



Caring for
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Your
relocation
guide to
Netherlands



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Memb No: A091



TELEPHONE:	Country code (31) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT +1 hour
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	220V, 50Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Inoculation and vaccination certificate not required for EC citizens.
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, Apr 16,17, 27, May 25, Jun 4, 5 Dec 25, 26
OFFICE HOURS:	08.00-12.00, 13.00-17.00 Monday – Friday
BANK HOURS:	09.00-15.30 Monday – Friday
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	112 – Emergencies (Ambulance, Police, Fire)
BRITISH EMBASSY IN:	Lange Voorhout 10 THE NETHERLANDS 2514 ED The Hague Tel: +31 (0)70 427 0427 Fax: +31 (0)70 4270 345 Web: http://ukinnl.fco.gov.uk/en/
NETHERLANDS EMBASSY IN LONDON:	38 Hyde Park Gate London SW7 5DP Tel: 0207 590 3200 Fax: 0207 225 0947 Web: http://netherlands.embassyhomepage.com/

Customs

Netherlands is part of the EU and as such, no official documents are required to import personal effects and household goods if originating from another EU country. However, should you be from outside the EU the following applies.

To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household goods and personal effects into Netherlands from outside the EU. It is advisable to check with the authorities that documentation is in order, prior to despatch.

Customs

All containers arriving in the Port of Rotterdam with a too high concentration of gas, will be taken out from the logistic transport chain. (Methyl bromide is mostly used as a toxic gas).

According to the Ministry you may expect delays running up to several months before a fumigated container finally will be released to the consignee. Obviously high costs will be involved if a container has a too high concentration of gas.

Household Goods

For customs clearance of personal belonging, the following documents are required:

- Clear copy of the shipper's passport
- Copy of the shipper's housing contract in the Netherlands (rental or purchase)

Or

- Copy of the work contract or statement of employer in the Netherlands (with length of employment and position in the firm)

Or

- Copy of the registration at town / city hall where the shipper will live (this document has to mention the country the shipper is moving from)
- Inventory in two copies

Removal goods are duty free entry, provided:

- You have lived outside the European Union for at least twelve months prior to leaving the country of departure and you will be living in the Netherlands
- You are transporting household goods belonging to your residence
- You have owned and used your personal belongings for at least six months prior to your removal to the Netherlands
- You are importing your personal belongings within twelve months after your date of arrival in the Netherlands
- You will be using your personal belongings again and will not lend or rent them out, pawn or sell them for a period of twelve months after customs cleared your personal belongings to enter the Netherlands

Diplomats removals

Document required:

- Diplomatic passport

Duty free entry provided:

Not having Dutch nationality

- Not permanently a resident in Netherlands
- Administrative, technical and service staff to have been employed for 10 years or more in the Netherlands

Wedding Trousseaux

Documents required:

- Inventory in two copies
- Marriage certificate
- Certificate of residence
- Exemption of duties form

Duty free entry.

Inheritance

Documents required:

- Application for exemption for inheritance
- Copy of passport of applicant
- Registration of residence at town hall
- Two signed inventory lists
- Statement of Notary stating:
 - that the goods are originating from an Inheritance
 - the date that the testator was deceased
 - the date when the goods were acquired by the applicant
 - the date that the testator was deceased the date when the goods were acquired by the applicant

If there is a motor vehicle or other vehicle involved additional required documents:

- License registration
- Purchase or ownership document

Duty free entry.

New Furniture and household articles

Document required:

- Invoice

Subject to payment of duties.

Works of Art, Antiques, Electrical & Household appliances

No documents required. If it is part of the household effects.

Household appliances: mark and fabrication number to be mentioned on the inventory.

Electrical appliances: make and serial number to mentioned on the inventory.

Motor Vehicles

Documents required:

- Invoice or property justification
- Registration card
- Certificate of residence
- Copy foreign insurance certificate or proof of insurance.

Important: In order to import a car or motorcycle free of any duties / taxes, you should have owned and used it for at least six months prior to shipping out. Moreover you should have resided outside the Netherlands for at least one year.

Other vehicles (bicycles, water vehicles)

Documents required:

- Invoice
- Registration card
- Certificate of residence

Machines, appliances, spare parts

Document required:

- Invoice

Subject to payment of duties.

Presents, Souvenirs

No documents required, if part of the household effects.

Wine & Alcohol

Document required:

- Detailed valued list

Subject to payment of duties and taxes.

Tobacco

Document required:

- Detailed valued list

Subject to payment of duties and taxes.

Food

Not allowed, or limited quantities.

Contact your destination agent prior to shipping.

Arms, Ammunition and Dangerous Objects

Authorisation issued by the Police Authorities.

Sports articles

No document required if part of the household effects.

Medicine

No document required if part of the household effects and prescribed by a doctor. Otherwise forbidden.

Narcotics, Drugs

No document required if part of the household effects and prescribed by a doctor. Otherwise forbidden.

Precious metal objects

No document required, if part of the household effects.

Carpets

No document required, if part of the household effects.

Plants

Document required:

No document required if part of the household effects.

Cats, Dogs and Other Animals

Document required:

- Health and vaccination certificates

Wood Packaging Regulations

The European member states have adopted the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM). This regulation requires all wood packing materials to be treated for the transport of goods to the EU or from other countries.

General Information on Kingdom of the Netherlands

Background

The Dutch United Provinces declared their independence from Spain in 1579; during the 17th century, they became a leading seafaring and commercial power, with settlements and colonies around the world. After a 20 year French occupation, a Kingdom of the Netherlands was formed in 1815. In 1830 Belgium seceded and formed a separate kingdom. The Netherlands remained neutral in World War I, but suffered invasion and occupation by Germany in World War II. A modern, industrialised nation, the Netherlands is also a large exporter of agricultural products.

The country was a founding member of NATO and the EEC (now the EU), and participated in the introduction of the euro in 1999.

Geography

The Netherlands lie on the North Sea coast of Western Europe. Apart from the low hills in the Far South East, the land is flat and low-lying, much of it below sea level. The coastal region includes the delta of five rivers and polders (reclaimed land) protected by sand dunes, dikes and canals.

Population

The Netherlands has an estimated population of 16.5 million with 18% being under 15 years of age, 15-64 years is 68% of the population and 14% being 65 years and over. The Netherlands is a densely populated and highly urbanized country, with the majority of people living in the Western Amsterdam – Rotterdam's Gravehage area.

Economy

The Netherlands, the sixth-largest economy in the European Union, plays an important role as a European transportation hub, with a persistently high trade surplus, stable industrial relations, and moderate unemployment. Industry focuses on food processing, chemicals, petroleum refining, and electrical machinery. A highly mechanized agricultural sector employs only 2% of the labour force but provides large surpluses for food-processing and underpins the country's status as the world's second largest agricultural exporter. The Netherlands is part of the Eurozone, and as such, its monetary policy is controlled by the European Central Bank. The Dutch financial sector is highly concentrated, with four commercial banks possessing over 90% of banking assets. The sector suffered as a result of the global financial crisis and required billions of dollars of government support, but the European Banking Authority completed stringent reviews in 2014 and deemed Dutch banks to be well-capitalized. To address the 2009 and 2010 economic downturns, the government sought to stimulate the domestic economy by accelerating infrastructure programs, offering corporate tax breaks for employers to retain workers, and expanding export credits. The stimulus programs and bank bailouts, however, resulted in a government budget deficit of 5.3% of GDP in 2010 that contrasted sharply with a surplus of 0.7% in 2008. The government of Prime Minister Mark RUTTE has since implemented significant austerity measures to improve public finances and has instituted broad structural reforms in key policy areas, including the labor market, the housing sector, the energy market, and the pension system. As a result, the government budget deficit at the end of 2014 dropped to 1.8% of GDP. Following a protracted recession during which unemployment doubled to 7.4% and household consumption contracted for nearly three consecutive years, the year 2014 saw fragile GDP growth of 0.8 percent and a rise in most economic indicators. Drivers of growth included increased exports and business investments, as well as newly invigorated household consumption.

Language

The official language of the Netherlands is Dutch but people also speak English in the major towns. In the provinces of Friesland the majority of the population speak Friesian as their first language.

Climate

The climate temperate, with cool summers and mild winters. Rainfall is spread evenly throughout the year.

Currency

The monetary unit is the Euro.

Notes: 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 & 5 euros

Coins: 2, 1 euros then 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 & 1 cents

Government

The head of state is a hereditary monarch, she must sign all new laws and appoints the prime minister, who is head of the cabinet, but has no real power. The government presents its plans for the coming year at the state opening of parliament on the third Tuesday of September ('Prinsjesdag'). The plans and budget speech are delivered by the Queen.

Residence Permit

EU nationals entering Netherlands to work are advised to register with the foreign police (Vreemdelingenpolitie) within eight days of arrival. They are not found at the local police station, either at the local town hall or look in the telephone book. You should take with you: passport, birth/marriage/divorce certificates, health insurance papers and rent agreement.

Once you have registered with the police and have arranged a fixed address (with a rent contract) you should go to the local town hall to register with the population registry and take with you necessary identity papers (as previous) and two passport photographs.

Your next move is to obtain a Dutch national insurance number. (SOFI number), from the nearest tax office. You can now legally look for work.

Once successfully found work and paying into a health insurance scheme you need to take all your identity papers (as previous) with more passport photographs back to the foreign police to start applying for an EU residence permit. A plastic identity card will be issued.

On leaving the country you should inform the foreign police and remove yourself from the populations register.

Culture

The Dutch are not clog-wearing windmill-dwellers or drugdealing pornographers which they have been made out to be in recent times. They are commercially minded people that show tolerance and openness in business, the workplace can be informal and it is common practice for employees to be on first name terms. The Dutch believe in equality for all members of society and think the British class system quite intolerable. They are generally friendly and helpful and do not believe in wasting time on trivialities. Other unacceptable forms of behavior are laziness, lack of punctuality and extravagance with money.

Health

The standards of health care are high. The majority of health care workers understand English.

The Netherlands has an excellent two tier health care service comprising curative and preventative care, under the overall control of the Ministry of Health. Most health care provision comes from private organisations and is funded through insurance schemes.

Medical Facilities

- **Pharmacies** – in the Netherlands are called Apotheek and are usually open from 8.00 to 17.30 in addition one pharmacy in the area will stay open after hours to handle emergency prescriptions. The rota is published in the local paper and a copy in the Pharmacy window. For minor ailments they are highly qualified and will probably be able to prescribe something for you.
- **Medical Insurance** – If you use the Dutch health service you must be able to prove that you are paying into a health insurance fund or a private medical insurance scheme.
- E111 entitled all EU nationals to subsidized medical treatment in any member state. This covers emergencies but will only cover part of your costs.

Consult a doctor who practices within the health insurance scheme, during surgery hours. Provide a photocopy of your E111. Pharmacists will also need a photocopy of the E111. Treatment by a doctor is usually free of charge. Only some prescribed medicines are free. Dental care is limited to children and preventative dental care for adults.

For hospital treatment a doctor must obtain an ANOZ Verzekeringen authorization for you to receive free hospital in patient treatment. A photocopy of your E111 is required.

- **Emergencies** – If you are involved in or are witness to a serious accident call an ambulance on 112.

Housing

The important thing to remember when renting or buying property in the Netherlands is: if in doubt keep quiet. An oral agreement is legally binding under Dutch law. It is safest to discuss your views with your relocation consultant or the rental agent, and let them do the talking. If a contract is being drawn up it is legally binding.

- **Rented accommodation** – the cost is high and as a foreigner you are only eligible for free-sector apartments, so you can expect to pay the highest rate.
- **Unfurnished property** – will not have furniture and may not have light fittings, curtains, water heaters, floor coverings or kitchen appliances.
- **Partly Furnished property (Gestoffeerd)** – should have light fittings, floor and window coverings, but little or no furniture.
- **Furnished home** – May have everything including furniture, fixtures and fittings, pots and pans, linen, cutlery and crockery. Don't be afraid to ask for things you would like to be included, most landlords are willing to arrange the things you need, especially in high priced apartments.
- **Deposits** – these can be anything from one month to three.

Education

- **Primary Education** – caters for children 4 to 12. Schooling is compulsory from the age of 5. There are both public run schools financed by the state and privately run schools

which are either religious based, or which follow some special education philosophy eg Montessori or Rudolf Steiner. Many pupils sit a leaving exam this influences their placement into secondary education.

There are a considerable number of British schools which cater for the GCSE curriculum.

Sources of information

- Council of British Independent Schools in the European Community, Lucy's Hill, Hythe, Kent CT21 5ES.
Tel: 01303 260 857
- European Council of International Schools, 21B Lavant Street, Petersfield, Hants GU32 3EL. Tel: 01730 268 244
- Foundation for International Education, c/o Dienst Onderwijs, Postbus 12650, 25000 DP Den Haag,
Tel: 070 353 26 59
- Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Secretariaat VBI, PO Box 25000, 2700 LZ, Zoetermeer.
Tel: 079 323 23 23

Driving in Netherlands

Travelers in possession of a valid driving licence may use that licence to drive in the Netherlands. However, in some instances an International licence is required, these can be obtained from automobile associations in your home country.

If residing in the Netherlands you must exchange your UK driving licence within one year of taking up residency in the Netherlands. You must have been issued within a one-year period during which the holder resided at least 185 days.

Transport

- **Bicycles** – With a population of 15 million there are nearly as many bicycles at 12 million. Cycling is influenced by the flat terrain, high price of petrol, traffic congestion and lack of parking. There is an extensive network of lanes and paths designed to keep cyclists out of the way of other vehicles on the road. However, you should be aware of a huge trade in stolen cycles.
- **Public Transport** – If you already have a ticket, you can board a bus or tram at any door, otherwise you can buy a ticket at the front door. Failure to produce a ticket to an inspector, could result in a fine and you should retain it until your journey is completed as inspectors and police regularly check tickets at underground station exits as well as on buses and trams. Monthly and yearly season tickets are available for regular users.

Children under 6, accompanied by an adult, travel free.

Activities

Cycling is the most popular activity, and the smooth cycle paths are also used a lot by in-line skaters. Windsurfing and sailing have a lot of fans in the waterlogged provinces of Friesland and Zeeland. If it's cold enough in the winter it's possible to make long ice-skating tours from town to town

along connecting canals. Wadlopen is a serious pastime – strenuous and at times dangerous – involving long low-tide walks in mud that can come up to your thighs. Yes, people really do this. Groningen, in the north, is the best place to organise your mud-walking excursion.

Post

Delivery services are surprisingly good with items mailed within Netherlands usually arriving the next morning. As well as the traditional postal services, Netherlands post offices now offer banking services including a current account and savings account. All bills can be paid and you can purchase fiscal stamps for all kinds of official and administrative documents as well as national lottery tickets, greeting cards, fishing licences and money orders.

Television and Video

TV (and car radio) licences must be renewed annually. Like in other countries, the number and variety of channels is increasing, but the availability depends very much on the locations. The quality of sound and image is generally satisfactory and some of the German channels even broadcast in stereo.

It is worth noting that 98% of videos are VHS and 99.9% of them only work on European TV's. If you are bringing tapes from abroad, therefore, you might have to bring the TV on which to play them as well.

Utilities

Electricity: Voltage in Belgium is 220 volts. British and Irish appliances work adequately despite the slight difference in voltage, but they may need plug adapters, whereas America appliances will need a transformer.

Gas: Gas distributed by public companies is natural gas. If you are bringing in gas appliances from abroad, you will have to be sure that they are suited to natural gas and properly regulated (for this, call a plumber). Some appliances also work on bottled propane or butane gas, which can be delivered to your home.

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date we cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.