

FORMATION OF A VALID CONTRACT

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LAW FOR
ENGINEERS
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- WHAT IS A CONTRACT?**
- IMPORTANCE OF CONTRACTS?**
- DISTINGUISH FROM SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS?**
- GIVE EXAMPLES OF A CONTRACT**
- GIVE EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

PART C – GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CONTRACT

1. THE FORMATION OF A VALID CONTRACT

In order for a contract to be valid and binding in law, certain requirements have to be met. **All the requirements must be met**, if one is missing then there will normally not be a valid contract and the courts will refuse to enforce it.

1. The parties must have contractual capacity
 2. The parties must have a serious intention to contract
 3. The parties must communicate their intention to each other
 4. The parties must be of the same mind, i.e. no misunderstandings or mistakes
 5. The agreement must be lawful
 6. Performance of the contractual obligations must be possible
 7. The agreement must comply with any formalities
 8. The agreement must be certain in its terms
- } offer & acceptance

1.1 Contractual Capacity

General rule?

Exceptions: limited contractual capacity

1.1 Contractual Capacity

People with limited contractual capacity are:

Married persons

Minors

**Insolvents*

Mentally ill and

**intoxicated persons.*

(a) MARRIED PERSONS

- 1- Marriages In Community Of Property (ICOP)
- 2- Marriage out of community (OCOP)
- 3- Marriage out of community with accrual (accrual)

Mechanics...briefly



**(a) MARRIED
PERSONS**

Marriages In Community Of Property (ICOP)

Law sees yall as one person

Assets – before marriage

Any liabilities that you had before, yall will be jointly responsible

Liabilities – before marriage

Assets – after marriage

Will be shared equally between yall

Liabilities – after marriage

What kinda contracts can you enter into and what are the implications

Focus is on contractual capacity!

(a) MARRIED PERSONS

Marriages In Community Of Property (ICOP): terminology

Transfer ownership: Selling a tangible asset

Matrimonial Property Act (MPA) 1984

Alienate: sell, mortgage, lease out (as lessor/landlord),
 give away

Cede: manner of alienating usually used for intangible
 assets Patents, Copyright, Stocks...

Mortgage: you borrow money to purchase **immovable**
 property and as security for that loan, you
 mortgage the property. **EG**

Moveable

Pledge: give something as security. **EG**

Bank can sell that
asset if you cant pay
back the money for
mortgage

(a) MARRIED PERSONS

Marriages In Community Of Property (ICOP)

General rule:

Spouses married in ICOP can enter into contracts freely. Full contractual capacity and act freely regarding matters that affect the estate.

Exceptions: i.e

You must get the consent sometimes.

If they don't get consent, the contract is void.

Why is this section important to you?

You need to know the requirements of the person you are signing a contract with.

Three types of consent

What is ratification? Consent after the fact.

- **Formal consent**

Formal consent is a written and signed consent witnessed by two witnesses.

When do you need formal consent?

- Alienate or mortgage immovable property
- Enter into as a credit receiver, a credit agreement in terms of the National Credit Act 2005 If you get any kind of credit (like account at a store)
- Bind him/herself as surety What is this word?
Person that will pay your debt if you are unable to pay
It is a strong form of security, but not strong as a mortgage

In case of (ii) consent can be given by ratification. But must still be in writing (signed) before two witnesses.

Consent is not required for (ii) + (iii) if the act is done in the **ordinary course of that spouse's trade or business or occupation? AI**

Mortgage > You have tangible asset that they can sell if you don't pay

Surety > You basically trusting a person to pay back via promise

- **Written consent?** For all three of these, consent can be given via ratification... still needs to be written
 - i. Alienate, cede or pledge any shares, insurance policies, fixed deposits, or any investments in a financial institution. **(financial investment assets.):** exceptions
 - But don't need consent to sell shares listed on JSE or Dealing is like deposits, or withdrawals to deal with a deposit in one's own name at a bank (**fact check?**)
 - Don't need consent if the act is done in connection with the spouse's trade, business or occupation
- ii. Alienate or pledge jewellery, coins, paintings etc. **(capital assets)**
- iii. Withdraw money held in the name of the other spouse at bank, building society or post office

- **Written consent?**

Ratification?

- **Informal consent**

This is a verbal consent?

When is informal consent valid?

- i. Alienating or pledging household furniture and effects
- ii. Receiving money due to the other spouse from:
 - their trade, business or occupation e.g. salary or pension
 - inheritance, donation, bursary or prize (fact check?)
- iii. **Large** donations from joint estate. **EG**

REMEMBER

If the act has not been listed in any of the categories above, then no consent is needed.

If you have overlapping consent, use the more powerful form of consent

- **Informal consent**

This is a verbal consent.

Ratification?

Overlap?

- **Transactions made without consent**

General rule: The contract is void, it doesn't exist, it never happened, fugazi. Each party needs to give back what they received.

However, there is an exception:

If the third party (other party to contract) does not know or could not reasonably have known that the required consent had not been given, then the contract is valid.

If the contracting spouse knew that he or she would not get consent and the estate has suffered a loss, then an adjustment will be made in favour of the other spouse upon dissolution of the marriage

Marriages Out of Community of Property (OCOP) &
Marriages Out of Community of Property with the
Accrual (Accrual)

(b) MINORS

Who is a Minor?

Guardianship/Parental Responsibility

Contractual Capacity of Minors

Effect of An Assisted Contract

The effect of a duly assisted contract is that the **minor is bound and liable in terms of the contract** not the guardian.

So it is a fully valid and enforceable contract against the minor.

The only time the minor will not be bound by a duly assisted contract is if the contract was inherently prejudicial. The prejudice however must be substantial and not trivial.

Note such a contract is valid (not void) but the contract can be cancelled.

Effect Of An Unassisted Contract under the Common Law

The contract is a “limping contract”.

What the limping contract means is that the minor can choose (with the assistance of the guardian) whether to enforce the contract (ratification) or not to enforce the contract (repudiation).

The choice lies solely with the minor (guardian) . Other party (the adult) is bound by that decision.

Repudiation: minor not bound under law of contract and neither is other party (adult)

Ratification: both minor and the other party (adult) are bound by the contract

Effect of an Unassisted Contract - Consumer Protection Act 2008

CPA only applies to certain types of agreements- mainly sale and lease and where the **seller / lessor** is someone who sells those goods and services **in the ordinary course of business**.

The CPA says that the effect of a minor's unassisted contract where the Act applies is that it is voidable.

This is different from a limping contract and a void contract –will look at these voidable contracts in more detail in another section.

Liability of an Unassisted Minor in terms of Fraudulent Misrepresentation

Where a minor has lied about his or her age or has lied about having the guardian's consent that is fraudulent misrepresentation.

Because the minor lied about their age/ consent, the minor could incur obligations under the law of delict.

Statutory Exceptions

(c) INSOLVENTS

Sequestrated
Insolvency Act

1. Insolvent may not enter into a contract in terms of which he disposes of assets in the insolvent estate.
2. Insolvent may not, without the written consent of the trustee, enter into contract which adversely affects the estate.
3. Insolvent may not, without the trustee's consent be involved in a business which is a general dealer or manufacturer.

Contracts in contravention of the above are **voidable at instance of trustee (*not void*)**. This means the contract is valid until the trustee chooses to cancel it and he may or may not choose to do so depending on what is in the best interests of the creditors.

(d) **MENTAL INCAPACITY ARISING FROM MENTAL ILLNESS
OR INTOXICATION**

Mental Illness

lucidum intervallum = sane interval

Intoxication