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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2008

Actual estimates	May 2008	% change between May 2007 and May 2008	% change between March to May 2007 and March to May 2008
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	105 427	-21,0	-19,1
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	54 759	-25,5	-13,4
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	480,8	-27,4	-12,3

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MAY 2008)

Key findings as at the end of May 2008

The number of civil summonses issued for debt continues to decrease

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2008 decreased by 19,1% compared with the three months ended May 2007.

The major contributors to this decrease were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-12,7 percentage points), other services (-3,4 percentage points), goods sold on open account (-1,6 percentage points) and professional services (-1,4 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 2, page 9).

Both number and value of judgements decrease

During May 2008, 54 759 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R480,8 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R480,8 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R162,4 million or 33,8%) and 'other debts' (R95,1 million or 19,8%) (see Tables 3 and 4, pages 7 and 8).

Following the trend in the number of summonses issued for debt, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2008 decreased by 13,4% compared with the three months ended May 2007.

Civil judgements in respect of money lent (-9,3 percentage points) and promissory notes and other acknowledgements for debt (this category includes credit cards) (-4,6 percentage points) were the main drivers behind the 13,4% decrease (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended May 2008 decreased by 12,3% compared with the three months ended May 2007.

The major contributors to this decrease were civil judgements in respect of money lent (-7,5 percentage points), 'other debts' (-3,8 percentage points) and judgements recorded for promissory notes and other acknowledgements for debt (-2,7 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

Figure 1 outlines the number of civil summonses issued for debt from January 2002 to May 2008.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

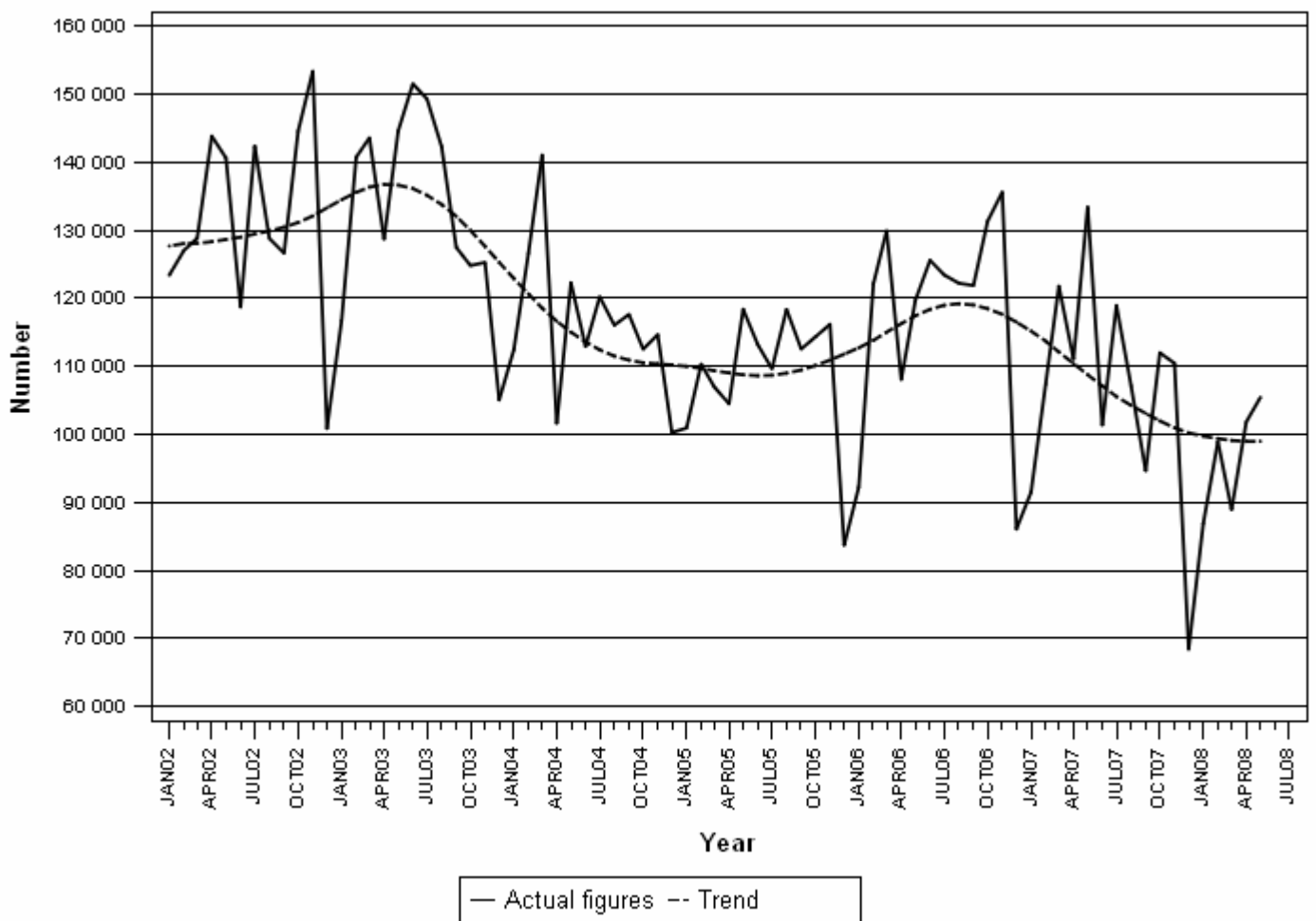
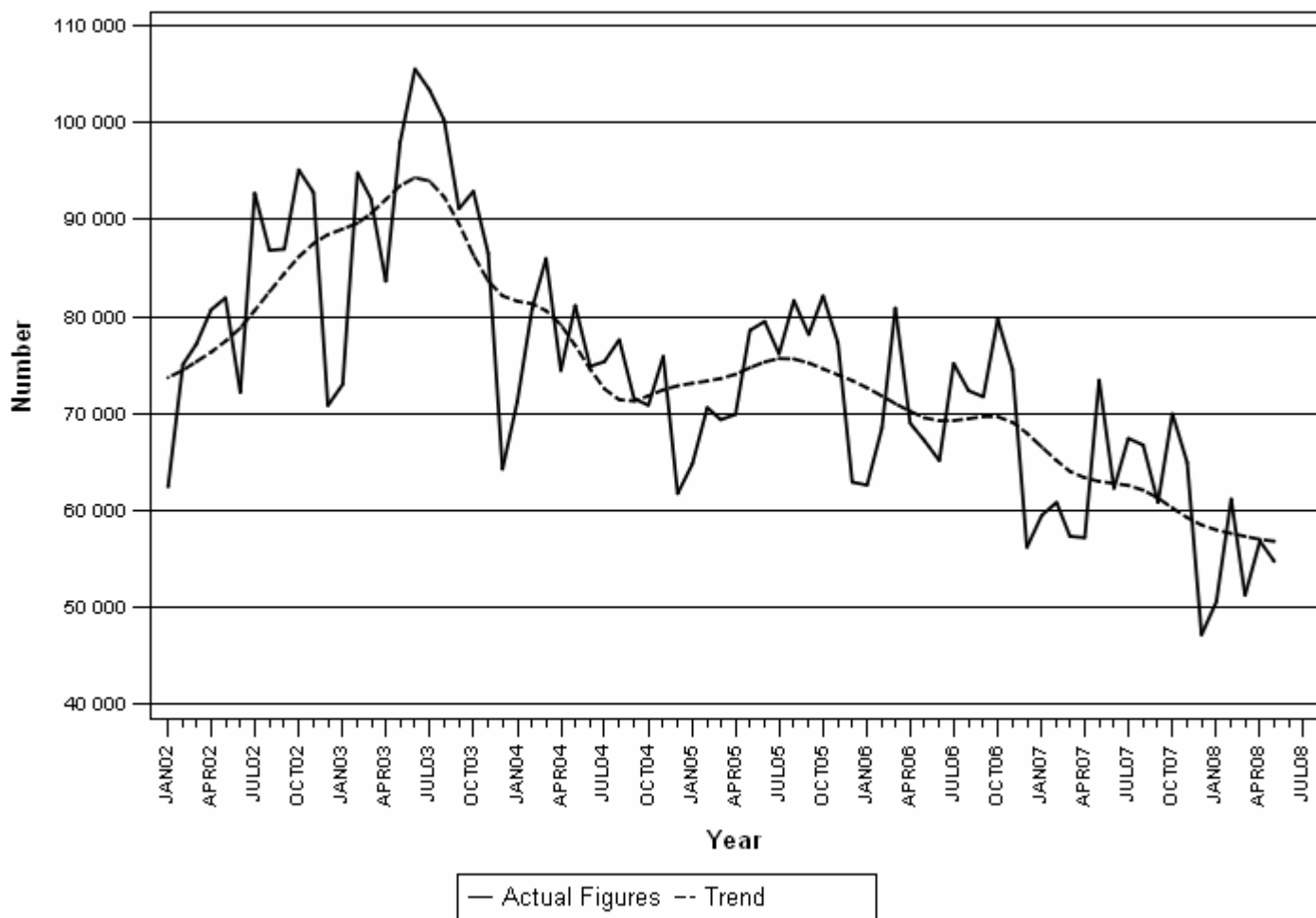


Figure 2 outlines the number of civil judgements recorded for debt from January 2002 to May 2008.

Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2007	2007	2008		2007	2007	2008	
		May	1/ April	1/ May		May	1/ April	1/ May
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 459 945	151 188	119 919	125 283	1 318 425	134 656	106 843	111 246
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		142 078	124 748	117 525		125 404	111 474	103 351
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	117 734	12 427	9 062	10 707	98 588	10 410	7 368	8 832
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	27 838	2 496	3 141	2 687	23 512	2 004	2 623	2 121
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	129 259	13 119	10 511	11 422	110 911	10 468	9 181	9 948
2.2.2 Other	182 924	17 034	14 526	15 693	162 590	14 520	12 646	13 458
2.3 Rent	46 108	3 716	4 258	4 966	38 880	3 331	3 430	4 148
2.4 Money lent	350 896	44 267	23 918	21 641	330 652	41 522	22 168	19 521
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	203 142	19 190	14 949	17 939	190 799	17 793	13 955	16 808
2.6 Other debts	220 217	21 166	21 458	20 372	192 203	17 946	18 640	17 429
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 278 118	133 415	101 823	105 427	1 148 135	117 994	90 011	92 265
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		126 028	103 654	99 719		110 071	92 698	85 981

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Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices.

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
2007	Year Total	117 403	65 797	32 766	9 226	17 420	77 021	215 297	51 978	40 863	153 646	26 219	45 913
	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922
	March	12 802	7 935	3 553	1 123	1 613	8 978	15 648	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010
	April	9 349	5 013	3 167	1 123	1 748	8 518	15 648	5 118	4 826	12 558	4 822	3 652
	May	10 792	6 650	5 105	1 332	2 346	5 245	25 094	5 655	2 760	16 251	2 714	4 242
	June	10 167	4 387	5 688	503	638	7 164	8 213	3 077	3 142	10 948	4 326	4 105
	July	13 170	4 784	1 799	983	2 173	7 164	20 470	5 775	2 865	14 144	3 004	4 110
	August	8 805	5 275	2 532	764	1 178	4 977	18 632	4 513	3 950	13 494	1 895	4 189
	September	8 734	4 614	1 922	470	1 442	5 154	16 515	3 804	2 855	11 363	1 217	4 070
	October	9 056	6 584	2 181	469	1 558	5 671	23 806	4 444	2 559	13 617	1 515	3 261
	November	9 144	5 153	1 202	788	1 065	6 383	22 542	4 899	3 027	13 026	1 367	3 236
December	7 656	3 396	1 510	361	925	5 960	8 358	2 692	1 025	8 372	584	2 878	
2008	January	6 304	5 151	1 278	274	1 136	5 286	10 193	3 392	1 905	15 008	4 496	3 068
	February	9 395	4 538	2 187	431	1 132	5 476	11 003	4 424	3 242	11 748	3 638	2 842
	1/ March	9 382	4 278	1 399	822	1 447	6 079	11 776	4 716	2 482	7 997	1 470	2 905
	1/ April	8 158	6 398	1 807	465	1 851	6 648	17 776	5 253	2 858	9 995	1 815	2 658
	1/ May	9 157	6 544	2 912	597	1 814	6 080	17 667	5 407	2 499	10 008	2 666	3 087

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2007	2007	2008		2007	2007	2008	
		May	1/ April	1/ May		May	1/ April	1/ May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	91 240	8 130	9 221	8 649	82 514	7 287	8 466	7 758
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	8 676	757	661	849	7 422	637	562	682
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	70 236	6 229	6 103	5 822	63 963	5 651	5 449	5 197
1.2.2 Other	83 337	6 578	5 854	5 932	78 276	6 204	5 129	5 527
1.3 Rent	25 174	2 072	2 295	2 351	20 002	1 726	1 712	1 807
1.4 Money lent	284 538	31 120	19 561	17 979	280 107	30 819	19 221	17 554
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	79 219	9 019	3 519	4 192	75 470	8 644	3 161	3 891
1.6 Other debts	105 316	9 551	9 627	8 985	96 936	8 711	8 788	8 102
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	747 736	73 456	56 841	54 759	704 690	69 679	52 488	50 518
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		73 664	59 021	55 381		69 922	54 308	51 114

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2007	2007	2008		2007	2007	2008	
		May	1/ April	1/ May		May	1/ April	1/ May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	645 348	90 943	70 803	59 523	499 331	79 439	52 158	44 208
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	220 929	17 102	19 334	20 398	180 234	13 992	13 298	16 109
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	234 349	20 863	22 564	21 234	188 541	15 462	16 329	17 049
1.2.2 Other	569 505	52 252	46 545	43 236	442 362	43 506	34 352	33 069
1.3 Rent	248 826	24 693	27 010	25 468	179 717	18 726	19 001	16 299
1.4 Money lent	1 996 121	289 366	145 193	162 403	1 868 083	281 139	136 414	153 048
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	819 376	62 750	39 030	53 416	738 603	55 920	27 911	47 895
1.6 Other debts	1 404 039	104 200	111 830	95 095	1 145 086	85 326	88 941	74 527
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 138 493	662 169	482 309	480 773	5 241 957	593 510	388 404	402 204
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		669 950	506 857	485 087		584 835	402 911	394 811

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Actual estimates	Actual estimates March to May 2007	Actual estimates March to May 2008	% change between March to May 2007 and March to May 2008	Difference between March to May 2007 and March to May 2008
Number of summonses for debt	366 258	296 212	-19,1	-70 046
Number of judgements for debt	187 987	162 862	-13,4	-25 125
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 635,5	1 435,0	-12,3	-200,5

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Item	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
--Open Account	-1,6	1,1	-0,5
--Instalment sale transactions	0,4	-0,1	0,9
Professional Services	-1,4	-0,3	0,5
Other Services	-3,4	-0,3	-0,1
Rent	0,9	0,5	1,0
Money lent	-12,7	-9,3	-7,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	-0,5	-4,6	-2,7
Other debts	-0,9	-0,3	-3,8
Total	-19,1	-13,4	-12,3

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during March to May 2007, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May 2007	Actual estimates May 2008	% change between May 2007 and May 2008	Difference between May 2007 and May 2008
Number of summonses for debt	133 415	105 427	-21,0	-27 988
Number of judgements for debt	73 456	54 759	-25,5	-18 697
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	662,2	480,8	-27,4	-181,4

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	<p>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.</p> <p>Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.</p>
Purpose of the survey	3	<p>The survey of Civil Cases for Debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). 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.</p>
Scope of the survey	4	<p>This survey covers-</p> <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	<p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates, offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by mail each month from 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	7	<p>The response rate for the civil cases for debt for May 2008 was 89,4%.</p>
Trend cycle	8	<p>Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.</p>
Publications	9	<p>Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
Unpublished statistics	10	<p>In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics, which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts, on diskette or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to Drawer CD Compact Disc Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures</p>

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor 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.
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. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. loan agreement.
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 debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect to television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat 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 and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, signed by one person, in which he promises 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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