

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. TORT LAW AND LITIGATION IN GENERAL

- § 1:1 Introduction and scope of this treatise
- § 1:2 Definition of a tort “claim”
- § 1:3 The Georgia Code’s important role in Georgia tort law
- § 1:4 Sources of statutory claims and statutory or common law duties
- § 1:5 Purposes of tort law
- § 1:6 Choice of law and conflict of laws
- § 1:7 Application and effect of federal law
- § 1:8 Preemption of local law by state law
- § 1:9 Overview of the 2005 tort reform act
- § 1:10 Overview of the 2025 tort reform act
- § 1:11 Ethical issues in tort litigation; relationship to standard of care in legal malpractice claims
- § 1:12 Professionalism in tort litigation

CHAPTER 2. ORDINARY NEGLIGENCE CAUSING PHYSICAL HARM

- § 2:1 Ordinary negligence in general
- § 2:2 The general rule: no duty to act
- § 2:3 Duty of care—Can arise from statute, contract, or common law
- § 2:4 —Arising from engaging in an affirmative act
- § 2:5 —From a voluntary undertaking
- § 2:6 —From a gratuitous promise
- § 2:7 —To prevent a third person from causing physical harm due to special relationship or control over the third person
- § 2:8 —Parents to control adult child
- § 2:9 —Arising from supplying a chattel with reason to know its foreseeable use will cause physical harm
- § 2:10 —Negligent misrepresentation causing physical harm
- § 2:11 —Common carriers to passengers
- § 2:12 —Arising from contract
- § 2:13 — —Third party beneficiaries
- § 2:14 —Owners or occupiers of land
- § 2:15 Breach of duty
- § 2:16 —Failure to exercise ordinary diligence or care
- § 2:17 —Persons with diminished capacity, impaired persons, or children

- § 2:18 —Extraordinary diligence or slight negligence
- § 2:19 —Gross negligence or slight diligence
- § 2:20 —Willful and wanton misconduct
- § 2:21 —The business judgment rule
- § 2:22 —*Res ipsa loquitur*
- § 2:23 —Negligence *per se*
- § 2:24 —Voluntary undertakings under Restatement § 324A
- § 2:25 Causation—Elements
- § 2:26 —Cause-in-fact
- § 2:27 —General principles of proximate cause
- § 2:28 —Proximate cause—Intervening proximate cause
- § 2:29 — —Concurrent proximate cause
- § 2:30 — —Third party criminal activity
- § 2:31 Damages—Generally negligence requires injury to plaintiff’s person or damage to plaintiff’s property
- § 2:32 —Exceptions to impact rule
- § 2:33 —Economic loss rule
- § 2:34 — —Exceptions
- § 2:35 —Limitations on recovery of medical expenses for claims arising on or after April 21, 2025
- § 2:36 Additional negligence-based claims

CHAPTER 3. PRODUCTS LIABILITY AND RELATED DOCTRINES

- § 3:1 Introduction and scope
- § 3:2 Manufacturer liability for harm to natural persons caused by new, defective personal property
- § 3:3 Did the defendant manufacture and sell new personal property?
- § 3:4 Breach of duty—Existence of a “defect”
- § 3:5 —Design defect
- § 3:6 —Manufacturing defect
- § 3:7 —Duty to warn based on information known to the manufacturer at the time of sale or based on later-acquired information
- § 3:8 Breach of warranty
- § 3:9 —Express warranty
- § 3:10 —Implied warranty
- § 3:11 Causation requires cause-in-fact and proximate cause
- § 3:12 Statutes of limitations and repose
- § 3:13 Other defenses and limitations on defenses
- § 3:14 Liability of retailers for physical harm or property damage caused by products manufactured by others
- § 3:15 Liability of sellers of unwholesome food or provisions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- § 3:16 Liability of sellers of adulterated drugs or liquor
- § 3:17 Liability of manufacturers or distributors of certain drugs
- § 3:18 Liability of distributors of blood and human body parts

CHAPTER 4. STRICT LIABILITY AND RELATED DOCTRINES

- § 4:1 In general
- § 4:2 Injuries or damage caused by explosives or blasting
- § 4:3 Heightened liability for personal injuries caused by wild animals
- § 4:4 Greater liability for injuries caused by vicious or dangerous animals other than domesticated livestock
- § 4:5 Damages caused by roaming livestock
- § 4:6 Innkeeper liability for injury to guests or guests' property
- § 4:7 Carrier liability for injury to their customers or customers' property
- § 4:8 Statutory strict liability

CHAPTER 5. PREMISES LIABILITY AND RELATED DOCTRINES

- § 5:1 Introduction
- § 5:2 Duty arises from “ownership,” “possession,” or “occupation” of “premises” or “approaches”
- § 5:3 Duty of out-of-possession landlords
- § 5:4 Breach and the standard of care turns on the “status” between owner/occupier and plaintiff at time of injury
- § 5:5 Duty of care to invitees—Generally
- § 5:6 —Defect, condition, or hazard but not active negligence
- § 5:7 —To inspect for hazards or conditions
- § 5:8 —The superior knowledge rule
- § 5:9 Liability to invitees—Causation
- § 5:10 —Injury and the impact rule
- § 5:11 Standard of care owed to licensees
- § 5:12 Standard of care owed to trespassers—Generally
- § 5:13 —Attractive nuisances
- § 5:14 Standard of care owed to volunteers
- § 5:15 Standard of care owed to emergency personnel, social guests, and minors
- § 5:16 Standard of care owed to invitees on recreational property
- § 5:17 Liability for harm to or caused by independent contractors

- § 5:18 Liability of premises owners for injuries caused by third party criminal conduct—Claims arising before April 21, 2025
- § 5:19 —Claims arising on or after April 21, 2025
- § 5:20 Defenses to premises liability
- § 5:21 Qualified immunity for damage caused by prescribed burns

CHAPTER 6. WRONGFUL DEATH AND RELATED CLAIMS

- § 6:1 Death of a natural person gives rise to two potential claims
- § 6:2 Wrongful death claims—Background
- § 6:3 —Persons entitled to bring
- § 6:4 —Right initially belongs to surviving spouse
- § 6:5 —Brought by surviving child or children
- § 6:6 —Brought by surviving parent or parents
- § 6:7 —Brought by personal representative of decedent
- § 6:8 —Measure of damages
- § 6:9 —Limitations on damages for healthcare expenses
- § 6:10 Survivors' claims
- § 6:11 Defenses to wrongful death and survivors' claims

CHAPTER 7. INTENTIONAL TORTS REQUIRING BODILY INJURY OR MENTAL DISTRESS

- § 7:1 Background
- § 7:2 Requirement of intent; impact rule
- § 7:3 Battery
- § 7:4 Assault
- § 7:5 Intentional infliction of emotional distress
- § 7:6 Sexual harassment

CHAPTER 8. INJURY TO A FAMILY MEMBER OR TO A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

- § 8:1 Injuries to a minor
- § 8:2 Parents' claim against a person who furnishes alcohol to their minor child
- § 8:3 Harm to plaintiff's marital relationship

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 9. CLAIMS FOR HARM CAUSED BY UNLAWFUL DETENTION OR ABUSE OF CRIMINAL OR CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

- § 9:1 Introduction to false imprisonment, malicious arrest, malicious prosecution, and liability for procurement.
- § 9:2 False imprisonment
- § 9:3 Procuring false imprisonment
- § 9:4 Malicious or false arrest and malicious prosecution
- § 9:5 Abusive civil litigation
- § 9:6 Wrongful injunction as a form of abusive litigation
- § 9:7 Spoliation of evidence: sanction, not a tort claim

CHAPTER 10. INJURY TO REPUTATION OR PRIVACY: DEFAMATION, INVASION OF PRIVACY, AND RELATED CLAIMS

- § 10:1 Introduction
- § 10:2 Defamation—First Amendment concerns: necessity to prove malice or mere negligence
- § 10:3 —Fault of malice or negligence
- § 10:4 —Publication of defamatory statement about plaintiff to a third party
- § 10:5 —Truth and opinions
- § 10:6 —*Per se vs. per quod*
- § 10:7 —*Per se*
- § 10:8 —*Per quod*
- § 10:9 —Absolute and qualified privileges
- § 10:10 —Justification, limitations, the Anti-SLAPP Statute, and other defenses
- § 10:11 —Media defendants
- § 10:12 —Liability of others in addition to an actual publisher
- § 10:13 —Damages, punitive damages, and injunctive relief
- § 10:14 Violation of liberty interest of government employee
- § 10:15 Invasion of privacy—Common law and related statutory claims
- § 10:16 —Damages and remedies
- § 10:17 —Defenses
- § 10:18 Disparaging goods, services, or business of another

CHAPTER 11. HARM TO ECONOMIC INTERESTS; FRAUD; MISREPRESENTATION; INTERFERENCE; FIDUCIARY DUTY

- § 11:1 Fraud—Generally

- § 11:2 —Material representation of present fact
- § 11:3 —Omission of material fact
- § 11:4 —Knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for truth
- § 11:5 —Justified and actual reliance
- § 11:6 —By surprise
- § 11:7 —Economic damages required for actual fraud
- § 11:8 Fraudulent inducement to enter a contract
- § 11:9 Fraudulent transfer of property
- § 11:10 Fair Business Practices Act
- § 11:11 Negligent misrepresentation that causes pecuniary loss
- § 11:12 Tortious interference with contracts or business relations
- § 11:13 Interference with existing or prospective business relations
- § 11:14 Tortious interference with burial rights
- § 11:15 Misappropriation of trade secrets or ideas
- § 11:16 Wrongful discharge or termination
- § 11:17 Breach of fiduciary duty or confidential relationship
- § 11:18 Wrongful dishonor
- § 11:19 Tortious termination of utility service
- § 11:20 Negligent disclosure of personally identifiable information: identity theft

CHAPTER 12. PROFESSIONAL MALPRACTICE

- § 12:1 Introduction
- § 12:2 Professional malpractice—Affidavit regarding breach required for certain claims; general requirements for all professional negligence claims
- § 12:3 —Additional requirements regarding medical malpractice claims
- § 12:4 Medical malpractice—Generally
- § 12:5 —Duty
- § 12:6 —Breach—When expert testimony needed
- § 12:7 — —Emergency medical care
- § 12:8 — —Georgia COVID-19 Pandemic Business Safety Act
- § 12:9 —Cause-in-fact and proximate cause
- § 12:10 —Damages
- § 12:11 —Liability of hospitals, clinics, and related entities
- § 12:12 —Defenses and related issues
- § 12:13 Legal malpractice—Generally
- § 12:14 —Duty
- § 12:15 —Breach

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- § 12:16 —Cause-in-fact and proximate cause
- § 12:17 —Damages
- § 12:18 —Liability for acts of nonlawyer personnel
- § 12:19 —Defenses

CHAPTER 13. HARM TO, OR INTERFERENCE WITH RIGHTS IN, PERSONAL PROPERTY; MISAPPROPRIATION OF TRADE SECRETS; THEFT OR MISUSE OF ELECTRONIC DATA

- § 13:1 Background and definitions
- § 13:2 Trespass to personalty
- § 13:3 Theft of personal property, conversion, and trover
- § 13:4 Bailments
- § 13:5 —Rights and duties of bailor
- § 13:6 —Rights and duties of bailee
- § 13:7 —Liability to third parties
- § 13:8 Wrongful repossession
- § 13:9 Misappropriation of trade secrets or ideas
- § 13:10 Computer theft, misuse, and data torts

CHAPTER 14. HARM TO, OR INTERFERENCE WITH RIGHTS IN, REAL PROPERTY

- § 14:1 Historical background
- § 14:2 Trespass to real property
- § 14:3 Nuisance—Definitions; public compared to private
- § 14:4 —Elements of private nuisance claims
- § 14:5 —Distinguished from similar claims
- § 14:6 —Statute of limitations
- § 14:7 —Enjoining nuisances or anticipatory nuisances; limitations; notice
- § 14:8 Governmental liability for trespass or nuisance
- § 14:9 Defamation of title
- § 14:10 Wrongful foreclosure and wrongful attempted foreclosure

CHAPTER 15. VICARIOUS LIABILITY AND RELATED CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES

- § 15:1 Introduction
- § 15:2 Vicarious liability distinguished from liability for negligent hiring, retention, or supervision and negligent entrustment

- § 15:3 Principal-agent relationship in general
- § 15:4 Agency distinguished from other legal relationships
- § 15:5 Vicarious liability in the principal-agent context
- § 15:6 Vicarious liability arising from shared control of an agent
- § 15:7 No vicarious liability on a “special master” for harm caused by a “borrowed servant”
- § 15:8 No vicarious liability for harm caused by an “independent contractor”
- § 15:9 Exceptions: principal liability for torts of independent contractor
- § 15:10 No vicarious liability for harm caused by a fellow employee
- § 15:11 Negligence claims against a principal for harm caused by negligent hiring, retention, or supervision of an agent
- § 15:12 Negligence claims for permitting another to use a dangerous instrumentality
- § 15:13 Negligence claims for permitting an incompetent person to drive a vehicle or use another dangerous chattel: negligent entrustment
- § 15:14 Liability for conspiracy; RICO
- § 15:15 Liability for aiding and abetting or procuring tortious harm
- § 15:16 Agent’s liability to principal
- § 15:17 Liability of agent to third parties
- § 15:18 Agent’s liability for torts of underservant
- § 15:19 Employer’s liability to employee: workers’ compensation as exclusive remedy; exceptions
- § 15:20 Liability of independent contractors
- § 15:21 Authority of agent; nondelegable duties
- § 15:22 Principal’s ratification of agent’s conduct
- § 15:23 Notice to agent as notice to principal
- § 15:24 Partnerships—Defined
- § 15:25 —Liability of partners to third parties
- § 15:26 —Liability of partners to other partners
- § 15:27 Joint ventures or joint enterprises
- § 15:28 Limited partnerships
- § 15:29 Limited liability partnerships
- § 15:30 Unincorporated associations
- § 15:31 Professional corporations
- § 15:32 Liability of corporate constituents, related corporations, and successor corporations for harm caused by the tort of a corporation
- § 15:33 Liability for acting on behalf of non-existent corporations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- § 15:34 Liability for providing alcoholic beverages to a tortfeasor; dram shop liability
- § 15:35 Liability of an owner of a vehicle for vehicular injuries
- § 15:36 Liability of a vehicle's passenger for damages caused by the driver: guest passengers
- § 15:37 Liability of a family member for torts of another family member
- § 15:38 Liability of a family member for torts of a family member—The family purpose doctrine

CHAPTER 16. IMMUNITY FROM TORT CLAIMS

- § 16:1 Background and general considerations
- § 16:2 Infant immunity
- § 16:3 Interspousal immunity
- § 16:4 Intra-family and parental immunity
- § 16:5 Sovereign immunity and governmental employee official immunity against claims for damages
- § 16:6 Waiver of sovereign immunity against claims for damages caused by specific acts or conduct
- § 16:7 County sovereign immunity and qualified immunity of county employees against claims for damages
- § 16:8 Municipal immunity and employee qualified immunity against claims for damages
- § 16:9 Emergency services immunity against suits for damages
- § 16:10 School district immunity and school district employee qualified immunity against claims for damages
- § 16:11 Waiver of sovereign immunity regarding claims for declaratory and injunctive relief
- § 16:12 Charitable immunity against claims for damages
- § 16:13 Immunity of health care providers for possessing low-THC oil against claims for damages
- § 16:14 Immunity of broadcasters of Amber Alerts against claims for damages
- § 16:15 Immunity of firearms instructors against claims for damages
- § 16:16 Immunity of employers or property owners for transportation, use, or possession of firearms against claims for damages
- § 16:17 Immunity from crimes committed by persons under pre-trial release against claims for damages
- § 16:18 Immunity for boat liveries from certain tort liability
- § 16:19 Immunity for certain mental health care providers

CHAPTER 17. DEFENSES TO INTENTIONAL TORTS

- § 17:1 Introduction
- § 17:2 Justification
- § 17:3 Recapture of property
- § 17:4 Consent
- § 17:5 Lack of intent including by reason of insanity or incompetency

CHAPTER 18. DEFENSES AND DOCTRINES TO ELIMINATE, REDUCE, OR APPORTION DAMAGES

- § 18:1 Introduction
- § 18:2 Statutes of limitations
- § 18:3 —Determining the applicable limitations period
- § 18:4 —Accrual of claims
- § 18:5 —Computation of time
- § 18:6 —Application to other pleadings; relation back of amendments
- § 18:7 —Tolling
- § 18:8 Ante litem notice for certain claims against governmental entities
- § 18:9 Statutes of repose
- § 18:10 Insufficient service of process
- § 18:11 —Diligence in perfecting service
- § 18:12 Assumption of risk
- § 18:13 —Elements
- § 18:14 —Applicability
- § 18:15 —Injuries from space flight participation
- § 18:16 Joint and several liability and apportionment of fault
- § 18:17 Contributory negligence and assumption of the risk distinguished from modified comparative fault
- § 18:18 Modified comparative fault
- § 18:19 Last clear chance
- § 18:20 Avoidance of consequences of defendant's negligence
- § 18:21 Sudden emergency
- § 18:22 Legal accident
- § 18:23 Act of God
- § 18:24 Contractual exculpatory provisions
- § 18:25 Exculpatory provisions in contracts—Lease provisions
- § 18:26 Settlement agreements
- § 18:27 Lack of standing due to invalid assignment of certain tort claims

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- § 18:28 Judicial estoppel
- § 18:29 Indemnity—Definition and general concepts
- § 18:30 —Contracts indemnifying for one’s own negligence
- § 18:31 Failure to mitigate damages
- § 18:32 Workers’ compensation as exclusive remedy
- § 18:33 Qualified immunity for certain persons engaged in equine, livestock, or llama activities

CHAPTER 19. REMEDIES

- § 19:1 Introduction
- § 19:2 General and special damages defined
- § 19:3 Awards of general damages for distress, discomfort, or pain and suffering and their review
- § 19:4 Awards of special damages and their review
- § 19:5 One satisfaction or recovery for each compensable harm
- § 19:6 Attorney’s fees
- § 19:7 Unjust enrichment as a remedy, not a tort
- § 19:8 Injunctions

Table of Laws and Rules

Table of Cases

Index