

QUICK-REFERENCE SCRIPT CARDS

Open the right card on your phone before you dial.
Read the scripts word for word during the call.

- Card 1: Bank Hardship Call
- Card 2: Store Account Negotiation
- Card 3: Debt Collector Response
- Card 4: Settlement Offer
- Card 5: Prescribed Debt Defence
- Card 6: Section 129 Response

How to use: Each card is one page. Save this PDF on your phone. Before you make a call, open the relevant card. Fill in your details in the [BRACKETS] beforehand. Read the script exactly as written — the words are chosen carefully.

CARD 1: BANK HARDSHIP CALL

Capitec: 0860 10 20 43

FNB: 0800 110 132

Absa: 0800 111 155

Nedbank: 0800 110 929

Standard Bank: 0800 020 600

African Bank: 0861 111 011

BEFORE YOU CALL — Have ready:

- Account number
- ID number
- Monthly income
- Monthly obligations
- Amount you can afford

STEP 1 — Get to the right person:

"Good day. My name is [NAME]. I have a [loan type] with account number [NUMBER]. I'm having difficulty making my full payments and need to discuss a payment arrangement. Can you transfer me to collections or the payment arrangements department?"

STEP 2 — Explain:

"I'm struggling financially due to [REASON]. My income is R[AMOUNT] and my total obligations are R[AMOUNT]. After essentials, I can realistically afford R[AMOUNT] per month on this account."

STEP 3 — Ask:

"Could we reduce my instalment to R[AMOUNT] for the next [3-6] months while I work on improving my situation?"

IF THEY AGREE:

"Please give me: a reference number, the new payment amount and date, and written confirmation by email to [EMAIL]."

IF THEY SAY NO:

"What is the minimum you can accept? I want to find a solution rather than default. Can I speak to a supervisor or restructuring department?"

REMEMBER: Get everything in writing. Log it in your tracker. Stay calm and specific.

CARD 2: STORE ACCOUNT NEGOTIATION

For: Woolworths, Edgars, Mr Price, Truworths, Foschini, Jet, Ackermans, clothing & retail stores

THE SCRIPT:

"Good day. I have a [STORE] account, number [NUMBER]. I'm experiencing financial difficulty and need to discuss reducing my monthly payment. I can currently afford R[AMOUNT] per month instead of the full instalment. Is there someone in collections I can discuss a payment arrangement with?"

IF TRANSFERRED:

"My financial situation has changed due to [REASON]. I want to keep paying but need a reduced amount. Can we arrange R[AMOUNT] per month for [3-6] months?"

IF ACCOUNT IS WITH A DEBT COLLECTOR:

"Can you give me the name and contact details of the collection agency handling my account? I'd like to contact them directly to make an arrangement."

Then use Card 3 (Debt Collector Response).

FOR HIRE PURCHASE (furniture, appliances):

"I have a hire purchase account with [STORE], number [NUMBER]. I'm behind because of [REASON]. I don't want to lose the items or default further. Can we work out R[AMOUNT] per month for [3-6] months? I want to keep paying and protect both our interests."

WARNING: Hire purchase items can be repossessed. Negotiate early to avoid this.

ALWAYS: Get reference number + written confirmation + log in tracker.

CARD 3: DEBT COLLECTOR RESPONSE

STEP 1 — Verify them first:

"Before we discuss anything, I need to verify: What is your company name and CFDC registration number? Who is the original creditor? What is the original amount and the current amount including fees?"

STEP 2 — Make your offer:

"I'm in a difficult financial situation. I can offer R[AMOUNT] per month / a settlement of R[AMOUNT]. Can we work with that?"

IF THEY GET AGGRESSIVE:

"I'm aware of my rights under the National Credit Act. I'm engaging in good faith and offering what I can afford. Threats and harassment are not acceptable and I will report them to the Council for Debt Collectors."

THEY CANNOT: Call on Sundays • Contact your employer/family • Threaten arrest • Harass you with constant calls • Misrepresent who they are

VERIFY: Council for Debt Collectors — (012) 804 9808 — www.cfdc.org.za

Before you pay anything: get the arrangement in writing with reference number.

CARD 4: SETTLEMENT OFFER

Use when: You have a lump sum available and want to settle a debt for less than the full amount.

THE SCRIPT:

"I'm calling about account [NUMBER]. I know I owe R[FULL AMOUNT]. I've been struggling financially and can't pay the full balance. I've managed to put together R[YOUR OFFER] and I'd like to offer this as full and final settlement. Is that something you'd consider?"

IF THEY COUNTER:

"The absolute maximum I can stretch to is R[YOUR MAX]. That's genuinely all I have. Can we close this at that amount as a full settlement?"

NEGOTIATION GUIDE:

- Start at 30-40% of the balance
- Expect to settle at 40-60%
- Debt collectors often accept less than original creditors
- Older debts = more room to negotiate
- Having cash ready NOW is your biggest leverage

BEFORE YOU PAY — Get in writing:

• Account number • Settlement amount • "Full and final settlement" wording • Account will be marked "Settled" on credit report • Keep this letter FOREVER

After payment: Get proof of payment + paid-up letter. Check credit report in 30-60 days.

CARD 5: PRESCRIBED DEBT DEFENCE

Use when: A collector contacts you about an old debt you haven't paid or acknowledged in 3+ years.

THE 4-QUESTION TEST (all must be YES):

1. Last payment was 3+ years ago?
2. Never acknowledged the debt in 3+ years?
3. No summons served in 3+ years?
4. It's a 3-year debt type? (credit card, personal loan, store account, cellphone, gym)

THE SCRIPT:

"I am not acknowledging this debt. I believe this account may have prescribed under the Prescription Act. Please provide written proof of: the original credit agreement, my last payment date, proof a summons was served within the prescription period, and the current balance with calculation."

"Until you provide this, cease all collection activity. Section 126B of the National Credit Act prohibits collection of prescribed debt."

DO NOT: Acknowledge the debt. Make any payment (even R1). Say 'yes I owe that.' Sign anything.

DO: Contact the Credit Ombud (0861 662 837) for free help. Dispute the listing with the credit bureau.

CARD 6: SECTION 129 NOTICE RESPONSE

Use when: You receive a formal Section 129 letter of demand from a creditor or their attorneys.

WHAT IS A SECTION 129 NOTICE?

A formal warning that you're in arrears. The creditor **MUST** send this before taking legal action. You have **10 business days** to respond. This is your window to negotiate.

STEP 1 — Check the notice is valid:

- Does it have your correct personal details? • Does it name the specific credit agreement? • Does it state the amount in arrears? • Does it mention your right to debt counselling? • Was it delivered properly (registered mail or in person)?

STEP 2 — Respond within 10 business days:

"I received your Section 129 notice dated [DATE] regarding account [NUMBER]. I would like to make an arrangement to bring this account up to date. I can afford R[AMOUNT] per month. I am responding within the 10 business day period and request we negotiate a payment plan before any further action."

STEP 3 — Options available to you:

- Negotiate a payment arrangement (use the bank script from Card 1)
- Catch up on the arrears if you can afford to
- Apply for debt counselling (this gives you legal protection from further action)

DO NOT IGNORE IT. Ignoring a Section 129 notice allows the creditor to proceed with legal action, summons, judgment, and potentially repossession.