



# Road safety

THE NETHERLANDS POLICE



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« waakzaam en dienstbaar »



Safety on the road is important to everyone. Ideally, we would prefer to travel from A to B safely and quickly. It is important however to abide by the rules in doing so. Many serious accidents occur on our roads, some of which are even fatal for the victims. By exercising safety on the road, not only will you avoid a fine, you will also be making a contribution to improving traffic safety. Together we can reduce the number of traffic accidents and the resulting injuries.

## 5 ROAD SAFETY RULES

There are a variety of rules of conduct which apply to traffic. In order to reduce the number of traffic accidents and the injuries that arise as a result, the following five rules in particular are of vital importance:

1. Observe the speed limit
2. Don't drink and drive
3. Always wear your seatbelt
4. Stop at red lights
5. Always wear your helmet when riding on a moped or motorcycle

In this folder, the police provide you with further information on these subjects so that you will have a safe trip while in the Netherlands, and enjoy your stay even more.



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## THE POLICE PERFORM SAFETY CHECKS.

The police perform regular safety checks. As long as you abide by the traffic rules, you will experience very little inconvenience from this, and you will be on your way again quickly.

During road safety checks, the police use measuring equipment such as a camera, for example, which measures your speed and records your vehicle registration number or number plate. However, you might also be asked by a policeman or woman to cooperate with a traffic check. This means that you must stop your vehicle. If you have violated a traffic rule, you will be fined. If you can prove that you are a resident of the Netherlands, you will receive a payment slip sent to your home afterwards, and if you do not officially reside in the Netherlands, the police will present you with a proposal for settling the fine, and you will have to pay it immediately.

## DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

An estimated 25% of the traffic deaths (approximately 200) in the Netherlands are caused by alcohol-related accidents. The combination of alcohol and drugs in particular increases the chance that someone will be seriously injured in an accident.

Alcohol is a drug that remains in the blood for a long time and reduces one's ability to react, causes tunnel vision (reduced vision on the left and right) and a loss of concentration, and affects muscle control. The more a person drinks, the stronger these effects become. For example, the body requires about one and a half hours to eliminate all of the alcohol in one glass of beer or wine. In spite of what many people think, there is no remedy that will accelerate the elimination of alcohol from the blood.

## DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

If you have been driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you will be detained by the police for investigation. You will then have to go to the police station for a breath test.

You may not refuse to take this test unless you can prove there are medical reasons to do so. A doctor will verify this. In these cases, a blood sample will be taken. You may not refuse this either. In the Netherlands, refusing to take these tests is viewed as a criminal offence. The police will notify you of the results of the breath test immediately. The results of the blood test will not be known until later, and these will be sent to you by post. The maximum permitted breath alcohol content for a beginning driver is 88 µg/l and for all other drivers, this limit is 220 µg/l (µg/l is microgrammes of alcohol per litre of exhaled air).

## DRIVING BAN

If you have been driving under the influence of alcohol, you will receive a driving ban before you can go home again. This means that you will not be permitted to operate any transport vehicle whatsoever, not even a bicycle, for a pre-determined period of time. If you violate the ban, in addition to having driven under the influence, you will be committing yet another criminal offence. The driving ban document ("Beschikking rijverbod") contains a precise indication of the date on which the ban will be lifted. If you have had to surrender your driving licence to the police because you have exceeded the legal alcohol limit, or if you have violated the speed limit, this means that you may not drive any vehicle for which a driving licence is required for a certain period of time. According to Dutch law, the Public Prosecutor may suspend your driving licence if the alcohol content exceeds 570 µg/l for a beginning driver, or 785 µg/l for other drivers. The Public Prosecutor may also suspend your driving

licence if you refuse to cooperate, or if you have been detained by the police for driving under the influence a second time within a five-year period.

## REFUSAL TO COOPERATE

If you have refused to cooperate with the police investigation, you will also be issued a driving ban. Refusing to cooperate with an alcohol investigation is a criminal offence for which you will be punished by the courts, even if your alcohol level at the time was unknown.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR DRIVING LICENCE?

Your driving licence will be sent to the Public Prosecutor. He or she will decide within ten days after your driving licence was surrendered whether or not your licence will be returned to you, or if it will remain suspended. The Public Prosecutor can suspend your driving licence until the judge has rendered a decision at your criminal case hearing. This hearing will normally be held within six months of the date that your driving licence was surrendered. If the judge imposes a driving disqualification, the time that your licence had already been suspended will be deducted from the total period of the driving disqualification.

## ON THE SPOT INFRINGEMENT

It applies to all traffic violations that if you are not a resident of the Netherlands and/or do not have a permanent address in the Netherlands, the Public Prosecutor will be contacted to determine the fine to be imposed. He or she will then decide immediately the amount of the fine to be paid, or which measure to impose. If you can demonstrate that you live in the Netherlands, you will be contacted by the Ministry of Justice and/or the Central Fine Collection Agency (CJIB) which will send you a payment slip by post.

## LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT

In the Netherlands, if you are involved in an accident, your identity and the registration information for your automobile must first be recorded before you may leave the scene of the accident. Leaving the scene of an accident is a criminal offence. This not only involves the driver of a vehicle, but sometimes also 'witnesses', or any persons who might have caused the accident. It also does not matter whether the damage is minor or substantial, you must always remain at the scene of the accident and exchange your information with the other party involved.

## SEATBELTS

In the Netherlands, the law requires that every person in the automobile (driver and all passengers) must wear a seatbelt. Every passenger bears personal responsibility for wearing his or her own seatbelt, except for children under the age of 12. The driver is responsible for these passengers. In 40% of the cases, wearing a seatbelt can prevent fatalities. In 25% of the cases, wearing a seatbelt can prevent serious injury. These percentages are much higher for collisions involving speeds up to 80 km per hour. For this reason, the police perform frequent seatbelt checks in the Netherlands.

## USING A TELEPHONE

In the Netherlands, using or holding a mobile telephone is forbidden while driving and operating a motor vehicle. If the police observe these activities, they will fine the offender. The mobile telephone will not be seized, but the police will make a note of the brand and model of the telephone used.

## THE FOLLOWING FINES APPLY TO TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

(effective 1 January 2009\*):

Speeding violations (depending on the number of km/hour beyond the limit)	from € 32 to € 790
Driving under the influence (depending on the amount of µg/l)	from € 250 to € 1200
Failure to wear a seatbelt	€ 90
Failure to stop at a red traffic light	€ 150
Driving without a helmet	€ 90
Not phoning handsfree while driving	€ 150

\* these amounts do not include administrative costs

