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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for December 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of December 2014

Actual estimates	December 2014	% change between December 2013 and December 2014	% change between Oct – Dec 2013 and Oct – Dec 2014	Annual % change between 2013 and 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	39 755	-6,7	-3,4	-4,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	20 745	-6,7	-18,3	-13,6
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	294,7	-3,8	-12,7	-14,0

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 4,0% in 2014 compared with 2013. A 6,7% decrease was recorded between December 2013 and December 2014 – see Tables A, 6 and 7.

The main categories that influenced the 4,0% decrease year-on-year in 2014 were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -2,5 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,7 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -1,1 percentage points) – see Table 8.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 13,6% in 2014 compared with 2013. A decrease of 6,7% was recorded year-on-year in December 2014 – see Tables A, 6 and 7.

The main categories that influenced the 13,6% decrease year-on-year in 2014 were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -5,6 percentage points);
- services (contributing -2,6 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -2,5 percentage points) – see Table 8.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 14,0% lower in 2014 compared with 2013. A decrease of 3,8% was recorded year-on-year in December 2014 – see Tables A, 6 and 7.

The main categories that influenced the 14,0% decrease year-on-year in 2014 were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -4,4 percentage points);
- services (contributing -2,7 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing -2,6 percentage points) – see Table 8.

In December 2014, 20 745 civil judgements for debt amounting to R294,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R81,7 million or 27,7%);
- ‘other’ debts (R77,9 million or 26,4%); and
- services (R55,7 million or 18,9%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

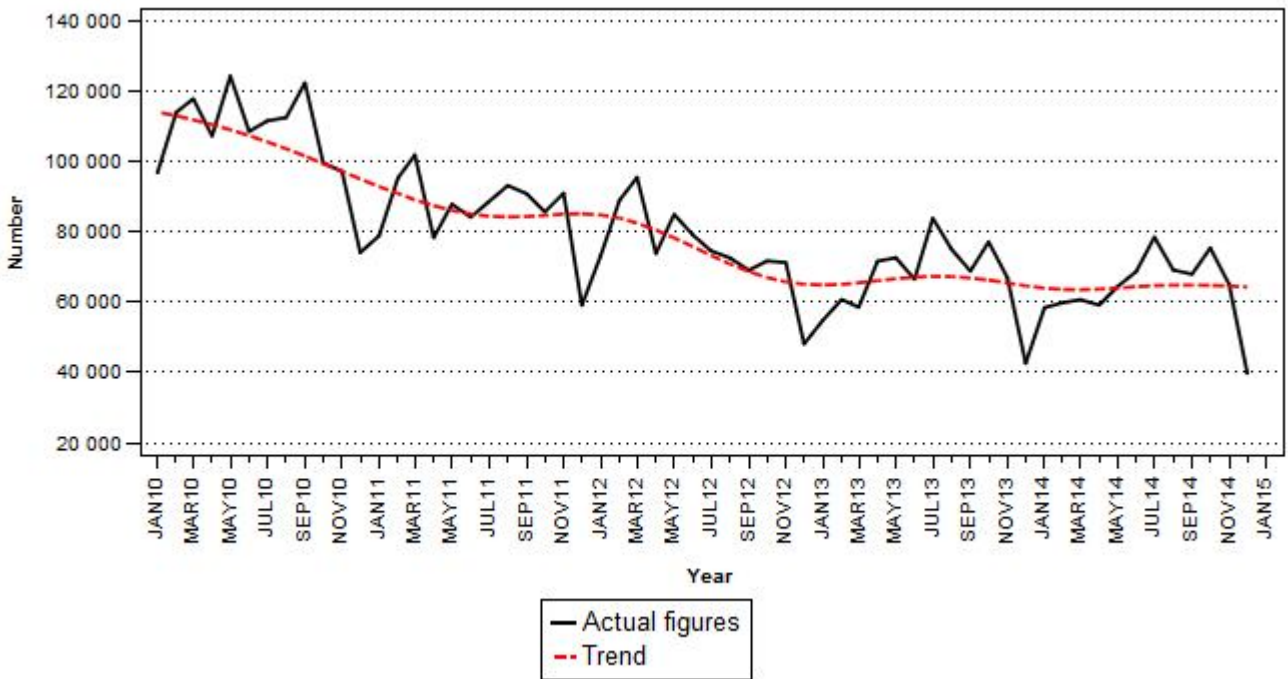
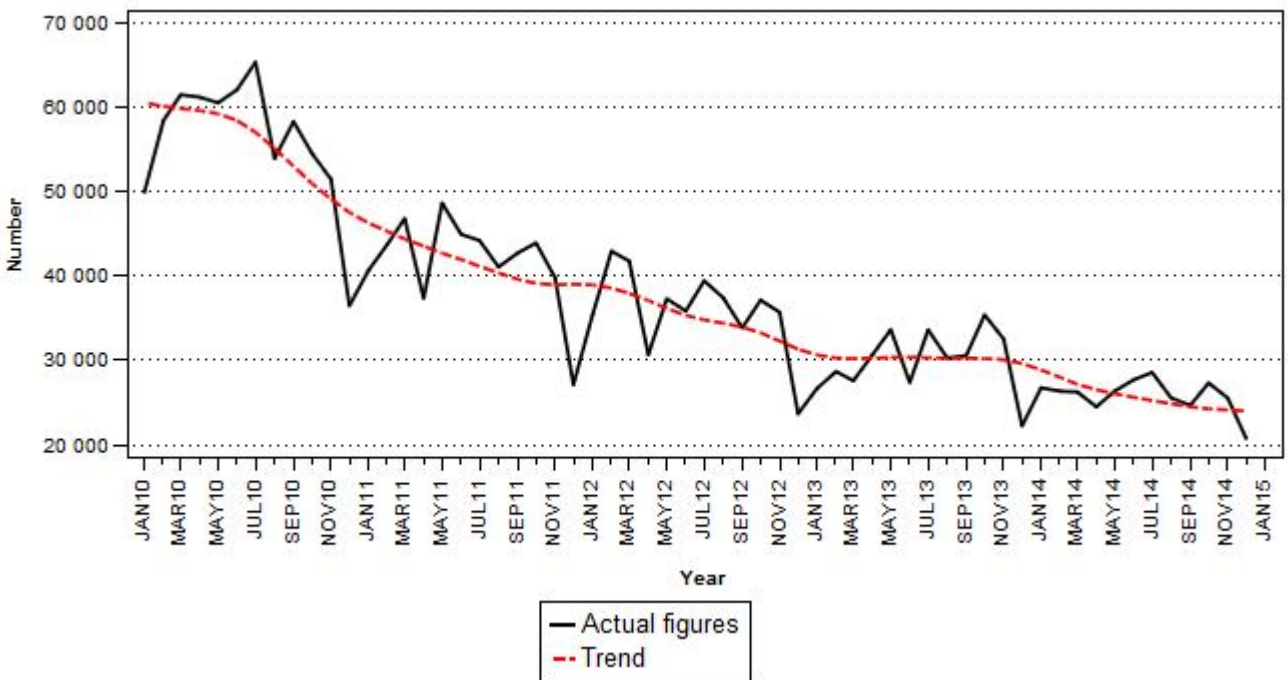


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	December 2013	November 2014	December 2014	2014	December 2013	November 2014	December 2014
Cases recorded	Actual figures	838 983	46 944	71 265	44 920	738 597	39 367	61 594	39 241
	Seasonally adjusted		68 904	69 186	66 650		59 009	60 772	59 450
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	53 702	3 780	5 494	2 826	41 998	2 870	4 479	2 113
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	26 973	1 926	3 174	2 148	21 678	1 408	2 618	1 751
	Services - Professional	93 554	5 787	8 727	4 796	83 220	4 927	7 797	4 242
	Services - Other	124 112	7 167	9 533	6 651	107 927	5 933	8 194	5 607
	Rent	39 485	2 918	3 707	2 512	32 460	2 366	3 114	2 021
	Money lent	199 420	9 009	16 840	9 382	190 025	8 321	15 979	8 973
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	98 753	4 797	6 648	4 535	91 037	4 104	5 939	4 039
	Other debts	130 908	7 206	10 943	6 905	117 735	6 236	9 668	6 189
	Total - Actual figures	766 907	42 590	65 066	39 755	686 080	36 165	57 788	34 935
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		61 969	62 437	58 595		54 394	56 377	53 329

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Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Dec-13	1/ Nov-14	1/ Dec-14	2014	Dec-13	1/ Nov-14	1/ Dec-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	21 874	1 797	1 547	1 332	16 679	1 368	1 169	997
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 382	591	647	578	5 580	454	497	436
	Services - Professional	53 296	3 415	4 340	3 412	47 730	3 065	3 903	2 964
	Services - Other	47 295	4 150	3 786	3 075	41 404	3 712	3 292	2 723
	Rent	17 547	1 305	1 300	1 176	14 410	1 073	1 069	911
	Money lent	75 582	4 906	6 425	5 167	70 974	4 613	6 095	4 897
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 335	2 155	2 148	2 264	23 145	1 797	1 809	1 995
	Other debts	59 866	3 905	5 341	3 741	55 619	3 573	4 990	3 479
	Total - Actual figures	310 177	22 224	25 534	20 745	275 541	19 655	22 824	18 402
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		29 230	23 757	27 268		25 977	21 270	24 321

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Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Dec-13	1/ Nov-14	1/ Dec-14	2014	Dec-13	1/ Nov-14	1/ Dec-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	288 991	18 945	20 278	19 549	166 670	10 566	11 468	12 430
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	89 674	7 890	7 917	6 782	75 311	6 931	6 944	5 268
	Services - Professional	268 941	24 612	22 975	23 251	235 273	18 245	21 162	20 737
	Services - Other	470 379	40 022	46 441	32 417	375 355	33 064	36 030	27 244
	Rent	277 596	19 719	20 429	16 768	201 601	14 597	16 980	10 808
	Money lent	1 085 317	80 679	104 758	81 700	1 002 213	64 898	99 928	79 151
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	418 697	30 185	32 921	36 322	349 493	25 281	27 591	30 390
	Other debts	1 201 376	84 155	117 399	77 917	778 795	61 672	62 013	59 175
	Total - Actual figures	4 100 971	306 207	373 118	294 706	3 184 711	235 254	282 116	245 203
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		391 306	348 767	377 766		296 017	260 893	308 104

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Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the fourth quarter of 2013 and the fourth quarter of 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Oct – Dec 2013	Actual estimates Oct – Dec 2014	% change between Oct – Dec 2013 and Oct – Dec 2014	Difference between Oct – Dec 2013 and Oct – Dec 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	186 612	180 202	-3,4	-6 410
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	90 123	73 589	-18,3	-16 534
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 196,2	1 044,8	-12,7	-151,4

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the fourth quarter of 2013 and the fourth quarter of 2014 1/

Item	Contribution (% points) to the % change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,0	-2,9	-1,8
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	1,1	0,0	-0,5
Services - Professional	-1,6	-1,2	-0,9
Services - Other	-3,5	-5,2	-1,0
Rent	-0,6	-1,9	-1,9
Money lent	1,6	-4,3	-2,8
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,8	-3,0	-0,8
Other debts	1,4	0,1	-3,0
Total	-3,4	-18,3	-12,7

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt by the percentage contribution to the total during October to December 2013, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates December 2013	Actual estimates December 2014	% change between December 2013 and December 2014	Difference between December 2013 and December 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	42 590	39 755	-6,7	-2 835
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	22 224	20 745	-6,7	-1 479
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	306,2	294,7	-3,8	-11,5

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between 2013 and 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates 2013	Actual estimates 2014	% change between 2013 and 2014	Difference between 2013 and 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	799 201	766 907	-4,0	-32 294
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	359 116	310 177	-13,6	-48 939
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	4 768,1	4 101,0	-14,0	-667,1

Table 8 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between 2013 and 2014 1/

Item	Contribution (% points) to the % change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,3	-2,4	-1,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,2	-0,1	-0,7
Services - Professional	-1,0	-0,5	-0,2
Services - Other	-1,5	-2,1	-2,5
Rent	-0,7	-1,0	-1,5
Money lent	1,2	-5,6	-2,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,7	-2,0	-0,5
Other debts	0,8	0,1	-4,4
Total	-4,0	-13,6	-14,0

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the annual percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during January to December 2013, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 9 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	Dec	5 591	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	42 590
2014	Jan	8 017	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 411
	Feb	8 624	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 855
	Mar	9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 677
	Apr	9 252	5 239	1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 148
	May	9 760	6 894	1 445	4 044	8 469	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	64 362
	Jun	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 107	2 456	68 685
	Jul	12 853	6 730	1 505	4 864	10 610	3 691	32 249	3 514	2 462	78 478
	Aug	8 714	6 089	1 282	3 903	10 645	3 754	28 346	3 988	2 419	69 140
	Sep	12 079	5 130	976	4 000	10 359	3 230	26 895	3 052	2 228	67 949
	Oct	11 293	6 285	1 250	5 372	11 448	4 725	29 319	3 402	2 287	75 381
	Nov	9 635	5 420	845	4 071	9 974	3 968	25 024	3 739	2 390	65 066
Dec	7 832	2 269	420	2 578	7 701	3 329	12 097	1 533	1 996	39 755	

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Table 10 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	Dec	3 103	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	22 224
2014	Jan	4 195	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 740
	Feb	4 753	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 329
	Mar	4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 247
	Apr	4 062	2 877	697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 487
	May	4 095	3 686	812	2 586	3 629	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	26 351
	Jun	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 628	1 960	27 698
	Jul	5 529	3 913	631	3 607	3 685	1 515	5 884	1 743	2 044	28 551
	Aug	4 491	3 117	721	2 783	3 699	1 281	6 266	1 228	1 946	25 532
	Sep	4 662	2 946	684	2 342	4 051	1 300	5 535	1 368	1 765	24 653
	Oct	4 828	3 861	691	3 413	3 795	1 815	5 578	1 572	1 757	27 310
	Nov	3 913	3 858	509	2 925	3 669	1 440	5 915	1 497	1 808	25 534
Dec	3 351	2 134	225	2 342	3 333	1 131	5 268	1 264	1 697	20 745	

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Table 11 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	Dec	56 313	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	306 207
2014	Jan	64 948	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	312 974
	Feb	117 751	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	402 499
	Mar	74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 188
	Apr	75 403	37 097	6 648	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	292 490
	May	72 011	43 019	9 208	22 471	36 772	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 344	344 707
	Jun	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 943	12 050	327 148
	Jul	84 131	52 402	4 934	33 840	34 975	14 670	79 929	33 696	11 747	350 324
	Aug	56 977	41 055	5 043	27 985	38 151	14 280	97 007	19 280	11 649	311 427
	Sep	68 262	47 878	6 171	37 095	36 823	12 234	83 259	33 117	8 587	333 426
	Oct	73 833	41 426	8 712	48 906	43 394	20 149	87 208	44 660	8 676	376 964
	Nov	81 761	53 761	4 067	40 578	38 954	15 472	91 607	38 341	8 577	373 118
Dec	57 898	26 541	1 736	39 417	34 484	12 296	91 426	23 160	7 748	294 706	

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Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
	2	Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Purpose of the survey	3	The survey of civil cases for debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa. This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.
Scope of the survey	4	This survey covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of civil cases recorded; • number of civil summonses issued for debt; • number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and • value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
Statistical unit	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for December 2014 was 83,3%. The collection rate for November 2014 was 82,8%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>South African Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for debt he owes without defending the action.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	'Other services' refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel beaters and electricians.
Other debts	'Other debts' refers to all other kinds of outstanding debt such as salaries and wages, medical fund debt, sponsored debt, class and tuition debt, tax, assessment rates and property levies.
Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services, etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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