

Why is COJ Telling Me I Have Been Served with a Pre-Termination Notice when my Account is Up to Date?

By **Charissa Kok** (Partner) and **Chantelle Gladwin-Wood** (Partner)

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INTRODUCTION

HBGSchindlers has recently been inundated with requests for assistance by confused members of the public who have received invoices from the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (“the COJ”) this month (June 2024) who have been advised by the COJ in their invoices that COJ is issuing them a pre-termination notice, when their account is up to date. This message appears printed at the bottom of the invoice, as follows:

This Pre-termination Notice is issued in respect of MUNICIPAL SERVICES charges reflecting arrears over thirty (30) days. Paying your municipal account in full and or enter into payment arrangement will avoid services being cut off.
We notice that payment on your account was not received in full last month. If you have since paid we thank you and request that you ignore this message. If you had not yet paid please do so urgently.
Do you have a longstanding or unresolved service delivery-related issue with the City of Johannesburg? You may lodge your complaint today with the Office of the Ombudsman by contacting us 010 288 2800/emailing complaints@joburgombudsman.org.za

In brief, the printed message advises that “This Pre-termination Notice ”is issued in respect of MUNICIPAL SERVICES charges reflecting arrears over thirty (30) days”. It is appearing on accounts even where the account is paid up, or in credit, and where there are no arrears. The printed message goes on to warn that the City “notice that payment on your account was not received in full last month” even where in the case of many customers, it was paid in full.

The last element of the message is a contradictory plea for people who have not yet paid to please pay, coupled with a thank-you to those who have paid.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME IF I AM IN ARREARS?

If you are in arrears, then this message applies to you and you ought to take heed of it. Pay, or make arrangements for payment, or lodge a dispute, to avoid further credit control action.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME IF I AM NOT IN ARREARS?

You can essentially ignore this message.

You can contact the Public Law Department at HBGSchindlers if you require legal assistance with municipal law disputes on public@hbgschindlers.com.



Chantelle Gladwin-Wood
(Partner)



Charissa Kok
(Partner)