



POLITIE

Your stay in Groningen or Leeuwarden

Police
information
for
International
Students

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The police force in the Netherlands

The police force has an important role in Dutch society. It aims to ensure a safe environment for the people in the Netherlands, regardless of their heritage, gender, nationality, religion, politics, sexual orientation or background. To protect the democracy in this country.

Police officers are trained to uphold the law, conduct criminal investigations and offer aid to those who need it.

In order to do this, they work closely with other national and international organisations, such as local and national

governments, fire departments, health services, official housing cooperations and educational institutions.



Contacting the police 24/7

Call 112 in an emergency situation

Always call 112 if you need emergency assistance. If a crime is in progress, someone is (badly) injured or you find yourself in a dangerous situation, calling 112 will ensure the quickest response from your local police, ambulance service or fire department. Calling 112 is free-of-charge. A trained officer will ask for your location and a description of the emergency at hand. The officer will send local services to your location, if needed, and will give you supportive advice.

Dial 0900-8844 to contact the police in non-emergency situations

You can call 0900-8844 to contact the police in non-emergency situations, such as:

- reporting a crime which is not currently in progress
- making an appointment at your local police station to file an official crime report
- informing the police that you have witnessed a crime or have other information that may help a police investigation
- reporting suspicious incidents

- general questions for your local police department

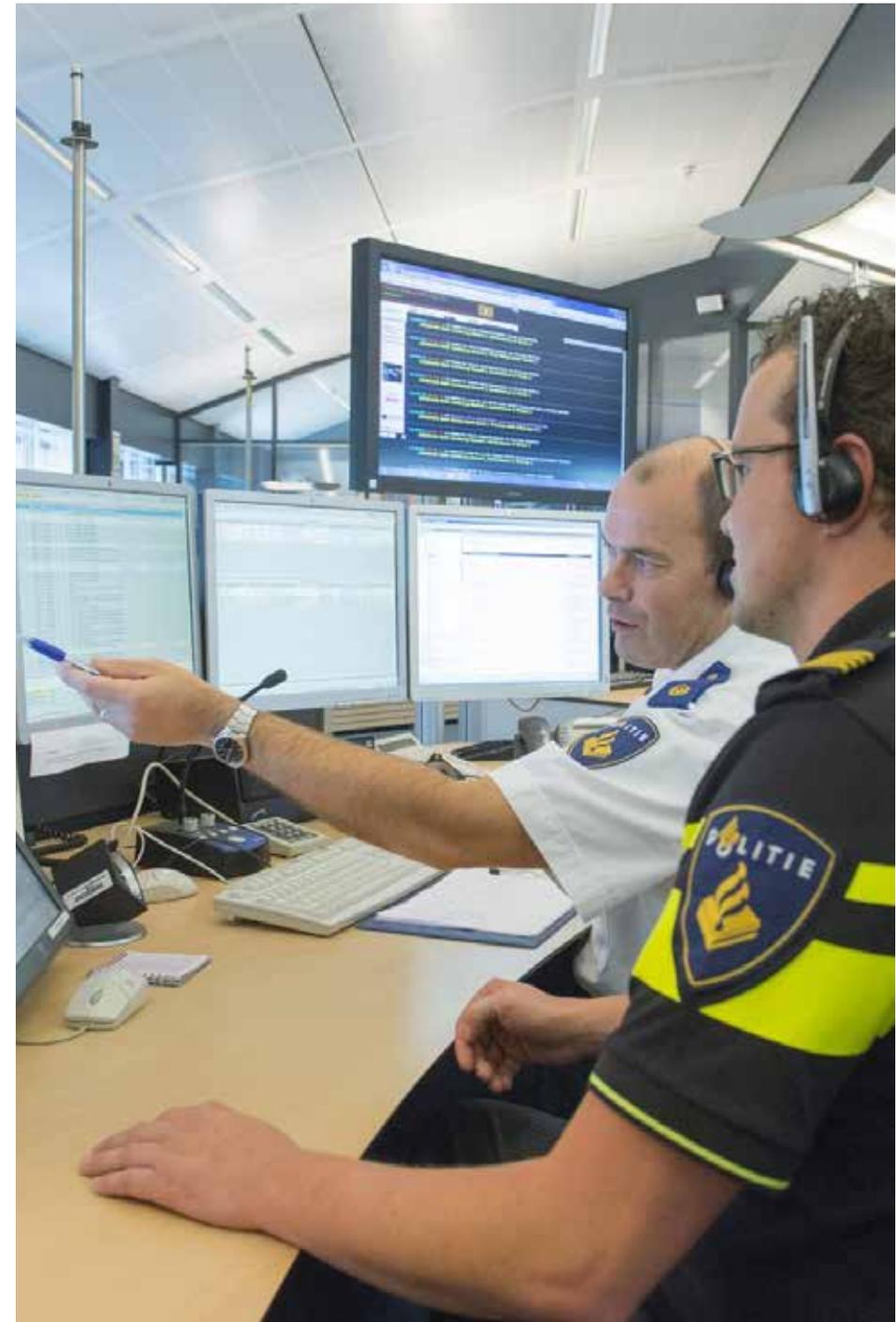
Note: if you wish to contact the Dutch police from outside of the Netherlands, call +31 34 357 8844.

Reporting a crime anonymously

You may have information that could help a criminal investigation or could even prevent a crime, but you are too afraid to report it. You can then call M.0800-7000 or report online via www.meldmisdaadanoniem.nl. 'Meld Misdaad Anoniem' or 'M' is an independent organisation in the Netherlands which serves as an intermediary to the police and other investigation services. This means that you can provide the 'M' employee with information that could help victims in their criminal case without leaving your personal information. This employee will then forward the information to the police without revealing your identity. For more information on 'Meld Misdaad Anoniem', visit their website www.meldmisdaadanoniem.nl.

Contacting the police if you are deaf or your hearing is impaired

In case of emergency, call 0800-8112 (text phone)
In non-emergency situations, call 0900-1844 (text phone).



Reporting a crime

You have become the victim of a crime. You want the person responsible to be caught. As a victim, you will need to file an official crime report if you want the police to start a criminal investigation. You will also need the official report if you wish to file an insurance claim for any damages you may have suffered.

Anyone can file an official crime report in the Netherlands, including people without Dutch citizenship.

How do I file an official report?

There is a difference between informing the police about a crime and filing an official crime report. If you want to file an official crime report to press charges, there are two ways to do it:

1. Police officers are already at your location because you were in an emergency situation or the nature of the crime required their presence at the location of the crime. Explain to the officers that you wish to file an official crime report (*in Dutch: aangifte doen*). They will either take your official statement immediately or they will make an appointment with you.

2. You wish to report a non-emergency crime for which you have not yet contacted the police. Call 0900-8844 to make an appointment at your local police station.

An official translator can be made available to help you file a complete and accurate crime report.

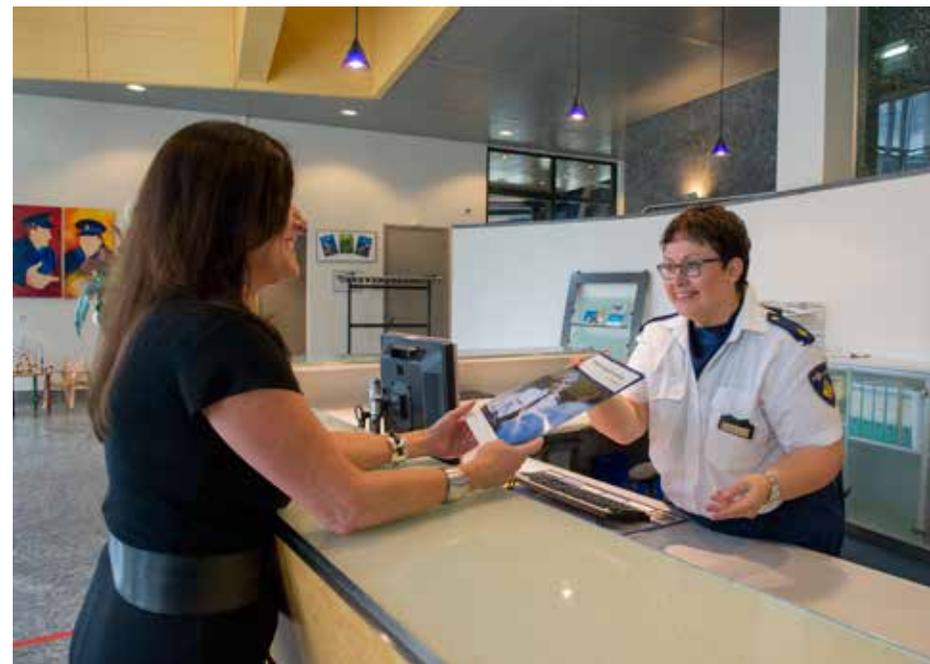
The procedure for filing an official crime report

- You can prepare before you give your official statement to the police:
- make sure you can provide the officer with an official passport or other means of identification that is recognised by the Dutch government (see chapter on losing your passport)
 - have your contact information ready (phone number

and address where you can be reached)

- try to provide as much detailed information as possible (location of the crime, timeframe)
- if you are the victim of a property crime, try to provide a detailed list of the items that were stolen. Include any unique codes, such as registration numbers or bank account numbers. If you have any receipts or pictures of the items stolen, bring these so that copies can be included in the official report.

A police officer will take your statement in as much detail as possible. You will receive an official copy of your report. If you wish, the police can give you progress updates on the criminal investigation, such as when an arrest has been made.



The Dutch Public Prosecution Service (*In Dutch: Openbaar Ministerie*) decides who is to appear before a court and on what charges. They can keep you informed on court hearings and possible convictions. Visit their website <https://www.om.nl/algemeen/english> for more information.

If you have any questions regarding the procedure of filing an official crime report, call 0900-8844.

Victim Support

Victim Support the Netherlands is there to provide emotional, practical and legal support to all victims, free of charge. Are you the victim of a crime, such

as a violent crime, sexual abuse or a burglary? Or are you the victim of a traffic accident? If so, you may have to deal with various consequences. Victim Support the Netherlands is there to help you, surviving dependents, witnesses and other involved persons. Their support is free of charge.

Visit their website www.slachtofferhulp.nl for more information, or call 0900-0101 (Monday to Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm).

Reporting other disturbances

Anti-social behaviour, such as littering, loud music at night, drug or alcohol use in the streets, misuse of fire-works or vandalism can be a nuisance to passers-by or people living in the surrounding area. The police will monitor this behaviour. People committing anti-social behaviour risk being fined, having their stereo equipment or other possessions confiscated and can, in some instances, even be arrested.

A few examples of fines for anti-social behaviour are:

- littering on the street with, for example, cans, cigarettes and papers	140 euro
- urinating in residential and public areas	140 euro
- producing excess noise (music, shouting, etc)	140 euro
- not carrying a valid means of identification as recognised by the Dutch government	90 euro
- consuming alcohol on the streets	90 euro
- drunk and disorderly behaviour	90 euro
- giving a false identity to a police officer	370 euro
- insulting a police officer	* euro
- other crimes /disturbances related to anti-social behaviour (such as kicking over a trash bin or climbing on public monuments	230 euro

*The Dutch Public Prosecution Service decides on the appropriate fine.
(A 9 euro administrative fee will be charged with each fine).

Call 0900-8844 to report anti-social behaviour.



Preventing crime

There are a number of ways in which crime can be prevented:

- Always lock your student room, house and windows, even if you think you will only leave for a few minutes
- Always lock your car, bicycle or other means of transportation, even if you think you will only leave them unattended for a few minutes
- Lock your bicycle with two different locks. Lock it to something solid with a chain so that your bicycle cannot be carried away without unlocking it. Make sure the chain goes through the frame of the bicycle, so that your bicycle cannot be stolen separately from the wheel. Lock your bicycle even if you have stored it in a locked shed. Park it in a lit area at night.
- Keep your valuables in zipped pockets or fastened bags while you are in public places. Do not leave your bags unattended. Keep an eye on your personal belongings.
- Write down any registration numbers or unique product codes. Take pictures of jewellery or other valuable items. This way, if your items do get stolen and the police retrieve or find them somewhere, they can be traced back to you more easily.
- Install a track-and-trace system on your electronic device. Some devices can also be wiped of its contents remotely, so that the perpetrator no longer has access to the information on your device.



Prevent yourself from becoming involved in criminal activity

Criminals not only sell their stolen goods to make a profit, but also to ensure that they can no longer be caught with them. They may try and sell you bicycles or other items on the streets, via other people or by posting ads on the internet. If you are in the possession of stolen items you will be arrested and you risk a criminal record yourself, even if you have paid for the item. The item will also be confiscated.

Here are a few ways you can prevent yourself from becoming involved in criminal activity:

- do not buy a bicycle if it is offered by someone on the streets
- do not buy a bicycle or item if it is offered for a price way below the normal price-range, even if the item is second-hand
- look for signs that may indicate an item has been stolen (specific damage indicating the item has been forcibly removed, such as scratched out registration numbers, original lock missing)
- some stolen items are registered as stolen on the website www.stopheling.nl.



Losing your passport/driving licence

In the Netherlands, from the age of 14 you are legally required to show a valid means of identification as recognised by the Dutch government. You can be fined or even detained at a police station if you cannot comply with this law. Police officers will use the time during which you are detained to prove your identity.

The Dutch government recognises the following as a valid means of identification*:

- a valid, official passport
- a valid identification card
- a valid identification card issued by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service
- a valid driving licence

** A passport may not be sufficient if you are staying in the Netherlands for a longer period of time. Not all identification cards or driver's licenses qualify as a valid means of identification in the Netherlands. Check with your embassy to ensure that you always carry the correct documents to prove your identity.*

Lost or stolen passport, identification card or driver's licence

If your passport, identification card or driver's license has been lost or stolen, it is very important that you report this. People can use your identity in criminal activity and thereby possibly implicate you. If you are sure that your passport or card is indeed stolen or lost, you can report this at your local Dutch municipality or police station, depending on your personal situation. Some embassies even need an official report in order to process your application for a new passport.

People from abroad who have registered as residents in the Netherlands

Those who have registered with a local Dutch municipality as residents, can go to the same local Dutch municipality to report the loss or theft of their passport, identification card or driver's licence. You will

receive an official form which you can use to apply for a replacement at your country's Embassy.

People from abroad who have not registered as residents in the Netherlands

People from abroad who have not (yet) registered residents in a local Dutch municipality can go to a police station to report the loss or theft of their passport, identification card or driver's licence. You will receive an official form which you can use to apply for a replacement at your country's Embassy.

If you are unsure of where to go, call 0900-8844 or go to your local police station for advice.



Drug policy in the Netherlands

Drugs are illegal in the Netherlands. The Dutch however, are known for maintaining a more tolerant policy towards the use of soft-drugs (marihuana, hashish, 'magic' mushrooms). This does not mean that soft drugs are simply free to use, produce or distribute in the Netherlands. There are strict regulations when it comes to any drug use. If you are caught breaking these rules, there can be serious consequences.

The soft-drug policy

Any drug use in the Netherlands is illegal. Because of the more tolerant view on soft-drugs however, you are less likely to be fined or arrested if you adhere to the following:

- you only buy soft-drugs in official coffee shops
- you are 18 years of age or older when you buy or use soft-drugs
- you only use soft-drugs in the smoking areas of coffee shops or at home
- you only possess soft drugs for personal use
- you do not, at any time, possess more than 5 grams of soft-drugs

If you carry any soft-drugs around, you risk having them

confiscated. If you have much more than five grams in your possession, you might also be charged with the intention to distribute. If you are found guilty, you will have a criminal record and you could be incarcerated.

The hard-drug policy

The use, production or distribution of any amount or kind of hard drugs is a crime for which you risk being arrested. Hard drugs such as GHB, heroin, cocaine, amphetamine, XTC and MDMA are not tolerated.

Additional warning

The import and/or export of any amount of soft or hard drugs is a direct violation of national and international law, for which

you will be arrested. If found guilty, you will have a criminal record.

Be advised that some of the substances or plants which are legal in other countries, such as Qat, are illegal in the Netherlands.

Mixing drugs with alcohol can be very dangerous. Always keep an eye on your drink.



Traffic regulations

Bicycles

In order to prevent traffic accidents, police officers also regularly check to make sure that cyclists uphold traffic regulations. If your behaviour in traffic or your means of transportation is not up to regulation, you risk being fined.

Make sure that you uphold general traffic regulations, that you make use of bicycle paths wherever possible and that you are visible to others. Examples of fines:

- cycling through a red stoplight 90 euro
- cycling in a pedestrian area 55 euro
- cycling at night or in very bad weather without working lights 55 euro

(A 9 euro administrative fee will be charged with each fine).

Cars

If you want to bring your car to the Netherlands, make sure it complies with the Dutch quality regulations. Parking in bigger cities might require a parking ticket or, if you live in such an area, a parking permit. Permits can be arranged at your local city hall. You can check with your country's embassy to see

whether your driver's licence is valid in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, parking is regulated by traffic wardens as well. Although police officers can also fine parking offenders, traffic wardens perform regular checks. If you have received a parking fine, it has likely been issued by a traffic warden.

Wrongful parking has a fee of 90 euro, excluding the 9 euro administrative costs.

If your license plate is lost or stolen, remember to report this to your local police immediately. This way, people do not have the opportunity to use your license plate for criminal activity. This could implicate you in their crime. Also, if they are fined using your license plate, you will be held responsible for this fine if you have not reported the loss or theft of your license plate to the police.

Alcohol, drugs and traffic

Consuming alcohol or drugs can have a very strong effect on your ability to drive a vehicle, which can lead to major traffic accidents. If you do consume alcohol or drugs before operating a vehicle, you risk

being arrested or fined. You can also lose your driver's license.

Bear in mind that most insurance companies will not cover any of your expenses if you have even the smallest amount of alcohol or drugs in your system. This means that you can be personally held accountable for both your own costs as well as any other victim's costs after an accident.



Additional information

Dutch National Police Force – www.politie.nl

Dutch National Government – www.government.nl

Dutch Public Prosecution Service - <https://www.om.nl/algemeen/english>

Meld Misdaad Anoniem (reporting information anonymously) – www.meldmisdaadanoniem.nl

Stop Heling (prevent buying stolen goods) - www.stopheling.nl

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