

Numbering in the General Statutes

General Statutes Number Structure

The General Statutes Commission adopted the current numbering system for the General Statutes in the 1940's. Its details have been refined over time. Here is a paradigm:

Chapter 1.
[Title]

SUBCHAPTER I.
[Title]

Article 1.
[Title]

Part 1.
[Title]

§ 1-1. [Section catchline].

- (a) [subsection - format in left-indented paragraphs]
- (b)
 - (1) [subdivision - format as block-indented paragraphs]
 - (2)
 - a. [subsubdivision - format as block-indented paragraphs]
 - b.
 - 1. [subsubsubdivision - format as block-indented paragraphs]
 - 2.
 - I. [subsubsubsubdivision - format as block-indented paragraphs]
 - II.
 - A. [subsubsubsubsubdivision - format as block-indented paragraphs]
 - B.

At present, the Codifier applies the numbering policies described in this document (with examples).

This document is intended as a reference. As a result, some information is duplicated when it applies to more than one level of codification.

Chapter #: The chapter is the major subject matter organizational unit in the General Statutes. In numbering chapters, use whole Arabic numbers, e.g. “**Chapter 1.**”

To insert a new chapter between existing chapters that have consecutive numbers, add one capital letter to the end of the number, e.g. “**Chapter 1A.**”. There is no way under our system to insert a chapter between a chapter number ending with “A” and the preceding chapter, e.g. between Chapter 1 and Chapter 1A, or between two chapters with numbers ending in consecutive letters, e.g. between Chapter 1A and Chapter 1B. The new chapter will need to be placed at the nearest available location.

The numbers belonging to repealed, expired, or recodified chapters are not reusable.

A chapter that is being completely rewritten should be given a new chapter number, e.g.

Chapter 150 when rewritten became Chapter 150A, which similarly became Chapter 150B. As an exception, a new chapter number is not necessary if the numbering style is being changed from a two-part number to a three-part number because the revised chapter is based on a Uniform or model act, e.g. when Chapter 55 was rewritten in 1989 based on the Model Business Corporation Act (see also discussion below under “G.S. § # - #”).

SUBCHAPTER #: As a matter of practice, only very large chapters have subchapters.

Use Roman numerals, e.g. “**Subchapter I.**”

To insert a new subchapter between existing subchapters that have consecutive numbers, add a hyphen and one capital letter to the end of the number, e.g. “**Subchapter I-A.**”. There is no way under this system to insert a new subchapter number between, e.g., Subchapter I and Subchapter I-A or between Subchapter I-A and Subchapter I-B; when numbering subchapters in this situation, the new subchapter should either be placed at the nearest available location (preferred) or (unlike chapters) the following subchapter(s) can be renumbered, e.g. the new subchapter could be numbered “Subchapter I-B” and an existing Subchapter I-B could be renumbered as “Subchapter I-C.”

FYI, LexisNexis shows subchapter designations as all caps, but in text, references should have an initial cap only.

Article #: *The article is normally the first grouping to use beneath the chapter level when a chapter is large or complex enough to make it desirable to divide the chapter into subgroups of sections.*

Use the same numbers for articles as for chapters, e.g. “**Article 1**” or “**Article 1A.**”

The numbers belonging to repealed, expired, or recodified articles are not reusable.

Unlike chapters, articles that are rewritten do not need to be renumbered as a matter of codification policy (although giving the rewritten article a new number may be desirable for other reasons).

Part #: Parts are used to subdivide articles if desired; all articles do not have them.

The numbering for parts is the same as for articles, e.g. “**Part 1**” or “**Part 1A.**”, etc., except that when a new part needs to be inserted between two existing parts and the numbering system will not accommodate a new number, it is possible to renumber the parts that follow (same principle as for subchapters).

G.S. § # - #: A standard G.S. section number consists of two whole Arabic numbers separated by a hyphen, e.g. “**G.S. 1-1.**” The first element is the chapter number; the second is the section number within that chapter.

As an exception to the two-part numbers just described, there are a few chapters that have three-part numbers, e.g. “**G.S. 1-1-1.**” In these chapters, the first number is the chapter number, the second is the article number, and the third is the section number within the article. Most chapters that use 3-part numbers were derived from Uniform or model acts; using a three-part number allows our version of these acts to reflect the numbering of the official Uniform or model act. The remainder are chapters that were created during a period when it was anticipated that three-part numbering was going to be officially adopted for the entire General Statutes. This change never happened. When it became clear that it would not happen, we officially returned to two-part numbers for all new chapters other than those based on Uniform or model acts.

The first section number in a chapter will normally be “1”, e.g. “**G.S. 1-1.**” The first number in a chapter can be a different number, e.g. “**G.S. 1-10**”, when desired, as when room for future additions at the beginning of the article is deliberately being left. In that case, the publisher will normally show **G.S. 1-1** through **1-9** as reserved for future codification. In a chapter with three-part numbers, the first number in each article also needs to be “1” rather than following on from the section numbers in the previous article, e.g. “**G.S. 1-2-1**”.

To insert a new G.S. section between two existing sections where there are no gaps in the section numbers, add a decimal at the end of the preceding G.S. section number, e.g. to insert a section between **G.S. 1-1** and **G.S. 1-2**, use **G.S. 1-1.1** (or **G.S. 1-1-1.1** for a three-part number). If the two existing sections already have G.S. section numbers that end in a decimal, add a single capital letter, e.g. **G.S. 1-1.1A** to go between **G.S. 1-1.1** and **G.S. 1-1.2**. To insert a section between **G.S. 1-1** and **G.S. 1-1.1**, use **G.S. 1-1.01**. *Never add a capital letter to the end of a G.S. section number unless the number already has a decimal.*

Unlike chapters, G.S. sections that are rewritten do not need to be renumbered as a matter of codification policy (although giving the rewritten section a new G.S. section number may be desirable for other reasons).

Section numbers are not reusable: with one exception, the numbers belonging to repealed, expired, or recodified G.S. sections should not be reused. The exception is when the repeal, expiration, or recodification is undone, in which case, the old number remains available for the restored section. G.S. sections should not be renumbered to accommodate the insertion of new sections.

Reservation of section numbers for future expansion: because the numbering system has limitations, it is a codification policy to build in space for future additions.

As a result, with respect to articles in chapters with two-part section numbers:

- Leave *at least five to ten* nondecimal G.S. section numbers unused at the end of each article (i.e., reserved for future use) in the following instances:
 - (1) Between all articles in new G.S. chapters with standard (two-part) section numbers, and

(2) Between the end of the preceding article and a new article when adding new articles to the end of existing G.S. chapters with two-part numbers,.

- When inserting a new article between two existing articles, to the extent reasonably possible, leave at least one nondecimal G.S. section number between the new article and both the preceding article and the following article.

With respect to parts in chapters that have either two- or three-part section numbers:

Leave *at least three to five* nondecimal section numbers at the end of parts in new articles and when adding new parts to the end of existing articles (leave as reserved sections).

The numbers to reserve set out in this document are minimums; more space can be reserved.

Please note that G.S. numbers can also be reserved for future use within articles or parts.

For example, to keep a reporting requirement at the end of an article, reserve space in front of the section that requires the report for possible future additions to the article (in addition to the sections reserved at the end of the article), e.g., the article could have G.S. numbers **G.S. 1-1** through **G.S. 1-6**, reserving **G.S. 1-7** through **G.S. 1-9**, and putting the report requirement as **G.S. 1-10**.

Subunits of a section generally: The first-level subunit in a section is usually the subsection, followed by the subdivision, the subdividing, the subdividing, etc.

Subsections are formatted as standard paragraphs with the first line indented from the left and the remainder flush with the left margin.

Subdivisions and smaller subunits are formatted as block-indented paragraphs with hanging indentation that are indented from the left margin but extend all the way to the right margin; the indentation from the left is greater at each level.

Sections that contain only a list, e.g., definitions sections, are initially formatted at the subdivision level. Such a section will not have subsections unless the section also contains other provisions or consists of multiple lists.

Subdivisions were originally meant as lists: Subdivisions and subunits below the subdivision were originally supposed to be lists. They were formatted as standard English lists, with each individual subdivision followed by a semi-colon and a conjunction appearing between the next-to-last and the last subdivision. Example of the older format:

G.S. 1-1. Sample list of animals (older format).

The following is a list of some domestic animals:

- (1) Cat;
- (2) Chicken;
- (3) Cow;
- (4) Deer;
- (5) Dog;
- (6) Gerbil;
- (7) Goat;
- (8) Hamster; and
- (9) Pot-bellied pig.

In the 1990's, the preferred drafting formatting for lists was changed to have the introductory language to the list reflect whether the list was inclusive or exclusive. The semi-colons were changed to periods, and the conjunction was omitted as no longer needed.

Example of the newer format:

G.S. 1-1. Sample list of animals (newer format).

Although the list in this section is not comprehensive, all of the following are domestic animals:

- (1) Cat.
- (2) Chicken.
- (3) Cow.
- (4) Deer.
- (5) Dog.
- (6) Gerbil.
- (7) Goat.
- (8) Hamster.
- (9) Pot-bellied pig.

Subdivisions are also used to treat subsections as mini-sections: Although all subdivisions are formatted like lists, subdivisions have also long been used as a way to subdivide larger subunits, e.g. a multi-paragraph subsection may occasionally have each paragraph numbered as a subdivision. Used as such, they are essentially mini-sections within a section. Either of the styles in the following example is permissible (although, unlike the example, the style used should be consistent within a section):

G.S. x-y. Format for subdivisions subsections, etc., into "mini-sections."

- (a)(1) The simplest way is to number each subsection paragraph as shown here, but please note that the first paragraph **does** need to have a number. The subsection designation ("a") is not sufficient.
- (2) The remaining subdivisions follow.
- (b) With subsection catchline. –
 - (1) Many drafters dislike the aesthetics of subsection (a) of this example section. In that case, the use of a subsection catchline may be helpful.
 - (2) Except for the subsection catchline, the numbering of this example subsection is the same as that of subsection (a) of this example section.

The system of numbering subunits of a subsection is not an outline system. If the subdivision or other subunit is of the list variety, it needs to have a "bridging" phrase ending in a colon at the close of the introductory paragraph (see example above). If the subdivision or other subunit is of the "mini-section" variety, the first paragraph must have a number or letter, whatever is proper for that level of subunit (see example above). Do not have an unnumbered first paragraph followed by numbered paragraphs, or a numbered paragraph without its own lower-tier designation followed by other paragraphs numbered with a lower-tier number, unless the subunit is of the list variety.

The policy of not reusing repealed, expired, or recodified numbers and of not renumbering to accommodate or reflect insertions also applies to subunits of sections, but with three exceptions:

- When the section has been completely rewritten, or when it appears to the Codifier who has to apply this exception that the section, taken as a whole, is being so extensively amended as to amount to a rewriting (as opposed, for example, to having a large number of new units inserted without change to the existing units in sections other than definitions sections).
- To keep definitions in alphabetical order when the limits of the numbering system have been reached (see below under “subdivisions”), although the renumbering should be limited to what is needed to insert the new definition.
- To insert a new initial subsection or subdivision, although the renumbering should be limited to what is needed to insert the new initial subunit.

A section should have at least two of the same type of subunit, e.g. two subsections. If one of these subunits is later deleted, the remaining subunit should retain its designation unless it is also rewritten. There will be a repeal line for the deleted subunit.

It is permissible (but not required) to reserve space within a G.S. section for future additions if future additions are anticipated, e.g. in a new or rewritten definitions section likely to be frequently revised, it is permissible to skip subunit numbers between definitions, e.g. “(1) cat -; (3) chicken -; (5) dog -; (7) gerbil -; (9) hamster -” This practice allows the later addition of “(4) cow -” and “(8) goat -” before the need to for later additions to be given combined numbers, e.g. “(4a) deer -” (between “cow” and “dog”).

Subsections: Use a lower case letter in parentheses, e.g. “(a).” For more than 26 subsections, use “(aa)”, “(bb)”, “(cc)”, etc., through “(aaa)”, “(bbb)”, etc.

To insert a new subsection between existing subsections, add an Arabic number, e.g. “(a1).”

To insert a new subsection between a subsection with a number ending with “1” and the preceding subsection, e.g. between subsections (a) and (a1), or between two subsections with an Arabic number, e.g. between subsections (a1) and (a2), rewrite the section with the new subsection included.

Subdivisions: Use a whole Arabic number between parentheses, e.g. “(1)”.

To insert a new subdivision between existing subdivisions, add a lower case letter, e.g. “(1a).”

In a subdivision that is not a definitions subdivision, to insert a new subdivision between a subdivision with a number ending with “a” and the preceding subdivision, e.g. between subdivisions (1) and (1a), or between two subsections with a lower case letter, e.g. between subdivisions (1a) and (1b), rewrite the entire section or subsection with the new subdivision included.

In a definitions section or subunit, the codification policy that defined terms should be in alphabetical order has priority over the policy of not renumbering to reflect or accommodate insertions. As a result, whenever a new defined term needs to be inserted but the limits of the numbering system have been reached, the defined term will need to be given the appropriate number and the remaining terms renumbered to the extent necessary. This will always be necessary when adding a new term that alphabetically precedes the current first defined term. In this case, give the new term the subdivision

number (1) and renumber the existing term, e.g. former (1) becomes “(1a).” Apply similar treatment if needed elsewhere in a definitions section or subunit, e.g. where the existing definitions section has in part “(1c) cat - . . .”, “(1d) dog - . . .”, “(1e) gerbil - . . .”, and “(2) pot-bellied pig - . . .”, a new definition of “cow” would need to be numbered “(1d)”, “dog” and “gerbil” would need to be renumbered “(1e)” and “(1f)”, respectively, and “pot-bellied pig” would remain “(2).”

Subsubdivisions: Use a lower case letter followed by a period, e.g. “a.”.

To insert a new subsubdivision between existing subsubdivisions, add an Arabic number, e.g. “a1.”. The period is part of the number.

Subsubsubdivisions: Use an Arabic number followed by a period, e.g. “1.”.

To insert a new subsubsubdivision between existing subsubsubdivisions, add a lower case letter, e.g. “1a.”. The period is part of the number.

Subsubsubsubdivisions: Use a Roman numeral followed by a period, e.g. “I.”.

The period is part of the number. If it is necessary to insert a new subsubsubsubdivision between existing subsubsubsubdivisions, please call the Codifier.

Subsubsubsubsubdivisions: Use a capital letter followed by a period, e.g. “A.”.

The period is part of the number. If it is necessary to insert a new subsubsubsubsubdivision between existing subsubsubsubsubdivisions, please call the Codifier.

Other points on numbers:

Decimals are not used in numbering chapters, subchapters, articles, parts, subsections, subdivisions, subsubdivisions, or further subunits of a section. They are only used in G.S. section numbers.

Small Roman numerals, e.g. “(i)”, are not used for tabulated subunits of a G.S. section but may be used within a nontabulated sentence in a section, e.g. “A crime is either (i) a felony, or (ii) a misdemeanor.”

All numbering is sequential and needs to be coordinated. Do not combine an article number with G.S. section numbers that fall in a different place in the chapter, e.g. where a chapter has existing Articles 1 and 2, Article 1 consists of G.S. 1-1 through 1-18 and Article 2 consists of G.S. 1-30 through G.S. 1-35, do not add a new article as “Article 1A” with section numbers G.S. 1-45 through 1-49. Either make the new article “Article 3” or number the new sections as G.S. 1-22 through 1-26 (or G.S. 1-20 through 1-24, etc., but not G.S. 1-19 through 1-23 or 1-25 through 1-29).

This document deals with numbering only. Drafting policies may also affect the use of numbers, e.g. the drafting manual discourages the use of subunits below the subsubdivision level although the numbering system allows for them.

Questions should be addressed to the Codifier of Statutes/Assistant Revisor of Statutes or to the Revisor of Statutes.