



FULBRIGHT
The Netherlands

Emergency Action Plan 2024 - 2025

Safety and security guidelines for U.S. Grantees in the Netherlands

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Purpose of this Emergency Action Plan

For U.S. Fulbright Grantees based in the Netherlands

The purpose of this Emergency Action Plan is to outline procedures for U.S. Fulbright grantees in the Netherlands to safely and effectively deal with a possible emergency situation. Every grantee will receive a digital copy of this plan. This plan focuses on the necessary steps to take in case of an emergency during your stay in the Netherlands.

Useful Resources

Websites and links to bookmark and review

- U.S. State Department travel advisories:
[Travel Advisories](#)
- U.S. State Department STEP (Smart Traveler Enrolment Program) for country-specific security alerts:
[STEP](#)
- Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board policies:
[FFSB Policies](#)
- Emergency Numbers in the Netherlands:
[112](#)
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs:
[Foreign Affairs](#)

U.S. Consulate and Fulbright Office Contact Info

U.S. Consulate General Amsterdam - U.S. Citizens Services

Museumplein 19

1071 DJ Amsterdam

Emergency number: during and outside office hours and holidays +31 (0) 70 310-2209

Email: AmsterdamUSC@state.gov

Website: <https://nl.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>

Fulbright Commission the Netherlands

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 19

1012 RC Amsterdam

Phone: +31 (0)20-5315930

Email: info@fulbright.nl

Website: www.fulbright.nl/en

Responsibilities of U.S. Government

The U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Academic and Exchange Programs (ECA/A/E) has overall worldwide responsibility for the Fulbright Program under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended (Fulbright-Hays), including planning for the security and well-being of Fulbright participants (teachers, scholars, students).

While in the Netherlands, U.S. Fulbright Grantees are in a distinct category. As private U.S. citizens they do not fall under the authority of the Chief of Mission (U.S. Embassy). They are, however, under U.S. government sponsorship during their exchange program and the State Department has a responsibility to provide guidance for their welfare and security. U.S. Fulbright grantees are supervised by the Dutch Fulbright Commission and must abide by Fulbright Commission's regulations, the terms and conditions of their grants, and the policies of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. In the terms and conditions of the Fulbright grants, as well as on the website of the Department of State on emergencies/crisis situations, grantees will find detailed information on what the U.S. Government can and cannot do.

Measures taken by the Fulbright Commission, or grantees to be prepared for Emergencies

1. A representative of U.S. Citizen Services will give a security briefing to grantees at the first general student orientation meeting. This briefing includes an overview of what role U.S. Citizen Services can play in case of an emergency, and addresses security concerns specific to the Netherlands.
2. Grantees are sent laminated credit card-sized cards with emergency contact information, intended to be kept in grantees' wallets.
3. Grantees must enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrolment Program (STEP):
<https://step.state.gov/step/>
When grantees register they will receive safety and security messages from the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in the Netherlands.
4. The Fulbright Commission collects contact information (phone number, address) from grantees once they are settled in the country. *If grantees' contact information changes, grantees must inform their Program Manager at the Fulbright Commission immediately.*
5. The Fulbright Commission creates a group on WhatsApp for security purposes only (see the next section for more information).
6. The Fulbright Commission keeps track of the location of all grantees, as a requirement of the U.S. Department of State.
All grantees must request permission from their Program Manager for all travel plans outside of the Netherlands (dates and destinations) at least five days in advance. The notification email must include information on how they may be contacted during their absence. Grantees must also obtain permission from their host institutions for the planned absence.
This is especially important for security reasons. In case of an incident in the Netherlands or elsewhere, the Fulbright Commission needs to know if a grantee might be in the affected area(s). Grantees are responsible for informing their immediate family members and emergency contact person of their travel plans.

Emergency WhatsApp Group

Fulbright Commission the Netherlands will set up a WhatsApp Emergency Group. Please make sure to download WhatsApp on your phone and give your Fulbright Program Manager your phone number associated with WhatsApp as soon as possible. If you do not

have a smartphone or are unable to use WhatsApp, get in touch with your Program Manager to discuss an alternative.

In case of an emergency (natural disaster, or dangerous incident) your Fulbright Program Manager will send a request to the WhatsApp group for everyone to state that they are safe.

Appropriate example response: "I am safe, in Amsterdam".

In case of a large-scale emergency, it's possible that the connection may not be reliable. In this case, please try to contact your Program Manager in whatever way you can but remember to prioritize your safety.

Physical and Mental Health Emergencies

To reach the emergency services, including the police, ambulance or fire fighters, dial 112. 112 is free of charge and available 24/7 in the Netherlands as well as in other countries in Europe.

All hospitals in the Netherlands will admit patients from ambulances with emergencies, regardless of insurance coverage. If it is not an emergency, you are advised to consult your local doctor (*huisarts*).

The Netherlands does not have walk-in clinics, so you should be registered at the local *huisarts*. Your university's international student office may be able to suggest a *huisarts* for you. If you are not placed at a university, you are advised to ask colleagues, roommates or fellow students for suggestions on what *huisartsenpraktijk* (doctor's office) you could register with.

You are not enrolled in the Dutch healthcare system, therefore you will be billed for doctor and hospital fees. You will need to file a claim with Seven Corners/ASPE or your primary insurance provider for reimbursement. Remember to keep copies of all bills, prescriptions, and other documents given to you at the hospital for your insurance claim.

If you use your Seven Corners/ASPE insurance, you have to notify Seven Corners immediately to obtain either pre-certification or certification of expense reimbursement for physical and mental health care.

Seven Corners 24/7 Contact Information

<https://www.sevencorners.com/gov/usdos>

Outside of the U.S.: +1- 317-818-2867

Email: usdosinfo@sevencorners.com

Inform your Program Manager as soon as possible if you are/need to be hospitalized.

ASPE ASSIST 24/7 Mental Health Support Hotline

This hotline was created to support Fulbrighters globally who are experiencing mental/emotional stress. You can call this hotline at any time to be connected with a mental health specialist. This hotline is free to use for all grantees. The hotline is available to anyone who is mentally struggling or in emotional distress. Please do not hesitate to

call, even if you think your situation is not serious enough.

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/current-fulbrighters/aspe-assist-24-7-support>

Phone: +1-833-963-1269

Worldwide: +44-20-3859-4463

Email: Anvil_aspesupport@everbridge.com

Reporting Crime

The Netherlands is generally a safe country. Below you will find more information on how to deal with various types of crimes.

Personal attack

If you are the victim of a physical attack, always dial 112, the emergency number.

Once you are able to file a police report, you can do so at the local police station. First, you need to schedule an appointment via 0900-8844. Also see this [link](#). You can request an interpreter to file a police report, but most police personnel are able to speak English sufficiently. The report will be filed in Dutch. Keep all documentation given to you by the police for your records.

For more information on personal attacks and support offered by the U.S. Consulate, please visit the following website:

<https://nl.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/victims-of-crime/>

If you need help after you have been victim of a crime, you can also contact the organization Victim Support the Netherlands (in Dutch *Slachtofferhulp*)

<https://www.slachtofferhulp.nl/english/>

Their support is free of charge.

The support Slachtofferhulp can provide:

- They can help you with expenses associated with the crime
- They can provide/coordinate mental health support

Here are some tips to protect yourself during an attack:

- If you are indoors when (an) assailant(s) threatens, close lock and/or block all doors, using heavy furniture if necessary. Stay away from the door(s) and hide in a safe place;
- If you are outdoors, remain aware of your surroundings. If you sense danger, move to a place of safety as soon as you can;
- If you know where the assailant is and there appears to be an escape route available to you, attempt to escape only if you can do so without putting yourself in danger.
- Take deep breaths and try to remain calm. Call the police at 112 when you are safe to do so.

It is important to report as much as possible about the assailant. You should also provide information about your location, the number of assailants, nature of the attack, if any weapons were used, and if there are any injuries to yourself or others. Wait for the police to arrive and stay in a secure area.

Remain in your location until the police advise that the incident has been resolved to the point that you can leave the area (this might take a long time, so be patient and remain calm).

If the police request that you evacuate the building, follow their instructions and do not make sudden or threatening movements while evacuating. We would advise you to watch this video on how to survive an active shooter inside a building:

<https://youtu.be/5VcSwejU2D0>

Please also inform the Fulbright Commission as soon as you are safe so we can provide support.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for a sexual favor, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It may include behaviors such as: unwanted deliberate touching or pinching; unwanted sexual looks and gestures; unwanted pressure for dates; unwanted sexual teasing or jokes; inappropriate questions of a sexual nature; inappropriate discussions of a sexual nature at work; pornography in your school or office; being followed or stalked. If someone is being persistent, be assertive and clear about saying no.

You can and are encouraged to report sexual harassment. The police take sexual harassment and cat-calling seriously and are trained to handle such situations without victim blaming.

What should you do if you experience sexual harassment?

At work

- Talk to other Fulbrighters, friends and co-workers that you can trust.
- Talk to your supervisor
- Do not sacrifice your personal safety, security or comfort zone. Set limits and boundaries for what is acceptable to you and try to be consistent.
- Find out who your institutional contact is for these issues (Dean, School principal, special officer for *ongewenste intimiteiten* as it is called in Dutch, or other).
- Document incidents

In public

- If you are in a public place, ask for help from someone around you (bus/tram driver, restaurant owner, other passengers, pedestrians, etc.)
- Tell the person you want him/her to leave you alone – speak loudly and clearly.

In case of sexual assault/rape, please contact the Center for Sexual Violence - *Centrum Seksueel Geweld*

<https://centrumseksueelgeweld.nl/en/>

Phone number (available 24/7): 0800-0188

There are 16 centers around the country, and they can help you with medical, police and psychological support.

Pickpocketing

This kind of theft mainly happens in busy places, like train stations, on buses and trams, in crowds at festivals etc. Most, but not all pickpockets work in groups. Here are some very general tips to prevent pickpocketing:

- Carry only what is necessary (ONE credit or debit card, One form of identification etc.)
- Scan your passport, and front and back of everything that you have in your wallet (insurance, residence permit etc.). In case something happens, you have all the numbers and contact information to cancel your cards and replace your passport.
- Use purses/backpacks that zip. Carry your purse under your arm and slightly in front of you. If you have a backpack, swing it around so that it is slightly in front of you as well.
- If you carry your wallet in your pocket, you should use your front pocket rather than your back pocket.

If you are pickpocketed, make an appointment to go to the local police station to file a complaint. Do not chase down whoever you think stole your wallet. If they work in groups, your wallet was most likely handed off before you realized it was gone. Should you lose your passport, you will need to apply for a new one through the U.S. Citizen Services: <https://nl.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>

Bicycle Theft

Bicycle theft is the most common crime Fulbrighters deal with in the Netherlands.

To prevent theft:

- Use two locks on your bike: a back lock that locks your wheel, and a chain lock to attach your bike to a bike rack.

If your bike is missing, please file a report online or at your local police station. Remember that a missing bike doesn't always mean theft. If you parked your bike in a spot where it shouldn't be or somewhere in the way, it's possible that your *gemeente* (local government) has taken it to the [fietsdepot](#).

Be careful when buying cheap bikes online or on the streets. They can be stolen and owning a stolen bike is also a crime. In general, instead of buying or bringing a bike, it might be easier to rent one for the duration of your stay, for instance via <https://swapfiets.nl/en-NL>.

General Safety

Fire safety

In case of fire, dial 112 to reach the Fire Department. After moving into your housing, locate and identify fire escape routes. Talk to your apartment building manager about which steps to follow in case of a fire, if there is an apartment building manager. At your

host school, university, or research lab, ask about where the closest fire escapes are in the buildings, and ask if there is an emergency meeting point.

Weather / flooding

The Netherlands does not have many natural disasters. Floods would be the one that you may encounter, due to the rain. This happens in some areas due to excessive rainfall or high rivers, but is still not a very common hazard and floods do not occur every year. Floods tend to be local, impacting a neighborhood or community, or larger, affecting river basins and multiple municipalities.

Storms in fall and winter can create high winds, soaking rain, fallen trees, and flying debris. Some winter storms have extremely strong winds. These intense winds can bring down trees and poles, and can also sometimes cause damage to homes and other buildings. In case of a storm warning, public transport may close. This happens approximately once or twice a year and these storms usually last only one day.

The Dutch national weather service (KNMI) will issue extreme weather warnings if necessary. In case of dangerous weather, the KNMI may issue code orange (be prepared for dangerous weather conditions) or code red (dangerous weather conditions, do not travel). <https://www.knmi.nl/nederland-nu/weer/waarschuwingen/>

Bicycle safety

Most of you will most likely use either public transport or a bicycle during your stay in the Netherlands.

Regarding bicycles, follow these safety tips:

- When buying a bike, buy one that is comfortable. You should be able to reach the ground with your feet without having to get off the saddle so you can stop comfortably. If you have a bike that is too large or too small, you will not be comfortable nor cycling safely.
- Look into [Swapfiets](#) as a possible option for you to avoid the higher upfront cost of a bike.
- Make sure that the tires of your bike are good quality. Often, cheaper bikes have tires that will go flat within a few months. Sometimes it's worth it to get a slightly more expensive bike if it has good tires, so you won't have to end up replacing them. A second hand bike will cost around €150- €200 (cheapest options) depending on where you live.
- Make sure you buy a bike on which the brakes work properly. In the Netherlands it is far more common to have back pedal brakes, rather than hand brakes.
- Signal when you change direction (even if the Dutch cyclists do not), so everybody is aware of where you are going.
- Always stay to the right side of the bicycle lane so others can pass you if they want.
- Do not use your mobile phone while cycling - you can be fined €95 for doing this.
- Stop for red traffic lights and zebra crossings/crosswalks (if there are pedestrians), even if fellow bike-riders do not.
- Do not cycle on sidewalks or tram/bus lanes, only use the road, or red bicycle paths.

- Make sure to have lights on when it's dark out. You could be fined if you are cycling at night without a white light on the front of your bike and a red light and reflector on the back.

NL-Alert

The Dutch government has a system for mobile phones for local/regional/national alerts to security risks. This ranges from fires in the neighborhood to missing children. Please install this on your phone. Unfortunately, all information is in Dutch, so please ask a Dutch person to help you with this. You can find the information here:

<https://www.nl-alert.nl/English>

Luchtalarm / Civil Defense siren

On the first Monday of every month in every city in the Netherlands, the Civil Defense Siren will go off briefly at noon to test the siren. If the alarm goes off at a different time, go inside immediately, and close windows and doors.

Terrorism

Please familiarize yourself with the rest of the information in this Action Plan so you can be prepared in case something does happen.

Here are some tips to protect yourself during a terrorist attack:

- If you are indoors when (an) assailant(s) threatens, close lock and/or block all doors, using heavy furniture if necessary. Stay away from the door(s) and hide in a safe place;
- If you are outdoors, remain aware of your surroundings. If you sense danger, move to a place of safety as soon as you can;
- If you know where the assailant is and there appears to be an escape route available to you, attempt to escape only if you can do so without putting yourself in danger.
- Take deep breaths and try to remain calm. Call the police at 112 when you are safe to do so.

In all cases of emergency, call 112, follow instructions from police and other officials, try to remain calm, and let the Fulbright Commission know you are safe as soon as you can via the WhatsApp emergency group (see page 4) - or in whatever way you can.

Summary of emergency information

National/European Emergency Number: 112

This is for police, ambulance and fire brigade, in case of emergencies.

National Police Number for non-emergencies: 0900-8844

This will connect you to your local police station, if the call comes from a landline. If you phone from a mobile phone, you will be asked which municipality / city you are in to be transferred, or this is done via a menu.

United States Consulate General U.S. Citizens Service Contact

<https://nl.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>

For Emergencies:

During regular office hours (8:15 am – 5:00 pm): +31 (0) 20 575-5309.

Outside regular office hours (including holidays): +31 (0) 70 310-2209.

The U.S. Department of State also has an emergency website with useful information about what the Department of State can and can not do in case of a crisis

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/emergencies.html>

Fulbright Commission

General phone number during office hours: 020-5315930

Direct phone numbers and in case of emergencies

Linda Pietersen, Program Manager:

Office hours +31 (0)6 27013344

Outside office hours +31 (0)6 29395994

Christward Gradenwitz, Executive Director: +31 (0)6 11341150

Centrum Seksueel Geweld / Sexual Violence Center 0800-0188

<https://centrumseksueelgeweld.nl/csg-en/>

Fulbright ASSIST 24/7 Hotline Contact Information:

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/current-fulbrighters/aspe-assist-24-7-support>

Phone: +1-833-963-1269

Worldwide: +44-20-3859-4463

Email: Anvil_aspesupport@everbridge.com

Be smart, stay safe and enjoy your time in the Netherlands!