest‑bearing accounts in a financial institution in which deposits are insured by an agency of the United States government. The interest earned on the accounts is considered public funds and must be distributed as follows:

(1) Interest on bail bond money received for offenses triable in municipal court or held for transmittal to the county clerk of court must be credited to the general fund of the municipality.

(2) Interest on bail bond money received for offenses triable in magistrate’s court or held for transmittal to the county clerk of court must be credited to the general fund of the county.

(3) Interest on bail bond money received by the county clerk of court for offenses triable in family and circuit court must be credited to the general fund of the county.

South Carolina Court Administration shall prescribe appropriate procedures for handling and accounting for bail bond interest.

**SECTION 17‑15‑260.** Disposition of funds collected pursuant to chapter.

The funds collected pursuant to this chapter must be remitted in the following manner: twenty‑five percent to the general fund of the State, twenty‑five percent to the solicitor’s office in the county in which the forfeiture is ordered, and fifty percent to the county general fund of the county in which the forfeiture is ordered.

However, if the case in which forfeiture is ordered is originated by a municipality, the funds collected pursuant to this chapter must be remitted in the following manner: twenty‑five percent to the general fund of the State, twenty‑five percent to the solicitor’s office in the county in which the forfeiture is ordered, and twenty‑five percent to the county general fund of the county in which the forfeiture is ordered and twenty‑five percent to the municipality.

All funds to be deposited in the state general fund shall be transmitted to the State Treasurer.