



Ministry of Infrastructure
and Water Management

Participating in Dutch Traffic





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Participating in Dutch Traffic

Arriving in the Netherlands one quickly recognises that the road environment is different than in other countries. To participate safely in Dutch traffic, we've listed which rules are in play, what signs are unique and how to comply, especially as a driver of a motorised vehicle. Here some of the most important Dutch traffic rules and regulations are highlighted, to keep you and others safe. The complete translation of Dutch traffic rules and regulations can be found on the [government website](#).

Download Road Traffic Signs and Regulations in the Netherlands >

Behaving safely in Dutch Traffic

To take part in the Dutch traffic safely one should take account of the priority rules.

- > Drive on the right, overtake on the left.
- > On crossings without traffic signals or priority rules, give way to all traffic on your right side, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- > Buses have priority when pulling out from a bus stop inside the urban area.
- > Trams always have the right of way, and all road users must yield to trams when crossing tram tracks or intersections. Be mindful of tram stops and avoid obstructing tram pathways. Remember that sudden stops and turns can be challenging for tram operators, so maintain a safe distance and avoid overtaking trams unless it is safe and legally permitted.
- > On intersections with 'Shark's teeth' (Haaientanden) road marking you must yield to traffic coming from left and right. This includes cyclists and motorised traffic. In the Netherlands these markings and accompanied signs are used frequently.
- > Drivers intending to make left or right turns must yield to pedestrians and cyclists proceeding straight ahead. This scenario frequently arises, especially at traffic signals. Exercise caution and prioritize the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly when approaching or navigating through intersections with traffic signals.
- > To ensure a secure road environment and promote attentiveness among road users, it is prohibited to hold electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in your hand while operating a moving vehicle. This rule is applicable to drivers of automobiles, micro cars, motorcycles, mopeds, scooters, and bicycles. The use of mobile phones is permitted only in conjunction with a hands-free system.
- > To maintain a safe and responsible road environment, it is imperative to adhere to the Dutch regulations regarding alcohol, drugs and specific medication. Operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol and drugs is strictly prohibited for drivers of automobiles, micro cars, motorcycles, mopeds, scooters, and bicycles. It is recommended to abstain from consuming alcohol or drugs if you intend to drive. Dutch law sets specific blood alcohol concentration limits, and exceeding these limits can result in severe legal consequences. Please be aware of and follow these regulations to ensure the safety of yourself and others on the road.

- > Bike paths in the Netherlands are used by various types of (electric) bicycles: electric, cargo bikes, mopeds, etc.. These have different speeds and can be wider than a regular bicycle. Be aware that cyclists might go faster than expected or take up more space.
- > On highway, during peak hours, motorcycles in the Netherlands are allowed to filter through or overtake between stationary or slow-moving cars on highways at a maximum speed of 10 km/h above the slowest traffic.



Photo: © Norali Nayla from unsplash.com

Cycling safely in Dutch traffic

Rules and regulations

- > If there's a bike lane, always use it.
- > Cycle on the right side of the bike lane, and pass other cyclists on the left.
- > Before turning left or right, extend your arm horizontally (left or right) to signal where you'll go.
- > A maximum of two cyclists are allowed to bike side by side provided they do not obstruct other traffic.
- > You're not allowed to cycle on sidewalks.
- > Your bicycle must have a working light both at the front (white) and the back (red) when cycling through dusk, dawn and darkness.

Recommendation

- > Wearing a bicycle helmet is recommended because it reduces the risk of serious head injury.

More on guidelines regarding walking and cycling rules can be found in this visual brochure: [brochure-veilig-lopen-en-fietsen.pdf \(itc.nl\)](#)

Using motorised vehicles in the Netherlands

Requirements for driving motorised vehicles

It is compulsory to be in possession of a valid driving license, vehicle registration papers and insurance documents when driving a motorised vehicle like a car, truck, motorcycle, moped or scooter in the Netherlands. A Dutch, EU or International driving license accompanied by the original driver licence is acceptable unless the driver holds non-EU citizenship and has been residing in the Netherlands for more than 185 days. In this case he/she must have a valid Dutch driving license.

In the Netherlands, the terms “Bromfiets” and “Snorfiets” refer to different categories of mopeds, and they are subject to distinct regulations. Here’s the difference between the two:

- A “**Bromfiets**” is a category that includes mopeds with a maximum design speed of up to 45 km/h (about 28 m/h). Bromfiets mopeds are allowed to travel on roads, bike paths, and moped paths.
- A “**Snorfiets**” is a category that includes mopeds with a maximum design speed of up to 25 km/h (about 15,5 m/h). Snorfiets mopeds are generally restricted to bike paths and roads with a maximum speed limit of 30 km/h.

In case of an incident

In case of a minor crash, for example only damaged vehicle, all parties involved complete and sign a claim form which may be used as evidence. If there is disagreement and the form cannot be signed by all involved, the police can be asked to intervene. A claim form will be distributed by the insurance company.

In case of a crash involving injury or death call 112. The police will make an official report describing the



18 years is the legal minimum age to drive a car or motorcycle, if you hold a driving licence, unsupervised. 16 is the legal minimum age to ride a scooter or moped (‘bromfiets’ and ‘snorfiets’), if you hold a moped certificate.

Safety Measures

Wearing an approved helmet is mandatory for all motorcycle, scooter and moped riders and passengers in the Netherlands. Riders must have proper eye protection, which can be in the form of a visor on the helmet or separate goggles. There is no specific requirement for protective clothing, however it is strongly recommended for riders to wear appropriate gear for their safety. This includes jackets, pants, gloves, and boots designed for motorcycle use.

Seat belts are compulsory for car drivers and all passengers, regardless if they are in the front or back seat.

Children under 18 years who are shorter than 1.35m must sit in an approved car seat or raised, booster seat.





Unique signs and infrastructure in the Dutch Road environment:



A “**woonerf**” is a Dutch term for a residential area or street designed with a shared space concept, prioritizing pedestrians and creating a safer, more communal environment. Within these residential areas, the speed limit for vehicles is 15 km/h. They can be recognised based on the Woonerf sign.



A “**Fietsstraat**” in the Netherlands is a type of street designed to prioritize and enhance the safety of cyclists. Translated as “bike street” or “cycle street,” it gives bicycles priority over motorized vehicles. A Fietsstraat is usually made from red asphalt or road pavement and can be recognised based on the Fietsstraat sign.



Milieu zones, or environmental zones, in the Netherlands are designated areas where specific restrictions on vehicle entry apply to improve air quality. These zones aim to reduce emissions and promote sustainable transport. Vehicles meeting certain environmental standards, typically related to emissions, are allowed entry, while older or more polluting vehicles may face restrictions or require permits within these zones. Signs indicate which vehicles are allowed. The rules and regulations for milieu zones are being revised.



Turbo Roundabouts. A turbo roundabout is a circular intersection with added features to improve traffic flow. Before entering, drivers must choose their lane based on their intended exit, as raised elements between lanes can restrict late changes. These roundabouts often include spiral or bypass lanes for safer and smoother traffic movement and increased capacity.



On Dutch highways there are **speed limit changes** during day- and night-time hours. The daytime speed limit is 100 km/h (06:00 to 19:00h). During the night-time hours the general speed limit changes to 130 km/h. On certain highway sections the speed limit remains 100 km/h or changes to 120 km/h. This is indicated with speed limit signs.



During peak hours on certain Dutch highways, the hard shoulder and a left-side lane can be utilized as rush hour lanes. In these cases, the speed limit is lowered to 100 km/h or even 80 km/h. The availability of rush hour lanes is signalled by specific signs. It’s important to note that road users are prohibited from using these lanes when they are closed



Dutch road signs are categorized into several groups, each serving a specific purpose to convey information, warnings, or regulations to road users. The most important categories of Dutch road signs include:

1. **Warning Signs** (Waarschuwingsborden): These signs alert drivers to potential hazards or changes in road conditions ahead.
2. **Priority Signs** (Vorrangsborden): Priority signs indicate the right of way at intersections or road merges. They include signs such as “Yield” or “Stop” signs.
3. **Prohibitory Signs** (Verbodsborden): These signs prohibit certain actions or behaviors.
4. **Mandatory Signs** (Gebodsborden): Mandatory signs inform road users of actions or behaviors that are required.
5. **Indication Signs** (Aanduidingsborden): These signs provide information about destinations, distances, and directions.

For a complete overview of all the traffic signs, rules and regulations in the Netherlands, you can download the updated [Road Traffic Signs and Regulations in the Netherlands \(2024\)](#). Please note that this translation is provided for convenience only. Signs, rules and regulations may be subject to change, the most up-to-date version can be viewed on the [government’s website](#) (in Dutch). In the event of any discrepancies or inconsistencies between the English translation and the Dutch version, the Dutch version shall prevail and be considered the authoritative and legally binding version.

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