



Ministry of the Interior and
Kingdom Relations

The personal records database: for the authorities and for you

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Everyone must notify the municipality of a birth, change of address or death. However, what do the authorities actually do with the personal details of the country's citizens? This brochure explains which personal details are stored in the municipal personal records databases and what they are used for. We also list your rights and obligations. In addition, we explain the procedure to be followed when you come from abroad and intend to stay in the Netherlands for a longer period of time.

Why is the Municipal Personal Records Database important?

The authorities need correct information about the country's citizens, for example when issuing a passport, identity card or driving licence, determining who may vote in an election, paying social benefits and collecting municipal taxes. However, the records are also used by others: organisations such as the Netherlands Tax and Custom Administration, benefits agencies and pension funds also use your personal details to tailor their decisions closely to your situation.

Which personal details are stored in the records?

In the Netherlands your personal details are collected in the Municipal Personal Records Database, abbreviated to the GBA. The database contains personal files for everyone who lives or has lived in the Netherlands. The file contains information including:

- your family name, first names, date of birth, place of birth and country of birth;
- your address;
- your citizen service number;
- details about your parents;
- details about your nationality (and, where relevant, your residence permit);
- details about your marriage or registered partnership;
- details about your children;
- details about travel documents issued to you;
- details about your right to vote;
- details about the organisations that may receive your personal data.

How do the authorities obtain these personal details?

You are required to supply some information, for example on changing address, the birth of a child, marrying abroad or on the death of a member of your family. However, some personal details are automatically added to or changed in the GBA: for example, on your marriage in the Netherlands the registrar of births, marriages and deaths will inform the GBA accordingly.

Everyone is assigned a unique citizen number

Your citizen service number (BSN) is your personal number for contacts with the authorities. This unique number helps, for example, to avoid cases of mistaken identity.

Everyone registering with a municipality for the first time is assigned a BSN.

Newly-born children are also assigned a BSN on the registration of their birth.

Your BSN is stated on your passport, driving licence and identity card.

The BSN offers you and the authorities benefits: it simplifies your contacts with the municipality and other government agencies and organisations.

On beginning employment you give your BSN to your employer. Your employer can then complete a number of formalities with, for example, the Netherlands Tax and Custom Administration and your pension fund. The healthcare sector also uses the BSN, and you may be asked for your BSN by your general practitioner, hospital, pharmacy or homecare provider.

Your privacy is guarded carefully

The GBA contains personal details that are not made available to the public. The authorities look after your privacy carefully and use your personal details only when the authorities need them to carry out their duties in the appropriate manner. Your personal details are used for other purposes only when you have not objected to their use and, in some instances, only once you have given permission.

Your rights

What are your rights?

- Everyone registering with the GBA for the first time receives a copy of their record. This is issued without charge. You also receive a free copy when you move back to the Netherlands after a period abroad.
- You are always entitled to inspect your personal details in the GBA. This is free of charge. Most municipalities charge a fee for a copy of your record.
- You are entitled to use the surname of your current or former spouse or registered

partner. This is referred to as the 'chosen name'. The GBA issues notification of the chosen name to government agencies such as the Netherlands Tax and Custom Administration, pension funds, district water board and the Department of Road Transport (RDW). Your own surname continues to be used on your passport, identity card and driving licence.

- You can request the municipality to correct or supplement any personal details that are incorrect or incomplete. The municipality will then ask you to furnish the relevant proof.
- You can ask the municipality not to supply your personal details to certain institutions. More information is available from your municipality.
- You can ask your municipality for a list of the institutions that have received your personal details during the past year. You will receive this list other than in situations in which national security or a criminal offence play a role. The municipality can charge a fee for this list.
- Adoptive parents can request the deletion of the former name of the child and the personal details of the natural parents in their adopted child's personal file. The natural parents of the adopted child can request the deletion of the personal details of the adopted child in their personal file.
- Persons who have changed their sex can request the deletion of their earlier first name(s), gender and chosen name from their personal file.

Your obligations

What are your obligations as a member of the public?

- You must always be able to prove your identity by showing a valid ID.
- If you move to the Netherlands from abroad you must notify the municipality where you will be staying within 5 days of your arrival.
- If you move within the Netherlands you must notify your change of address to the municipality to which you have moved within 5 days of moving.
- If you are staying abroad for a longer time – more than 8 months – you must notify the municipality where you live within 5 days of the day of your departure.
- When so requested by the municipality in which you live you are under the obligation to provide further information about the personal details you supplied that are registered in the GBA.
- You must notify the municipality of any changes to your personal details during a stay abroad (such as your marriage or the birth of your child) on your return to the Netherlands. Make sure that you can show the original documents.

When you arrive from abroad and wish to stay in the Netherlands

Have you come from abroad, and do you intend to stay in the Netherlands for longer than four months? If so, you must inform the municipality of your stay and your address within 5 days of your arrival in the Netherlands. However, your residence in the Netherlands must be legal: for example, you are a Dutch national or a national of one of the European Union's member states.

You will not be registered in the GBA following instances:

- When you do not have a valid residence permit for the Netherlands you will first need to apply a residence permit from an aliens' desk (IND desk). More information is available at www.ind.nl.
- When you have applied for asylum and are staying at an asylum seekers centre or a reception centre then the centre will register your stay in the Netherlands for the first six months. However, after this period – or on leaving the centre – you must register with the GBA in the municipality where you will be staying.
- If you have lived in the Netherlands Antilles or on Aruba you will need to prove that you have had your personal file deleted there. This is necessary to avoid the duplication of records within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Do you also wish to have your partner and/or children registered in the GBA? If so, they will need to accompany you to the town hall.

When you come to register you must bring original documents with you to prove your identity, civil status and address in the Netherlands as well as, of course, your passport(s) and, where relevant, proof of your legal residence in the Netherlands. In addition, you should also bring birth certificates (yours, and of your children), marriage certificates (including those of earlier marriages) and the tenancy or purchase agreement for your home in the Netherlands.

Objections

If you think that your personal details are not recorded correctly in the GBA then you can ask your municipality for more information. Your municipality can explain why certain personal details are or are not included in your personal file. If necessary, you can ask the municipality to make additions to or correct the personal details in your personal file.

Do you disagree with the municipality's decision on your request for the correction, addition or deletion of specific personal details? If so, you can lodge a written notice of objection with the municipal executive of your municipality with six weeks of receiving the decision.

Do you have any questions?

Do you have any questions after reading this brochure? If so, you can contact your municipality.



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