



# THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

## LIMITATION ACT 1959

### 2020 REVISED EDITION

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# Limitation Act 1959

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An Act regulating the limitation of actions and arbitrations.

[11 September 1959]

## PART 1

**Short title**

1. This Act is the Limitation Act 1959.

**Interpretation**

- 2.—(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —
  - “action” includes a suit or any other proceedings in a court;
  - “land” includes things attached to the earth or permanently fastened to anything attached to the earth, rentcharges and any legal or equitable estate or interest in land (including an interest in the proceeds of the sale of land held upon trust for sale) but does not include any right of way, easement, servitude, profit over or in respect of land, or right in the nature of an easement, servitude or profit over or in respect of land, or any other incorporeal hereditament;
  - “personal estate” and “personal property” do not include land or chattels real;
  - “personal injuries” includes any disease and any impairment of a person’s physical or mental condition;
  - “rent” includes a rentcharge and a rent service;
  - “rentcharge” means any annuity or periodical sum of money charged upon or payable out of land except a rent service or interest on a mortgage or charge on land or a rent payable in respect of a grant or lease of State land;
  - “trust” and “trustee” have the same meanings as in the Trustees Act 1967.
- (2) Subject to section 36(1)(b) of the Civil Law Act 1909, for the purposes of this Act, a person shall be deemed to be under a disability while he is a minor or lacks capacity (within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2008) to conduct legal proceedings.  
*[21/2008; 7/2009]*
- (3) A person shall be deemed to claim through another person, if he became entitled by, through, under, or by the act of that other person

to the right claimed, except that a person becoming entitled to any estate or interest by virtue of a special power of appointment shall not be deemed to claim through the appointor.

(4) References in this Act to a right of action to recover land shall include references to a right to enter into possession of the land or in the case of rentcharges any right to distrain for arrears of rent and references to the bringing of such an action shall include references to the making of such an entry or distraint.

(5) References in this Act to the possession of land shall, in the case of rentcharges, be construed as references to the receipt of the rent, and references to the date of dispossession or discontinuance of possession of land shall, in the case of rentcharges, be construed as references to the date of the last receipt of rent.

(6) In Part 3 references to a right of action shall include references to a cause of action and to a right to receive money secured by a mortgage or charge on any property or to recover proceeds of the sale of land, and to a right to receive a share or interest in the personal estate of a deceased person; and references to the date of the accrual of a right of action shall —

- (a) in the case of an action for an account, be construed as references to the date on which the matter arose in respect of which an account is claimed;
- (b) in the case of an action upon a judgment, be construed as references to the date on which the judgment became enforceable;
- (c) in the case of an action to recover arrears of rent or interest, or damages in respect thereof, be construed as references to the date on which the rent or interest became due.

### **Saving for other limitation laws**

**3.** This Act shall not apply to any action or arbitration for which a period of limitation is prescribed by any other written law or to any action or arbitration to which the Government is a party and for which if it were between private persons a period of limitation would have been prescribed by any other written law.

**Limitation not to operate as a bar unless specially pleaded**

4. Nothing in this Act shall operate as a bar to an action unless this Act has been expressly pleaded as a defence thereto in any case where under any written law relating to civil procedure for the time being in force such a defence is required to be so pleaded.

**PART 2****Part 2 to be subject to Part 3**

5. The provisions of this Part shall have effect subject to the provisions of Part 3.

*Action of contract and tort and certain other actions***Limitation of actions of contract and tort and certain other actions**

6.—(1) Subject to this Act, the following actions shall not be brought after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the cause of action accrued:

- (a) actions founded on a contract or on tort;
- (b) actions to enforce a recognizance;
- (c) actions to enforce an award;
- (d) actions to recover any sum recoverable by virtue of any written law other than a penalty or forfeiture or sum by way of penalty or forfeiture.

(2) An action for an account shall not be brought in respect of any matter which arose more than 6 years before the commencement of the action.

(3) An action upon any judgment shall not be brought after the expiration of 12 years from the date on which the judgment became enforceable and no arrears of interest in respect of any judgment debt shall be recovered after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the interest became due.

(4) An action to recover any penalty or forfeiture or sum by way of penalty or forfeiture recoverable by virtue of any Act or other written law shall not be brought after the expiration of one year from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

(5) For the purposes of subsection (4), “penalty” shall not include a fine to which a person is liable on conviction for a criminal offence.

(6) Nothing in this section shall apply to —

- (a) any cause of action within the admiralty jurisdiction of the General Division of the High Court which is enforceable in rem other than an action to recover the wages of seamen; or
- (b) any action to recover money secured by any mortgage of or charge on land or personal property.

[40/2019]

(7) Subject to sections 22 and 32, this section shall apply to all claims for specific performance of a contract or for an injunction or for other equitable relief whether the same be founded upon any contract or tort or upon any trust or other ground in equity.

### **Special time limit for claiming contribution**

**6A.**—(1) Where under section 15 of the Civil Law Act 1909 any person becomes entitled to a right to recover contribution in respect of any damage from any other person, no action to recover contribution by virtue of that right shall, subject to subsection (3), be brought after the end of the period of 2 years from the date on which that right accrued.

[45/98; 2/2012]

(2) For the purposes of this section, the date on which a right to recover contribution in respect of any damage accrues to any person (referred to in this section as the relevant date) shall be ascertained as provided in subsections (3) and (5).

[45/98]

(3) If the person in question is held liable in respect of that damage —

- (a) by a judgment given in any civil proceedings; or
- (b) by an award made on any arbitration,

the relevant date shall be the date on which the judgment is given or the date of the award, as the case may be.

[45/98]

(4) For the purposes of subsection (3), no account shall be taken of any judgment or award given or made on appeal insofar as it varies the amount of damages awarded against the person in question.

[45/98]

(5) If, in any case not within subsection (3), the person in question makes or agrees to make any payment to one or more persons in compensation for that damage (whether he admits any liability in respect of the damage or not), the relevant date shall be the earliest date on which the amount to be paid by him is agreed between him (or his representative) and the person (or each of the persons, as the case may be) to whom the payment is to be made.

[45/98]

(6) An action to recover contribution shall be one to which sections 24 and 29 apply, but otherwise Parts 3 and 4 (except section 33) shall not apply for the purposes of this section.

[45/98]

### **Limitation in case of successive conversions and extinction of title of owner of converted goods**

7.—(1) Where any cause of action in respect of the conversion or wrongful detention of a chattel has accrued to any person and before he recovers possession of the chattel, a further conversion or wrongful detention takes place, no action shall be brought in respect of the further conversion or detention after the expiration of 6 years from the accrual of the cause of action in respect of the original conversion or detention.

(2) Where any such cause of action has accrued to any person and the period prescribed for bringing that action and for bringing any action in respect of such a further conversion or wrongful detention under subsection (1) has expired and he has not during that period recovered possession of the chattel, the title of that person to the chattel shall be extinguished.



**Limitation of certain actions in respect of revenue matters****8.** An action —

- (a) to set aside a sale in pursuance of the order of a collector or other officer of revenue;
- (b) to set aside a sale for arrears of Government revenue or for any demand recoverable as such arrears;
- (c) to set aside any attachment, lease or transfer of immovable property by the revenue authorities for arrears of Government revenue;
- (d) against the Government to recover money paid under protest in satisfaction of a claim made by the revenue authorities on account of arrears of revenue or on account of demands recoverable as such arrears,

shall not be brought after the expiration of one year from the date on which the sale was confirmed or would otherwise have become final or conclusive had no such action been brought or when the attachment ceased or when the lease, transfer or payment was made, as the case may be.

*Actions to recover land and rent***Limitation of actions to recover land**

**9.—**(1) No action shall be brought by any person to recover any land after the expiration of 12 years from the date on which the right of action accrued to him, or, if it first accrued to some person through whom he claims, to that person.

(2) Nothing in this section or in section 11(2) shall be deemed to affect the provisions of the Government Proceedings Act 1956, or to apply to any person registered under or by virtue of the provisions of the Land Titles Act 1993 as the proprietor of the land sought to be recovered, or to any person claiming through a person so registered, except to the extent that such Act so provides or permits.

(3) This section shall not apply to an action to recover land from a person by reason only of his unauthorised occupation of the land.

**Accrual of right of action in case of present interests in land**

**10.**—(1) Where the person bringing an action to recover land or some person through whom he claims has been in possession thereof and has, whilst entitled thereto, been dispossessed or discontinued his possession, the right of action shall be deemed to have accrued on the date of the dispossession or discontinuance.

(2) Where any person brings an action to recover any land of a deceased person whether under a will or intestacy and the deceased person was on the date of his death in possession of the land and was the last person entitled to the land to be in possession thereof, the cause of action shall be deemed to have accrued on the date of his death.

(3) Where any person brings an action to recover land, being an estate or interest in possession assured otherwise than by will to him, or to some person through whom he claims, by a person who, at the date when the assurance took effect, was in possession of the land, or in the case of a rentcharge created by the assurance, in possession of the land charged, and no person has been in possession of the land by virtue of the assurance, the right of action shall be deemed to have accrued on the date when the assurance took effect.

**Accrual of right of action in case of future interests in land**

**11.**—(1) Subject to this section, the right of action to recover any land shall, in a case where the estate or interest claimed was an estate or interest in reversion or remainder or any other future estate or interest and no person has taken possession of the land by virtue of the estate or interest claimed, be deemed to have accrued on the date on which the estate or interest fell into possession by the determination of the preceding estate or interest.

(2) If the person entitled to the preceding estate or interest, not being a term of years absolute, was not in possession of the land on the date of the determination thereof, no action shall be brought by the person entitled to the succeeding estate or interest after the expiration of 12 years from the date on which the right of action accrued to the person entitled to the preceding estate or interest, or 6 years from the

date on which the right of action accrued to the person entitled to the succeeding estate or interest, whichever period last expires.

(3) No person shall bring an action to recover any estate or interest in land under an assurance taking effect after the right of action to recover the land had accrued to the person by whom the assurance was made or some person through whom he claimed or some person entitled to a preceding estate or interest, unless the action is brought within the period during which the person by whom the assurance was made could have brought such an action.

(4) Where any person is entitled to any estate or interest in land in possession and, while so entitled, is also entitled to any future estate or interest in that land, and his right to recover the estate or interest in possession is barred under this Act, no action shall be brought by that person, or by any person claiming through him, in respect of the future estate or interest, unless in the meantime possession of the land has been recovered by a person entitled to an intermediate estate or interest.

### **Provisions in case of land held on trust**

**12.**—(1) Subject to section 22(1), this Act shall apply to equitable interests in land, including interests in the proceeds of the sale of land held upon trust for sale, in like manner as it applies to legal estates, and accordingly a right of action to recover the land shall, for the purposes of this Act but not otherwise, be deemed to accrue to a person entitled in possession to such an equitable interest in like manner and circumstances and on the same date as it would accrue if his interest were a legal estate in the land.

(2) Where any land is held upon trust, including a trust for sale, and the period prescribed by this Act (if any) has expired for the bringing of an action to recover the land by the trustees, the estate of the trustees shall not be extinguished if and so long as the right of action to recover the land of any person entitled to a beneficial interest in the land or in the proceeds of sale either has not accrued or has not been barred by this Act, but if and when every such right of action has been so barred, the estate of the trustees shall be extinguished.

(3) Where any land is held upon trust, including a trust for sale, an action to recover the land may be brought by the trustees on behalf of any person entitled to a beneficial interest in possession in the land or in the proceeds of sale whose right of action has not been barred by this Act notwithstanding that the right of action of the trustees would apart from this provision have been barred by this Act.

(4) Where any land held on trust for sale is in the possession of a person entitled to a beneficial interest in the land or in the proceeds of sale, not being a person solely and absolutely entitled thereto, no right of action to recover the land shall be deemed for the purposes of this Act to accrue during such possession to any person in whom the land is vested as trustee, or to any other person entitled to a beneficial interest in the land or the proceeds of sale.

### **Accrual of right of action in case of certain tenancies**

**13.**—(1) For the purposes of this Act, a tenancy at will shall be deemed to be determined at the expiration of a period of one year from the commencement thereof, unless it has previously been determined, and accordingly the right of action of the person entitled to the land subject to the tenancy shall be deemed to have accrued on the date of such determination.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, a tenancy from year to year or other period, without a lease in writing, shall be deemed to be determined at the expiration of the first year or other period, and accordingly the right of action of the person entitled to the land subject to the tenancy shall be deemed to have accrued at the date of such determination.

(3) Where any rent has subsequently to the determination of any tenancy been received in respect of the tenancy, the right of action shall be deemed to have accrued on the date of the last receipt of rent.

(4) Where any person is in possession of land by virtue of a lease in writing by which a rent of not less than \$10 is reserved, and the rent is received by some person wrongfully claiming to be entitled to the land in reversion immediately expectant on the determination of the lease, and no rent is subsequently received by the person rightfully so entitled, the right of action of the last-named person to recover the land shall be deemed to have accrued at the date when the rent was

first received by the person wrongfully claiming as aforesaid and not at the date of the determination of the lease.

(5) This section shall not apply to any tenancy at will or lease granted by the Government.

### **Accrual of right of action in case of forfeiture or breach of condition**

**14.**—(1) A right of action to recover land by virtue of a forfeiture or breach of condition shall be deemed to have accrued on the date on which the forfeiture was incurred or the condition broken.

(2) If a right referred to in subsection (1) has accrued to a person entitled to an estate or interest in reversion or remainder and the land was not recovered by virtue thereof, the right of action to recover the land shall not be deemed to have accrued to that person until his estate or interest fell into possession, as if no such forfeiture or breach of condition had occurred.

### **Right of action not to accrue or continue unless there is adverse possession**

**15.**—(1) No right of action to recover land shall be deemed to accrue unless the land is in the possession of some person in whose favour the period of limitation can run (referred to in this section as adverse possession).

(2) Where under this Act any such right of action is deemed to accrue on a certain date and no person is in adverse possession on that date, the right of action shall not be deemed to accrue unless adverse possession is taken of the land.

(3) Where a right of action to recover land has accrued and thereafter, before the right is barred, the land ceases to be in adverse possession, the right of action shall no longer be deemed to have accrued and no fresh right of action shall be deemed to accrue unless the land is again taken into adverse possession.

(4) For the purposes of this section —

- (a) possession of any land subject to a rentcharge by a person (other than the person entitled to the rentcharge) who does

not pay the rent shall be deemed to be adverse possession of the rentcharge; and

- (b) receipt of rent under a lease by a person wrongfully claiming, in accordance with section 13(4), the land in reversion shall be deemed to be adverse possession of the land.

**16.** [*Repealed by Act 27 of 1993*]

**No right of action to be preserved by formal entry or continual claim**

**17.** For the purposes of this Act, no person shall be deemed to have been in possession of any land by reason only of having made a formal entry thereon, and no continual or other claim upon or near any land shall preserve any right of action to recover the land.

**Right of person out of possession extinguished**

**18.** Subject to section 12, at the determination of the period limited by this Act to any person for bringing an action to recover land, the right and title of the person to the land for the recovery of which the action might have been brought within that period shall be extinguished.

**Administrator's claim to date back to death**

**19.** For the purposes of this Act relating to actions for the recovery of land, an administrator of the estate of a deceased person shall be deemed to claim as if there had been no interval of time between the death of the deceased person and the grant of the letters of administration.

**Limitation of actions to recover rent**

**20.** No action shall be brought, or distress made, to recover arrears of rent, or damages in respect thereof, after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the arrears became due.

*Actions to recover money secured by mortgage or charge or to recover proceeds of sale of land*

**Limitation of actions to recover money secured by mortgage or charge or to recover proceeds of sale of land**

**21.**—(1) No action shall be brought to recover any principal sum of money secured by a mortgage or other charge on land or personal property or to enforce such mortgage or charge, or to recover proceeds of the sale of land or personal property after the expiration of 12 years from the date when the right to receive the money accrued.

(2) No foreclosure action in respect of mortgaged personal property shall be brought after the expiration of 12 years from the date on which the right to foreclose accrued.

(3) If, after the date referred to in subsection (1), the mortgagee was in possession of the mortgaged property, the right to foreclose on the property which was in his possession shall not, for the purposes of that subsection, be deemed to have accrued until the date on which his possession discontinued.

(4) The right to receive any principal sum of money secured by a mortgage or other charge and the right to foreclose on the property subject to the mortgage or charge shall not be deemed to accrue so long as that property comprises any future interests or any life insurance policy which has not matured or been determined.

(5) Nothing in subsections (1) to (4) shall apply to a foreclosure action in respect of mortgaged land but the provisions of this Act relating to actions to recover land shall apply to such an action.

(6) No action to recover arrears of interest payable in respect of any sum of money secured by a mortgage or other charge or payable in respect of proceeds of the sale of land or to recover damages in respect of such arrears shall be brought after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the interest became due.

(7) Notwithstanding subsection (6) —

(a) where a prior mortgagee or other incumbrancer has been in possession of the property mortgaged or charged, and an

action is brought within one year of the discontinuance of such possession by the subsequent incumbrancer, he may recover by that action all the arrears of interest which fell due during the period of possession by the prior incumbrancer or damages in respect thereof, notwithstanding that the period exceeded 6 years;

- (b) where the property subject to the mortgage or charge comprises any future interest or life insurance policy and it is a term of the mortgage or charge that arrears of interest shall be treated as part of the principal sum of money secured by the mortgage or charge, interest shall not be deemed to become due before the right to receive the principal sum of money has accrued or is deemed to have accrued.

- (8) This section shall not apply to any mortgage or charge on a ship.

*Actions in respect of trust property or personal estate of deceased persons*

**Limitation of actions in respect of trust property**

**22.—**(1) No period of limitation prescribed by this Act shall apply to an action by a beneficiary under a trust, being an action —

- (a) in respect of any fraud or fraudulent breach of trust to which the trustee was a party or privy; or
- (b) to recover from the trustee trust property or the proceeds thereof in the possession of the trustee, or previously received by the trustee and converted to his use.

(2) Subject to subsection (1), an action by a beneficiary to recover trust property or in respect of any breach of trust, not being an action for which a period of limitation is prescribed by any other provision of this Act, shall not be brought after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the right of action accrued.

(3) The right of action referred to in subsection (2) shall not be deemed to have accrued to any beneficiary entitled to a future interest in the trust property until the interest fell into possession.



(4) No beneficiary as against whom there would be a good defence under this Act shall derive any greater or other benefit from a judgment or order obtained by any other beneficiary than he could have obtained if he had brought the action and this Act had been pleaded in defence.

### **Limitation of actions claiming personal estate of deceased person**

**23.** Subject to section 22(1), no action —

- (a) in respect of any claim to the personal estate of a deceased person or to any share or interest in the estate, whether under a will or on intestacy, shall be brought after the expiration of 12 years from the date when the right to receive the share or interest accrued; and
- (b) to recover arrears of interest in respect of any legacy, or damages in respect of such arrears, shall be brought after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the interest became due.

## PART 3

### **Extension of limitation period in case of disability**

**24.—(1)** If, on the date when any right of action accrued for which a period of limitation is prescribed by this Act, the person to whom it accrued was under a disability, the action may be brought at any time before the expiration of —

- (a) 6 years;
- (b) in the case of actions to which section 24A(2) applies, 3 years; or
- (c) in the case of actions to which section 6(4) or section 8 applies, one year,

from the date when the person ceased to be under a disability or died, whichever event first occurred, notwithstanding that the period of limitation has expired.

(2) In any case to which section 29 applies, subsection (1) shall apply as if the date from which the period of limitation begins to run were substituted for the date when the right of action accrued.

(3) Where any such person as is referred to in subsection (1) was on such date under 2 disabilities or where before the disability which he was under on such date had ceased he was affected by another disability, he shall be deemed for the purposes of this section to have continued under a disability until both the disabilities have ceased.

(4) When one of several joint creditors or claimants is under any such disability, and when a discharge can be given without the concurrence of that person, time will run against them all.

(5) Where no discharge under subsection (4) can be given, time will not run as against any of them until all those persons cease to be under a disability or until one of them becomes capable of giving a discharge without the concurrence of the others whichever shall first occur.

(6) This section shall take effect subject to the following provisions:

- (a) nothing in this section shall affect any case where the right of action first accrued to some person not under a disability through whom the person under a disability claims;
- (b) when a right of action which has accrued to a person under a disability accrues, on the death of that person while still under a disability, to another person under a disability no further extension of time shall be allowed by reason of the disability of the second person;
- (c) no action to recover land or money charged on land for which a period of limitation is prescribed under this Act shall be brought by virtue of this section by any person after the expiration of 30 years from the date on which the right of action accrued to that person or some person through whom he claims;
- (d) nothing in this section shall apply to any action to recover a penalty or forfeiture, or sum by way thereof, by virtue of any written law, except where the action is brought by an aggrieved party.

**Time limits for negligence, nuisance and breach of duty actions in respect of latent injuries and damage**

**24A.**—(1) This section shall apply to any action for damages for negligence, nuisance or breach of duty (whether the duty exists by virtue of a contract or of a provision made by or under any written law or independently of any contract or any such provision).

(2) An action to which this section applies, where the damages claimed consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the claimant or any other person, shall not be brought after the expiration of —

- (a) 3 years from the date on which the cause of action accrued; or
- (b) 3 years from the earliest date on which the claimant has the knowledge required for bringing an action for damages in respect of the relevant injury, if that period expires later than the period mentioned in paragraph (a).

*[Act 25 of 2021 wef 01/04/2022]*

(3) An action to which this section applies, other than one referred to in subsection (2), shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of —

- (a) 6 years from the date on which the cause of action accrued; or
- (b) 3 years from the earliest date on which the claimant or any person in whom the cause of action was vested before him first had both the knowledge required for bringing an action for damages in respect of the relevant damage and a right to bring such an action, if that period expires later than the period mentioned in paragraph (a).

*[Act 25 of 2021 wef 01/04/2022]*

(4) In subsections (2) and (3), the knowledge required for bringing an action for damages in respect of the relevant injury or damage (as the case may be) means knowledge —

- (a) that the injury or damage was attributable in whole or in part to the act or omission which is alleged to constitute negligence, nuisance or breach of duty;

- (b) of the identity of the defendant;
- (c) if it is alleged that the act or omission was that of a person other than the defendant, of the identity of that person and the additional facts supporting the bringing of an action against the defendant; and
- (d) of material facts about the injury or damage which would lead a reasonable person who had suffered such injury or damage to consider it sufficiently serious to justify his instituting proceedings for damages against a defendant who did not dispute liability and was able to satisfy a judgment.

(5) Knowledge that any act or omission did or did not, as a matter of law, involve negligence, nuisance or breach of duty is irrelevant for the purposes of subsections (2) and (3).

(6) For the purposes of this section, a person's knowledge includes knowledge which he might reasonably have been expected to acquire —

- (a) from facts observable or ascertainable by him; or
- (b) from facts ascertainable by him with the help of appropriate expert advice which it is reasonable for him to seek.

(7) A person shall not be taken by virtue of subsection (6) to have knowledge of a fact ascertainable only with the help of expert advice so long as he has taken all reasonable steps to obtain (and, where appropriate, to act on) that advice.

### **Overriding time limit for negligence, nuisance and breach of duty actions involving latent injuries and damage**

**24B.**—(1) An action for damages for negligence, nuisance or breach of duty to which section 24A applies shall not be brought after the expiration of 15 years from the starting date.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1),

“starting date” means the date (or, if more than one, from the last of the dates) on which there occurred any act or omission —

- (a) which is alleged to constitute negligence, nuisance or breach of duty; and
- (b) to which the injury or damage in respect of which damages are claimed is alleged to be attributable (in whole or in part).

(3) This section bars the right of action in a case to which subsection (1) applies notwithstanding that the cause of action has not yet accrued before the end of the period of limitation prescribed by this section.

### **Transitional provisions relating to section 24A**

**24C.**—(1) Nothing in section 24A shall —

- (a) enable any action to be brought which was barred by this Act immediately before 26 June 1992; or
- (b) affect any action commenced before 26 June 1992.

(2) Subject to subsection (1), sections 24A and 24B shall have effect in relation to causes of action accruing before or after 26 June 1992.

### **Extension of limitation period where debtor administers estate of his creditor**

**25.** Where letters of administration of the estate of a creditor have been granted to his debtor, the running of the time prescribed for an action to recover the debt shall be suspended while the administration continues.

### **Fresh accrual of action on acknowledgment or part payment**

**26.**—(1) Where any right of action has accrued to recover land or to enforce a mortgage or charge in respect of land or personal property, and —

- (a) the person in possession of the land or personal property acknowledges the title of the person to whom the right of action has accrued; or
- (b) in the case of any such action by a mortgagee or chargee the person in possession as aforesaid or the person liable

for the debt secured by the mortgage or charge makes any payment in respect thereof, whether of principal or interest, the right shall be deemed to have accrued on and not before the date of the acknowledgment or the last payment.

(2) Where any right of action has accrued to recover any debt or other liquidated pecuniary claim, or any claim to the personal estate of a deceased person or to any share or interest therein, and the person liable or accountable therefor acknowledges the claim or makes any payment in respect thereof, the right shall be deemed to have accrued on and not before the date of the acknowledgment or the last payment.

(3) A payment of a part of the rent or interest due at any time shall not extend the period for claiming the remainder of the rent or interest then due, but any payment of interest shall have effect, for the purposes of subsection (2) only, as if it were a payment in respect of the principal debt.

### **Formal provisions as to acknowledgments and part payments**

**27.—**(1) Every such acknowledgment as is referred to in section 26 shall be in writing and signed by the person making the acknowledgment.

(2) Any such acknowledgment or payment as is referred to in section 26 may be made by the agent of the person by whom it is required to be made under that section, and shall be made to the person, or to an agent of the person, whose title or claim is being acknowledged or, as the case may be, in respect of whose claim the payment is being made.

### **Effect of acknowledgment or part payment on persons other than the maker or recipient**

**28.—**(1) For the purposes of this Act, an acknowledgment of the title to any land, or mortgaged or charged property by any person in possession thereof shall bind all other persons in possession during the ensuing period of limitation.

(2) A payment in respect of a debt secured by a mortgage or charge by the mortgagor or any person in possession of the mortgaged or charged land or personal property shall, so far as any right of the

mortgagee or chargee to foreclose or otherwise to recover the property is concerned, bind all other persons in possession of the mortgaged property during the ensuing period of limitation.

(3) Where there are 2 or more mortgagors of land or personal property and the title or right to redemption of one of the mortgagors is acknowledged as aforesaid, the acknowledgment shall be deemed to have been made to all the mortgagors.

(4) An acknowledgment of any debt or other liquidated pecuniary claim shall bind the acknowledgor and his successors but not any other person.

(5) An acknowledgment made after the expiration of the period of limitation prescribed for the bringing of an action to recover the debt or other claim shall not bind any successor on whom the liability devolves on the determination of a preceding estate or interest in property under a settlement taking effect before the date of the acknowledgment.

(6) A payment made in respect of any debt or other liquidated pecuniary claim shall bind all persons liable in respect thereof.

(7) A payment made after the expiration of the period of limitation prescribed for the bringing of an action to recover the debt or other claim shall not bind any person other than the person making the payment and his successors and shall not bind any successor on whom the liability devolves on the determination of a preceding estate or interest in property under a settlement taking effect before the date of the payment.

(8) An acknowledgment by one of several personal representatives of any claim to the personal estate of a deceased person, or to any share or interest therein, or a payment by one of several personal representatives in respect of any such claim shall bind the estate of the deceased person.

(9) In this section, “successor”, in relation to any mortgagee or person liable in respect of any debt or claim, means his personal representatives and any other person on whom the rights under the mortgage or, as the case may be, the liability in respect of the debt or claim devolve, whether on death or bankruptcy or the disposition of

property or the determination of a limited estate or interest in settled property or otherwise.

### **Postponement of limitation period in case of fraud or mistake**

**29.**—(1) Where, in the case of any action for which a period of limitation is prescribed by this Act —

- (a) the action is based upon the fraud of the defendant or his agent or of any person through whom he claims or his agent;
- (b) the right of action is concealed by the fraud of any such person as aforesaid; or
- (c) the action is for relief from the consequences of a mistake,

the period of limitation shall not begin to run until the claimant has discovered the fraud or the mistake, as the case may be, or could with reasonable diligence have discovered it.

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(2) Nothing in this section shall enable any action to be brought to recover, or enforce any charge against, or set aside any transaction affecting, any property which —

- (a) in the case of fraud, has been purchased for valuable consideration by a person who was not a party to the fraud and did not at the time of the purchase know or have reason to believe that any fraud had been committed; or
- (b) in the case of mistake, has been purchased for valuable consideration, subsequently to the transaction in which the mistake was made, by a person who did not know or have reason to believe that the mistake had been made.

## **PART 4**

**30.** *[Repealed by Act 37 of 2001]*

### **Provisions as to set-off or counterclaim**

**31.** For the purposes of this Act, any claim by way of set-off or counterclaim shall be deemed to be a separate action and to have been



commenced on the same date as the action in which the set-off or counterclaim is pleaded.

### **Acquiescence**

**32.** Nothing in this Act shall affect any equitable jurisdiction to refuse relief on the ground of acquiescence, laches or otherwise.

### **Application to Government**

**33.—**(1) Subject to this Act and without prejudice to section 3, this Act shall apply to proceedings by or against the Government in like manner as it applies to proceedings between private persons.

(2) This Act shall not apply to any proceedings by the Government for the recovery of any tax, duty or interest thereon or to any forfeiture proceedings under any written law in force in Singapore relating to customs duties or excise or to any proceedings in respect of the forfeiture of a ship.

(3) For the purposes of this section, proceedings by or against any Government department or any officer of the Government as such or any person acting on behalf of the Government shall be deemed to be proceedings by or against the Government.

### **Provisions as to actions already barred and pending actions**

**34.** Nothing in this Act shall —

- (a) enable any action to be brought which was barred before 11 September 1959 by the Limitation Ordinance (Cap. 7, 1955 Revised Edition), except insofar as the cause of action or right of action may be revived by an acknowledgment or part payment made in accordance with the provisions of this Act; or
- (b) affect any action or arbitration commenced before 11 September 1959 or the title to any property which is the subject of any such action or arbitration.

**Exclusion of occupation and moratorium periods**

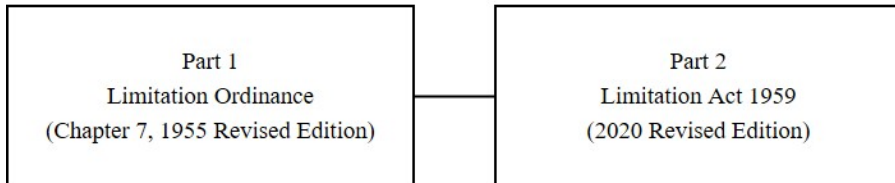
**35.** In computing the period of limitation prescribed for any action, the period commencing on 15 February 1942 and ending on 30 September 1949 shall be excluded.

# LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

## LIMITATION ACT 1959

This Legislative History is a service provided by the Law Revision Commission on a best-efforts basis. It is not part of the Act.

### PICTORIAL OVERVIEW OF PREDECESSOR ACTS



### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY DETAILS

#### PART 1 LIMITATION ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 7, 1955 REVISED EDITION)

##### **1. Ordinance VI of 1896 — The Limitation Ordinance 1896**

Bill	:	Information not available
First Reading	:	31 October 1895
Second Reading	:	6 November 1895
Select Committee Report	:	Council Paper No. 19 of 1896
Notice of Amendments	:	14 May 1896
Third Reading	:	22 May 1896
Commencement	:	1 January 1897

*Note: This Ordinance repealed An Act to provide for the Limitation of Suits (Indian Act XIV of 1859).*

##### **2. 1920 Revised Edition — Ordinance No. 56 (Limitation)**

Operation	:	28 November 1921
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##### **3. 1926 Revised Edition — Ordinance No. 56 (Limitation)**

Operation	:	1 August 1926
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##### **4. Ordinance 10 of 1929 — Limitation (Amendment) Ordinance, 1929**

Bill	:	G.N. No. 110/1929
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First Reading : 28 January 1929

Second Reading : 25 March 1929

Third Reading : 13 May 1929

Commencement : 1 June 1929

**5. 1936 Revised Edition — Limitation Ordinance (Chapter 16)**

Operation : 1 September 1936

**6. Ordinance 3 of 1946 — Limitation (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946**

Bill : Information not available

First and Second Readings : Information not available

Third Reading : 1 April 1946

Commencement : 1 April 1946

**7. Ordinance 33 of 1949 — Limitation (Amendment) Ordinance, 1949**

Bill : G.N. No. S 151/1949

First Reading : 12 April 1949

Second Reading : 17 May 1949

Select Committee Report : Council Paper No. 127 of 1949

Notice of Amendments : 23 August 1949

Third Reading : 23 August 1949

Commencement : 1 October 1949

**8. Ordinance 9 of 1953 — Limitation (Amendment) Ordinance, 1953**

Bill : 2/1953

First Reading : 25 February 1953

Second Reading : 17 March 1953

Notice of Amendments : 17 March 1953

Third Reading : 17 March 1953

Commencement : 22 March 1953

**9. 1955 Revised Edition — Limitation Ordinance (Chapter 7)**

Operation : 1 July 1956

PART 2  
LIMITATION ACT 1959  
(2020 REVISED EDITION)

**10. Ordinance 57 of 1959 — Limitation Ordinance, 1959**

Bill	:	18/1959
First Reading	:	13 August 1959
Second Reading	:	2 September 1959
Notice of Amendments	:	2 September 1959
Third Reading	:	2 September 1959
Commencement	:	11 September 1959

**11. L.N. 448/1964 (G.N. Sp. No. S 226/1964) — Modification of Laws  
(Limitation) (Borneo States  
and Singapore) Order, 1964**

Commencement	:	17 December 1964
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**12. Act 7 of 1966 — Limitation (Amendment) Act, 1966**

Bill	:	1/1966
First Reading	:	23 February 1966
Second and Third Readings	:	21 April 1966
Commencement	:	6 May 1966

**13. Act 14 of 1969 — Statute Law Revision Act, 1969**

(Amendments made by section 2 read with the First Schedule to the above Act)

Bill	:	22/1969
First Reading	:	15 October 1969
Second Reading	:	22 December 1969
Notice of Amendments	:	22 December 1969
Third Reading	:	22 December 1969
Commencement	:	2 January 1970 (section 2 read with the First Schedule)

**14. 1970 Revised Edition — Limitation Act (Chapter 10)**

Operation	:	1 March 1971
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**15. 1985 Revised Edition — Limitation Act (Chapter 163)**

Operation : 30 March 1987

**16. Act 22 of 1992 — Limitation (Amendment) Act 1992**

Bill : 14/1992

First Reading : 27 February 1992

Second and Third Readings : 29 May 1992

Commencement : 26 June 1992

**17. Act 27 of 1993 — Land Titles Act 1993**

(Amendments made by section 177 of the above Act)

Bill : 36/1992

First Reading : 16 November 1992

Second Reading : 18 January 1993

Select Committee Report : Parl. 3 of 1993

Third Reading : 30 August 1993

Commencement : 1 March 1994 (section 177)

**18. 1996 Revised Edition — Limitation Act (Chapter 163)**

Operation : 27 December 1996

**19. Act 45 of 1998 — Civil Law (Amendment) Act 1998**

(Amendments made by section 7 of the above Act)

Bill : 41/1998

First Reading : 12 October 1998

Second and Third Readings : 26 November 1998

Commencement : 1 January 1999 (section 7)

**20. Act 37 of 2001 — Arbitration Act 2001**

(Amendments made by section 67 of the above Act)

Bill : 37/2001

First Reading : 25 September 2001

Second and Third Readings : 5 October 2001

Commencement : 1 March 2002 (section 67)

**21. Act 7 of 2009 — Civil Law (Amendment) Act 2009**

(Amendments made by section 7 read with item (5) of the Schedule to the above Act)

Bill	:	38/2008
First Reading	:	17 November 2008
Second and Third Readings	:	19 January 2009
Commencement	:	1 March 2009 (section 7 read with item (5) of the Schedule)

**22. Act 21 of 2008 — Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act 2008**

(Amendments made by section 33 read with item 1(27) of the Second Schedule to the above Act)

Bill	:	11/2008
First Reading	:	21 July 2008
Second and Third Readings	:	15 September 2008
Commencement	:	1 March 2010 (section 33 read with item 1(27) of the Second Schedule)

**23. Act 2 of 2012 — Statutes (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2012**

(Amendments made by section 25 of the above Act)

Bill	:	22/2011
First Reading	:	21 November 2011
Second Reading	:	18 January 2012
Notice of Amendments	:	18 January 2012
Third Reading	:	18 January 2012
Commencement	:	1 March 2012 (section 25)

**24. Act 40 of 2019 — Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Act 2019**

(Amendments made by section 28(1) read with item 89 of the Schedule to the above Act)

Bill	:	32/2019
First Reading	:	7 October 2019
Second Reading	:	5 November 2019
Notice of Amendments	:	5 November 2019
Third Reading	:	5 November 2019

Commencement : 2 January 2021 (section 28(1) read with item 89 of the Schedule)

**25. 2020 Revised Edition — Limitation Act 1959**

Operation : 31 December 2021

**26. Act 25 of 2021 — Courts (Civil and Criminal Justice) Reform Act 2021**  
(Amendments made by section 150 of the above Act)

Bill : 18/2021

First Reading : 26 July 2021

Second and Third Readings : 14 September 2021

Commencement : 1 April 2022

Abbreviations

C.P.	Council Paper
G.N. No. S (N.S.)	Government Notification Number Singapore (New Series)
G.N. No.	Government Notification Number
G.N. No. S	Government Notification Number Singapore
G.N. Sp. No. S	Government Notification Special Number Singapore
L.A.	Legislative Assembly
L.N.	Legal Notification (Federal/Malaysian Subsidiary Legislation)
M. Act	Malayan Act/Malaysia Act
M. Ordinance	Malayan Ordinance
Parl.	Parliament
S.S.G.G. (E) No.	Straits Settlements Government Gazette (Extraordinary) Number
S.S.G.G. No.	Straits Settlements Government Gazette Number