

ACCESS

Guide

Post Office

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www.access-nl.org

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Introduction

The Dutch Post Office used to be an office where you could obtain all postal products and services and some services not related to mail. These Post Offices do not exist anymore and have been replaced by smaller Post shops, located in other shops, such as bookstores, tobacco shops and supermarkets. These Post shops are still called Post Office and offer all products and services from PostNL and sometimes a few other services as well.

Opening times of Post Offices vary and generally they have the same opening hours as the shop in which they are located.

Please be aware that for important transactions identification is required such as a passport or Dutch driving license, a European or Dutch identity card.

Postal products and services

PostNL (previously called TNT Post) is the main Dutch postal company (www.postnl.nl) and offers their products and services via the Post Office. Some products can only be ordered via the website.

PostNL has a Telephone Customer Service (Klantenservice); all operators speak English.

Phone 0900 0990 (€ 0, 10/minute) and press 9 for English.

You can also send a letter to: PostNL Klantenservice
Postbus 99180
8900 NA LEEUWARDEN

For all services, PostNL provides brochures in Dutch. You can ask for them at the customer service, at the Post Office or find them on www.postnl.nl. PostNL correctly delivers 95.6% of all mail within 24 hours, however wrongly delivered mail can be re-addressed and posted free of charge.

PostNL recognizes two main types of mail. They are:

- Mail box post (brievenbuspost). The dimension is maximum 38 x 26.5 x 3.2 cm. Postage is the same for all matter and goes by weight.
- Packages (pakketten). Where the dimension is more than 38 x 26.5 x 3.2 cm or heavier than 3 kg (with a maximum of 30 kg).

In general, postage depends on weight.

The products and services available at the Post Office are:

- Buying stamps.
- Weighing letters or packages and sending mail in different ways (e.g. Registered mail, express mail). The staff can advise you. Boxes for packages in different sizes are for sale.
- Collection of mail that could not be delivered to your house.

- Services such as retaining mail at the Post Office while you are away from home (bewaarservice), forwarding your mail to a temporary address (doorzendservice) or permanent address (verhuisservice).
- It is also possible to purchase pre-paid cards for your mobile phone, the anonymous OV Chip card, assistance in car registration and road tax and even concert tickets. You can also develop your photo album, print cards with your photo, subscribe to a magazine or buy gift tokens. The website from PostNL also has its own online shop.
- There are special PostNL Business Points for handling company mail and packages. They are specialised in dealing with large volumes and have longer opening hours. PostNL Business Service: (088) 86 86 868.

The most important products and services are discussed below:

Stamps

- Since July 2010 stamps do not show a price any more (e.g. €0.44) but a 1 or a 2. Stamps with a 1 are for letters and postcards up to 20 grams; stamps with a 2 are for letters and postcards from 20-50 grams. Depending on its destination you will find an addition on the stamp saying: Nederland (for mail inside the Netherlands), Europa (for mail within Europe, but outside the Netherlands) or Wereld (for mail to countries outside Europe). Even if the tariff for sending mail changes, these stamps remain valid. You do not need to add extra stamps (bijplakken niet nodig) to get the right value. If you have stamps with a price on it, you can still use them, but you need to add extra stamps until you have the actual value. You can use stamps with the addition “Nederland” for sending mail abroad, but you need to use twice as much “Nederland 1” stamps as you would use “Europa 1” stamps. E.g. If you need want to send a letter up to 20 grams to the UK, you need one “Europa 1 “stamp. If you do not have these stamps, you can also use 2 “Nederland “1 stamps. In this case, you need to add a priority sticker (available at the Post Office). If you send mail to countries outside Europe, you need to use three times as much “Nederland 1” stamps as you would use “Wereld 1” stamps. E.g. If you want to send a letter up to 20 grams to India, you need one “Wereld 1” stamp. If you do not have these stamps, you can also use three “Nederland “1 stamps. In this case, you need to add a priority sticker (available at the Post Office).
- Many department stores, supermarkets, and bookshops also sell stamps. If you purchase a card, it is possible to buy a stamp. Examples are Albert Heijn, Bruna, V&D, C-1000, Super de Boer and Primera. Additionally, in some card shops you will only be able to buy a stamp for the card you have purchased there.
- You do not need to pay any postage when the address contains an antwoordnummer. An envelope or postcard may have a small box in the upper right-hand corner “een postzegel is niet nodig” or “mag ongefrankeerd verzonden worden” or “port betaald”. These can be mailed within the Netherlands without a stamp.
- Every December PostNL sells sheets with 20 stamps (decemberzegels) for normal-sized greeting cards (max. 50 g). These entitle you to send unsealed envelopes or postcards within the Netherlands for less than the normal postage. They are only valid for use from late November of the year they are issued until the beginning of January of the following year. After that, they are still usable, but additional postage is required.

- Every year in October/November, children all over the Netherlands knock on doors and take orders for children's stamps (kinderzegels) and postcards. Part of the money goes to PostNL and the rest to children's charities. The allocations are stated on the stamps.
- There are also special occasion stamps for birthdays, marriage, birth of a baby and funerals. The prices are the same as for normal letters and cards, but the design commemorates the special occasion.
- On the internet (www.postnl.nl) you can design personalised stamps including a photo or picture of your choice. There is a minimum order of one sheet (ten stamps) and they will be sent to you by mail.

Registered mail

To ensure delivery for destinations inside and outside the Netherlands you can choose one of the following options:

- Registered mail (aangetekend): mail with a maximum weight of 2 kg for letters or up to 30 kg for packages requiring a signature by recipient is sent by registered mail, which is intended for documents and correspondence with legal implications. If this mail is lost, damaged or delayed, you will receive a refund. You do not receive notification of delivery however; this item of mail can be traced if necessary.
- Registered with insurance (aangetekend met verzekerd vervoer): packages may be insured up to a maximum value of € 5,500. It is not intended for money, cheques or jewellery but for items with more than a financial value; e.g. Photograph albums. In certain circumstances, the goods are insured up to the material value of the goods declared on the form.
- You can trace your registered mail with PostNL track & trace via www.postnl.nl). This service is not available at the post office.

Packages

Packages (up to 10 kg and up to 100 x 50 x 50 cm) can be sent in the following ways:

Within the Netherlands:

- You can send a package easily at the Post Office or ask PostNL to pick it up at your house or work (at additional costs). PostNL intends to deliver it within 24 hours.
- When sending a package you can choose to use an additional service : aangetekend pakket (registered package), pakket met verzekerservice (package with insurance) or pakket met spoedservice (package with urgent delivery).
- If you sell valuable goods and want to send them to the buyer, you can use Pakket met betaalservice (package with pay service). PostNL will not deliver the package until the addressee has paid the amount of money you told PostNL. The addressee will have to pay at delivery.
- You can trace your package with PostNL track & trace via the internet. This service is not available at the post office.

Packages sent abroad:

- For sending a package up to 2 kg, you can use the service "Pakket buitenland"

(package abroad). The mail carrier in the country of destination will deliver the package to your home. The delivery time depends on the country of destination.

- For valuable packages you may want an additional service. PostNL offers “Aangetekend pakket” (registered package) and “Pakket met verzekerservice” (package with insurance).
- For packages within the EU that must be delivered in time, PostNL offers the service “Pakket met spoedservice” (package with urgent delivery).
- For sending packages outside the EU, you need to complete Customs Form CN22. If the value of the goods exceeds €425 form CN23 is required.

Fast delivery of mail

Within the Netherlands: for delivery of a package or letter within the Netherlands on the same day (by courier) call TNT Express at 0800-1234. You can make the arrangement by telephone. For delivery the next day (TNT Easy Express), you have to go to the Post Office and use pre-paid express envelopes or pre-paid express stamps. In general, delivery by courier is more expensive than by express and price is dependent on content, weight, size and destination.

International: for delivery of a package or letter by courier to other countries TNT offers the service TNT Express. You can make the arrangement by telephone at 0800-1234.

The following options are available:

- Delivery on the same day
- Delivery tomorrow
- Delivery tomorrow with a guaranteed time of delivery
- Delivery on an agreed date

It is also possible to ask TNT Express to pick up your letter or package. Amongst the extra services are insurance of your letter or package and let the receiver pay for the costs of delivery.

In general, costs vary according to the delivery time and the country sent to. For more information call TNT Express at 0800 1234 (free of charge).

If a courier service is not necessary, you can use TNT Easy Express <http://www.tnteasyexpress.nl/> for letters or packages that contain only documents. The pre-paid envelopes and stamps are also available for international destinations. They can be contacted at 0800 1234 (free of charge).

Bewaarservice, doorzendservice and verhuisservice

Retaining mail at the Post Office (Bewaarservice): for a period when you are away, PostNL can collect your mail at the Post Office for up to a maximum of 13 weeks. There

are two choices for retrieval of your mail: you can collect it at the Post Office or the PostNL will deliver it to you upon your return. An application form needs to be completed, up to two names, at the address at least seven days before you leave. A valid form of identification, such as a passport or driving licence is required for the application form. You will receive a confirmation. This is a paid service. Only mail delivered by PostNL can be retained at the Post Office. Mail delivered by other postal companies is excluded from this service.

- Forwarding service (Doorzendservice): PostNL will forward your mail to any address in the Netherlands, in Europe or outside Europe where you are staying. You must provide the information to the Post Office at least a week in advance of the starting date of the service. An application form needs to be completed up to two names and addresses. This is a paid service.
- Change of Address (Verhuisservice): when changing your address in the Netherlands or when you are moving abroad, PostNL will forward your mail free for a period of one month if you move within the Netherlands. For a small fee, PostNL will forward your mail for a longer period or to an address outside the Netherlands. You may also purchase pre-stamped and pre-printed postcards to be mailed within the Netherlands that will include your current and new address. Please note that all mail with the same surname will be forwarded. An application form needs to be submitted at least one month in advance. You can choose to forward your mail from minimum 1 to maximum 12 months.

Products and Services not Related to Mail

At the Post Office there are also products and services available that are not related to mail. Not all products and services are available at every Post Office. In general large Post Offices offer all products and services mentioned below; small Post Offices will only have some of these products and services.

The additional products and services are:

- Pre-paid cards for your mobile phone
- Anonymous OV Chipcard for bus, tram, metro and train
- Assistance in car registration and moped registration
- Lottery tickets
- Gift tokens (cadeaubonnen)
- A license for fishing (Kleine Vispas)
- Boxes to use when you are moving

For more information about these products and services, see www.postnl.nl or call the customer service on 0900 0990 (€0.10/minute)

Mail boxes

Mail boxes are orange and available at all Post Offices and on the streets in all areas. They are emptied once a day, in general at 17.00 on working days. At the weekend the mailboxes are emptied only on a Sunday. You can see on the mailbox the time of the next collection.

The mailboxes have two slots; one for local mail (as indicated by postcode) and one for

all other destinations (Overige postcodes).

Addressing Mail

For addressing mail, follow these examples:

ACCESS
Zeestraat 100
2518 AD DEN HAAG

The addressee (family or company name) goes on the first line. The street name (straatnaam) followed by the house number (huisnummer) or postal box (postbus) on the second line. The postal code (postcode) and city (plaatsnaam) on the third line, in capitals. To address a letter or package to an address outside the Netherlands, be sure to write the country of destination.

Unwanted Mail

In the Netherlands you may receive printed advertisements in your mailbox. These advertisements are not addressed and are delivered in every mailbox. If you do not want these advertisements, you can get a special sticker to put on your mailbox.

There are two kinds of stickers: ja/nee (yes/no) and nee/nee (no/no). The ja/nee sticker indicates that you do not want unaddressed printed advertisements but you do want free local newspapers delivered. The nee/nee sticker indicates that you do not want any unaddressed mail.

These stickers can be obtained at the municipality (gemeente) or ordered by telephone on 0900-202 50 95 (€0.25/minute)

Many organisations, for example book clubs and lotteries, send direct mail.

They buy files with addresses to send out promotional mail. You can have your address removed from the listing by sending a card to:

Postfilter
Postbus 666
1000 AR AMSTERDAM

You can also register on the internet: www.postfilter.nl (website is only in Dutch) or e-mail to info@postfilter.nl.

Postfilter will not charge you for this service. After three years or when you change address, you have to ask again to block your address for direct mail.

Except for direct mail, you can also ask to block your landline or mobile phone, e-mail or SMS or advertisements or market research, through www.bel-me-niet.nl.

Other International Post Companies in the Netherlands

Competition is growing fast for sending mail. PostNL is still the most important company, but others are entering into the market. At the moment, these competitors address mainly the business market. Some important competitors are UPS and DHL, Sandd and Selekt Mail. The Dutch postal market has been fully liberalized, i.e. PostNL is no longer be the only one who has the right to deliver letters and postcards up to 50 gram; other companies are allowed to do this as well.

Sources

Most websites listed here are only in Dutch.

www.post.nl.nl : website from PostNL, the Dutch postal company

www.tntexpress.nl : “TNT easy express” fast delivery

www.tracktrace.nl: track and trace

www.sandd.nl: website from Sandd, a competitor of PostNL

www.selektmail.nl : website from Selekt Mail, a competitor of PostNL

www.ups.com: website from UPS, a competitor of PostNL (website also in English)

www.dhl.nl: website from DHL, a competitor of PostNL

www.postfilter.nl : website to block your address for unwanted mail

www.bel-me-niet.nl: website to block your landline or mobile phone from telemarketing calls.

Addresses and phone numbers

Customer service (klantenservice) PostNL

Postbus 99180

8900 NA LEEUWARDEN

Tel:(058) 233 33 33 (press 9 and in the next menu press also 9)

www.tntpost.nl

Sandd B.V.

Postbus 10071

7301 GB APELDOORN

Tel: (055) 368 25 25

www.sandd.nl

TNT Express

Tel: 0800-12 34

ACCESS guides available for downloading, free of charge, from the ACCESS website:

- Banking
- Childcare and playgroups
- Food from home
- Having a baby in The Netherlands
- Health care
- Housing and accommodation
- Inheritance and wills
- International primary and secondary education
- Learning the Dutch language
- Marriage , registered partnership, cohabitation and ending a relationship
- Obtaining a driving license in the Netherlands
- Post Office
- Public Transport
- Social Security
- Starting your own Business
- Studying in the Netherlands
- Telephone, internet and television
- What to do when leaving the Netherlands
- Working in the Netherlands

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ACCESS did everything possible to ensure correct and up-to-date information. ACCESS cannot accept responsibility for any information that may have changed. If you need more information about this subject, please contact the organisations listed or look at the websites mentioned.