



## SETTLE

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### 1. Appliances

#### Current

In the Netherlands the electric current may differ from the one in your home or previous country. It is single phase, alternating, 220 volts, 3 phase 50 cycles, whereas for instance in the U.S., it is 110 volts, 60 cycles. Therefore, you should never plug a 110-volt appliance into a 220-volt outlet. Not only will this damage the appliances but you might also get seriously injured.

You might experience some problems with other appliances because of the following reasons: a transformer cannot change frequency cycles; therefore, machines cannot operate smoothly, water and electricity outlets may not fit, it is difficult to find maintenance service and parts.

If you have 110-volt, 60 cycle appliances the following should be kept in mind:

- Appliances from some countries, e.g. U.S. televisions, video recorders and electric clocks, are not adaptable due to a different frequency.
- Low wattage appliances like mixers and shavers can be used with the help of an adjustable transformer.
- All lamps have screw-in fittings. All you need are LED light bulbs available in any supermarket and an adapter for the plug. Bayonet or clip-in fittings are not used in regular lighting
- A microwave oven can sometimes be used with a large transformer but this is only possible if it is non-computerized. The disadvantage is that cooking time must be increased and the clock is no longer accurate.

#### Plugs

The Netherlands plug type C and F are utilized. You may need a converter, available at any airport.

Europlug



The **europug (or plug type CEE 7/16)** can be used in most parts of Europe with the exception of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. It has no protective conductor, which is why it is not protected against polarity reversal. Its contacts have a diameter of 4 mm and are placed at a distance of 19 mm.

Find out in which countries this type of plug is common, what alternatives there are and with how many volts it is operated in the following country list (in alphabetical order):

Plug Type F



The **Schuko plug or CEE7/4-plug** has two round pins with a diameter of 4.8 mm and 19 mm length. Schuko is an abbreviation for the German word Schutzkontakt, which means "Protective contact" - in this case "protective" refers to the earth. Both contact pins are 19 mm apart. A third pole, the protective contact, is supposed to conduct fault currents, which can occur, for example, in the event of a short circuit as soon as the two other poles close the electric circuit. Therefore, the connection to the earthing contact must take place first. For the Schuko plug, this is guaranteed through contact surfaces on the plug's side and the socket's corresponding contact springs. The covering's basic level is surrounded by an approximately 19 mm high collar for the protection against accidental contact. Thus the contact pins can only be touched as long as they are outside the socket.

In the following country list (in alphabetical order) you can find out in which countries this type of plug is common, what alternatives there are and with how many volts it is operated:

## Water appliances

Washing machines in Europe operate on cold water, which will be heated in the machine. Therefore U.S. washing machines, for instance, are not suitable as they operate on hot water. Make sure the right water temperature and cycle is set for specific fabrics. Delicate items might better be washed by hand. Some appliances such as your shaver or iron might have a built-in converter, which you can switch from 110 to 220 volts. Dishwashers have three receptacles. Apart from the one for a detergent, there is one for a salt-based product, which prevents a hard water film, and a third receptacle for a drying liquid.

### General

Keep in mind that European appliances are usually smaller than those from the U.S. and often more expensive. For advice on buying electrical appliances check with your local electricity supplier or with the Dutch Consumer Organization <https://www.consumentenbond.nl>. The website is in Dutch, Google translate will be able guide you through.

MediaMarkt large chain store.

CoolBlue for online ordering of appliances

## 2. Utilities

“Utilities” describe the services provided by the electric, gas, television, and telephone companies. The general procedure for each utility company is to call the customer service department and a service representative will guide you through the process.

When calling to set up service, you will typically need to provide the following information:

- Name, date of birth
- Address of residence, including apartment number, if applicable
- Phone number and email address
- Bank account details
- In case of water providers: meter readings at check-in
- In case of gas and electricity providers: meter readings need to be provided after check-in; registration can take place before.

### Gas & Electricity

Gas and electricity are mostly provided by the same company. They will have a 14-day cooling down period and usually a fixed contract for the first year, after which you will have a one-month notice period. To get a cheaper rate, you can opt for a 3- or even 5-year contract. Gas and electricity are charged through monthly instalments, for which you can set up a direct debit.

The furnace and water heater are most often gas systems. Natural gas is odourless, but a distinct odour is added to the gas system as a way of alerting you that there may be a leak. If you smell a strong odour near your gas appliances, leave the area immediately. Go to a safe location and call the gas company right away. Do not re-enter your home until a gas company employee tells you it is safe.

Airconditioning, appliances and lighting account for a high percentage of the electricity used in a home. Hot water heaters may also be powered by electricity.

### Water

There is no free choice in water provider in the Netherlands. When moving abroad, there is no notice period. Water is usually charged through quarterly instalments, for which you can set up a direct debit.

### Television & Internet

Analog TV is almost phased out in the Netherlands. We are the 2<sup>nd</sup> European country to switch to digital TV.

The good news for expats is that the Netherlands has one of the best and fastest broadband networks in Europe. It also has one of the highest broadband connection rates per 100,000 inhabitants. So, you'll be in good company when you sign up for broadband.

Cable is the most common form of connection, although fiber-optic (*glasvezel*) is becoming increasingly popular throughout the country. Internet providers generally offer cable as the basic connection, with fiber-optic offered at a premium price. However, not all areas can support a fiber-optic connection. Check beforehand to see your options. Most internet providers will do this check for you.

When it comes to choosing a provider, you'll find most offer a range of packages. These packages are often priced according to download speed, alongside other 'extras' such as TV packages and on-demand video access. It's essential you choose the right package for you. For example, if your family spends a lot of time gaming, you'll need a higher download speed. If you use the internet for social media and subscription TV such as **Disney+** or **hayu**, you should be fine with lower download speed.

The biggest internet providers in the Netherlands include the following:

- [KPN](#)
- [Ziggo](#)
- [Tele2](#)
- [T-Mobile](#)
- [Youfone](#)
- [Oxxio](#)

You can often get discounted packages that include television, landline telephone, and broadband. This means it's best to shop around to get the best deal for you. You can do this easily using the online comparison site **Prijzvergelijken**, which will quickly show you your options.

Cable television service gives you more available channels to watch as well as better visual and sound quality. The selection of cable television providers available in your area will vary depending on the city or even where you live. To have cable installed in your home, it is likely that the provider may need to come into your home to coordinate initial setup, which is often free of charge for new clients.

### 3. Mobile Phones

With more mobile phones than people, it's safe to say the Dutch love being connected at all times. It's not surprising, either, given that the Netherlands is one of the world leaders when it comes to telecommunications. Furthermore, it boasts excellent 4G coverage and plenty of mobile operators. This increased competition has pushed operators to create a range of affordable mobile services that are perfect for expats and visitors alike. But with so much choice, finding the right SIM can be confusing.

The Netherlands is home to one of the best mobile networks in Europe. It uses the GSM mobile network, instead of the CDMA network. This means that generally speaking, foreign visitors to the country will have little problem connecting to the Dutch network. Even if you're arriving from a country that uses the CDMA network, your smartphone will still likely work in the Netherlands.

In 2020, the Dutch government plan to start **auktioning frequencies** on which mobile operators can provide 5G around the country.

Most visitors and expats arriving in the Netherlands will find it easy to connect to the country's mobile networks. The only exception are those traveling from a country that uses the CDMA – including Japan, parts of the US, and Canada. However, many smartphones will still connect on arrival although you should check with your operator beforehand on the costs you can expect to face.

Should your phone not be able to connect to the Dutch network, you can purchase a pre-paid mobile on arrival. These start at €30 for the most basic models. Alternatively, you can pick up a world phone in your own country before traveling. If you're staying a little longer, you might want to consider buying a secondhand smartphone to keep you connected.

Roaming charges within the EU were abolished in 2017. This means that EU residents arriving in the Netherlands will likely find they can use their phone at the same rates they would enjoy at home; including data usage. However, you should double-check this with your operator before you travel to avoid any unexpected charges.

If you're **moving to the Netherlands** – or planning a longer-term stay – you may want to buy a Dutch SIM card or even a brand-new phone. There are plenty of mobile operators to choose from. Many offer a range of deals depending on usage and budget. Some, including KPN and Vodafone, also offer discounts should you choose to take out another service, such as home internet or TV.

There are many mobile operators in the Netherlands so competition is fierce and mobile package deals typically offer good value for money. As such, it pays to shop around. It's also a good idea to compare mobile operators as many offer add-on benefits.

Mobile operators in the Netherlands include:

- [KPN](#)
- [Vodafone](#)
- [T-Mobile](#)
- [Tele2](#)
- [Expat Mobile](#)
- [Youfone](#)
- [Simpel](#)
- [Lebara](#)

**KPN** is the biggest mobile operator in the Netherlands in terms of users, enjoying a market share of around 35% in 2018. The network also claims 99% of 4G coverage across the country, with plans to roll out its 5G capabilities in the next few years. KPN also operates **Telfort** as well as no-frills providers **Simyo** and international-focused **Ortel**.

Vodafone is the second-biggest operator and offers mobile discounts when you take out TV and internet with Ziggo. Alongside T-Mobile and Tele2, all four of the biggest Dutch mobile operators claim almost total 4G coverage of the Netherlands. So, you'll always be able to stay in touch.

#### Mobile phone coverage in the Netherlands

Mobile coverage in the Netherlands is typically better in the larger cities, however, rural Dutch areas are surprisingly well connected when compared to other countries. If you want to check coverage before buying, visit [www.nperf.com](http://www.nperf.com) and check your local area.

KPN generally has the best coverage throughout the Netherlands, although its closest competitors also rank well. For those living close to the border, choosing a larger provider can be the best option. Some networks don't have strong connections in border towns. This means mobile phones tend to switch to Belgium or German connections, which can see you end up paying more for calls and data.

Alternatively, if you are moving to one of the major cities such as Amsterdam or Rotterdam, you might find one of the smaller operators is a better fit for your needs.

#### Prepaid vs mobile contracts

Expats arriving in the Netherlands have the choice between a prepaid SIM card and a mobile phone contract. If your phone is unlocked and compatible with the Dutch network, you have the freedom to choose an operator. If your previous operator has a presence in the Netherlands, it may be preferable to stay with the same company.

Prepaid SIMs are generally the easier option. With these, you'll be able to make calls, send text messages, and use mobile data. This is particularly popular for expats who already own a phone and simply want a Dutch SIM card to get by. It also offers users more freedom as it doesn't involve signing up for a lengthy contract.

However, others will prefer the security and cost advantages of a mobile contract. Generally speaking, your calls, texts, and data will work out cheaper on a contract if you use your phone a lot. This can be a good option if you're planning on staying in the Netherlands long-term or want the latest smartphone.

### Mobile phone plans in the Netherlands

Mobile phone contracts in the Netherlands offer cheaper rates than pre-paid SIM cards and typically include great deals on unlimited calls, text, and internet use. These deals can be even better if you opt for a mobile package that includes TV, home phone, and internet connection. These are available from the bigger providers, including **KPN** and Vodafone. Dutch mobile contracts are either SIM-only or include a handset and are available for one, two, and three years. Monthly charges will depend on usage and contract, although an activation fee will typically be applied. This is either as a one-off charge or included in your monthly payments. These payments are collected from your Dutch bank account. You can also purchase additional minutes or data should you use up your monthly allowance.

### How to get a mobile phone contract in the Netherlands

Signing up for a Dutch mobile phone contract can be done easily online or in-store. If you order online, your SIM card and/or handset should be delivered to your home address within a week. To sign up, you will likely need to provide the following:

- proof of identity, to show you are over 18
- address in the Netherlands
- BSN number
- Dutch bank account for payment

### Prepaid SIM cards in the Netherlands

Prepaid SIM cards in the Netherlands give you more freedom, but charges are more expensive than a contract. However, if you don't expect to use your mobile phone in the Netherlands much, pre-paid SIMs are the better and easier option. If you're under 18, this is your only option because, in the Netherlands, you are unable to sign up for a mobile contract.

Getting a SIM card in the Netherlands is quick and easy. You can buy one online or in a mobile phone shop. Bear in mind that you'll need a Dutch address to receive the SIM card should you order it online. You can also pick up a prepaid SIM in some supermarkets and most convenience stores. These stores will often display the name of a phone operator outside, such as **Lebara**. Here you'll be able to buy a SIM card and have a working phone connection in minutes.

Once you have a prepaid SIM, topping up is simple. You can either top-up in a mobile phone shop or at most convenience stores and supermarkets. Alternatively, you can top-up online or using your phone.

It is generally possible to switch from a pre-paid SIM card to a plan for free, with some Dutch mobile operators also deducting any unused pre-paid credit from your first invoice.

### Dutch mobile phone numbers

Telephone numbers in the Netherlands are grouped into three categories: geographical numbers, non-geographical numbers, and public services.

Mobile numbers in the Netherlands are classed as non-geographical numbers. They have nine digits and require a dialing trunk code that starts with 06.

To call a mobile phone in the Netherlands from abroad, you have to use the international mobile code and drop the first zero:

- 0031 6 followed by the 7-digit mobile phone number
- +316 if dialing from another mobile phone.

Calling any of the Dutch emergency numbers is typically free, and some emergency numbers will still work even if you don't have a Dutch SIM card or functioning international SIM.

Numbers beginning with 0900 tend to be particularly expensive from a mobile. Those that start with 0800 are generally free although your Dutch mobile operator may charge a connection fee.

In some cases, it is possible to keep the same Dutch mobile number, even if you transfer to a different mobile operator. You will keep the same Dutch mobile number if you remain with the same mobile operator, even if you change plans.

### Dutch mobile phone laws

When visiting or moving to a new country, it's essential to understand the local laws of the land. Here are some of the things you need to know when it comes to using your phone in the Netherlands:

- As with most other countries, using a mobile phone while driving in the Netherlands is against the law and can result in a hefty fine or suspension.
- Since 2019, it's also against the law to use a mobile phone (or any handheld electronic mobile device) while riding a bike. You could face a fine of around €100, so keep your phone in your bag.
- If your mobile phone is stolen, you should report it immediately to both your Dutch mobile operator and the police to not be charged for any calls made.
- Some mobile operators in the Netherlands do not allow non-EU citizens to sign a long-term contract.

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