



Addressing Issues

General Addressing Issues

Addressing Knowledge Centre

General Addressing Issues

1 Which countries in the world have/do not have a postcode system?

Nearly every country has a different addressing system.

Most countries have a postcode system which indicates the delivery zone or office. When a letter is sent to a given country, it needs to be addressed correctly and with the postcode in the position required by that country.

However, some countries do not have a postcode system or have one but do not use it.

Here you can find two lists: a list of countries with a postcode system and a list of countries without a postcode system.

Universal DataBase (Mar. 2019)				
List of countries which require postal codes:				
Country/territory name	Country/territory name	Country/territory name	Country/territory name	Country/territory name
A-Cu	Cy-Ir	Ir-Mo	Mo-Sa	Sa-Z
Afghanistan	Cyprus	Iraq	Mongolia	San Marino
Åland Islands	Czech Republic	Isle of Man	Montserrat	Saudi Arabia
Albania	Denmark	Israel	Montenegro (Rep.)	Senegal
Algeria	Dominican Republic	Italy	Morocco	Serbia
Andorra	Ecuador	Japan	Mozambique	Singapore
Argentina	Egypt	Jersey	Myanmar	Slovakia
Armenia	El Salvador	Jordan	Namibia	Slovenia
Australia	Estonia	Kazakhstan	Nauru	South Africa
Austria	Ethiopia	Kenya	Nepal	Spain
Azerbaijan	Faroe Islands	Korea (Rep.)	Netherlands	Sri Lanka
Bahrain	Finland	Kosovo (UNMIK)	New Caledonia	Sudan
Bangladesh	France	Kuwait	New Zealand	Swaziland
Barbados	French Guiana	Kyrgyzstan	Nicaragua	Sweden
Belarus	French Polynesia	Lao (People's Dem. Rep.)	Niger	Switzerland
Belgium	Federated States of Micronesia	Latvia	Nigeria	Svalbard and Jan Mayen Island
Bermuda	Georgia	Lebanon	North Macedonia (Rep.)	Tajikistan
Bhutan	Germany	Lesotho	Norway	Thailand
Bosnia-Hezergovina	Great Britain	Liechtenstein	Oman	Trinidad and Tobago
Brazil	Greece	Lithuania	Pakistan	Tunisia
British Antarctic Territory	Greenland	Luxembourg	Papua New Guinea	Turkey
Brunei Darussalam	Guadeloupe	Madagascar	Paraguay	Turkmenistan
Bulgaria (Rep.)	Guam	Malaysia	Peru	Ukraine
Cabo Verde	Guatemala	Maldives	Philippines	USA
Cambodia	Guernsey	Malta	Poland	Uruguay
Canada	Guinea	Mariana Islands	Portugal	Uzbekistan
Cayman Islands	Guinea-Bissau	Marshall Islands	Puerto Rico	Venezuela
Chile	Haiti	Martinique	Réunion	Viet Nam

China (People's Rep.)	Honduras (Rep.)	Mauritius	Romania	Virgin Islands, British
Clipperton Island	Hungary	Mayotte	Russian Federation	Virgin Islands of the United States of America
Colombia	Iceland	Mexico	Saint Barthélemy	Wallis and Futuna
Costa Rica	India	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Saint Martin (FR)	Åland Islands
Croatia	Indonesia	Moldova	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	
Cuba	Iran (Islamic Rep.)	Monaco	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	

Universal DataBase (Feb. 2019)

List of countries which do not require postal codes or use a single postal code for the whole country:

Country/territory name	Country/territory name	Country/territory name	Country/territory name
A-Co	Co-L	L-So	So-Z
American Samoa (Single postcode: AS 96799)	Cook Islands	Libya	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Single postcode: SIQQ 1ZZ)
Angola	Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.)	Macao, China	South Sudan
Anguilla (Single postcode: AI-2640)	Curaçao	Malawi	Suriname
Antigua and Barbuda	Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	Mali	Syrian Arab Rep.
Aruba	Diego Garcia (Single postcode: BBND 1ZZ)	Mauritania	Tanzania (United Rep.)
Ascension (Single postcode: ASCN 1ZZ)	Djibouti	Nauru (Single postcode: NRU68)	Timor-Leste (Dem. Rep.)
Bahamas	Dominica	Niue (Single postcode: 9974)	Tokelau
Belize	Equatorial Guinea	Norfolk Island (Single postcode: 2899)	Tonga
Benin	Eritrea	Palau (Single postcode for the whole territory: 96940)	Tristan da Cunha (Single postcode: TDCU 1ZZ)
Bolivia	Falkland Islands (Single postcode: F1QQ 1ZZ)	Panama	Turks and Caicos Islands (Single postcode: TKCA 1ZZ)
Botswana	Fiji	Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands (Single postcode: PCRN 1ZZ)	Tuvalu
British Indian Ocean Territory (Single postcode: BBND 1ZZ)	Gambia	Qatar	Uganda
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Rwanda	United Arab Emirates
Burundi	Gibraltar (Generic postcode: GX11 1AA)	Saint Helena (Single postcode: STHL 1ZZ)	United States Minor Outlying Islands
Cameroon	Grenada	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Vanuatu
Central African (Rep.)	Guyana	Saint Lucia	Vatican (Single postcode: 00120)
Chad	Heard Island & McDonald Islands	São Tomé and Príncipe	Yemen
Christmas Island (Single postcode: 6798)	Hong Kong, China	Seychelles	Zambia

Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Single postcode: 6799)	Ireland	Sierra Leone	Zimbabwe
Comoros	Jamaica	Sint Maarten (Dutch part)	
Congo (Dem. Rep.)	Kiribati	Solomon (Islands)	
Congo (Rep.)	Liberia (<i>Not being used</i>)	Somalia	

2 What is the longest postcode in the world?

The longest postcodes in the world belong to Iran (Islamic Rep.) and the United States of America.

Postcodes in Iran consist of 10 digits below the locality name.

Click here to display the detailed description of the postcode and addressing system in Iran:

<http://www.upu.int/fileadmin/documentsFiles/activities/addressingUnit/irnEn.pdf>

In the United States of America, the ZIP+4 system defines postcodes as having five digits, a hyphen, and four digits. In total, this gives nine digits plus a hyphen, which results in 10 characters that must be reserved for U.S. postcodes on labels, in databases, etc.

Click here to display the detailed description of the postcode and addressing system in the U.S.:

<http://www.upu.int/fileadmin/documentsFiles/activities/addressingUnit/usaEn.pdf>

3 Do UPU documents contain any official statements, proposals or recommendations regarding the use of ISO 3166 Alpha 2 signs for addressing (SI-1000 Ljubljana for Slovenia, SK for Slovakia, FR for France, etc.)?

The issue of two-character ISO codes preceding postcodes can be quite confusing.

First of all, prefixing a postcode with a two-character ISO code is not – and has never been – an international standard. It is up to the administration of the country concerned to decide whether two-character ISO codes should appear in the addresses or not.

Some countries dislike this practice because it disturbs their sorting routines, which is why they have excluded ISO codes from their recommended address format.

However, countries from some regions (e.g. Scandinavia, Benelux, Baltic countries) still use them, which is where the issue of ISO codes in addresses becomes complex. The use of ISO codes is not discouraged by the UPU either.

However, since it is common practice not to use country codes, the UPU recommends using them only if recommended by the country concerned. This recommendation was issued in International Bureau circular 201 of 22 May 2006 (Amendment of the Letter Post Regulations).

(...) Administrations may recommend that, on items addressed to countries where the recommended position of the postcode is in front of the name of the location of destination, the postcode should be preceded by the EN ISO 3166–1 Alpha 2 country code followed by a hyphen. This shall in no way detract from the requirement for the name of the destination country to be printed in full. (...)

Information about the correct addressing systems for each country is available on our website at:

<http://www.upu.int/en/activities/addressing/postal-addressing-systems-in-member-countries.html>

Below is a table indicating which countries use the ISO prefix.

Universal DataBase (Dec. 2013)					
Countries using ISO codes as prefix:					
Country/territory name		Country/territory name		Country/territory name	
A-Geo		Ger-N		P-V	
Albania	No	Germany	No	Poland	No
Andorra	Yes	Greece	No	Portugal	No
Armenia	No	Hungary	No	Romania	No
Austria	No	Iceland	No	Russian Federation	No
Azerbaijan	Yes	Ireland	No	San Marino	No
Belarus	No	Italy	No	Serbia	No
Belgium	No	Kazakhstan	No	Slovakia	No
Bosnia and Herzegovina	No	Latvia	Yes	Slovenia	Yes
Bulgaria (Rep.)	No	Liechtenstein (Rep.)	No	Spain	No
Croatia	Yes	Lithuania	Yes	Sweden	Yes
Cyprus	Yes	Luxembourg	Yes	Switzerland	No
Czech Rep.	No	Macedonia (the former Yugoslav Rep. of)	No	Turkey	No
Denmark	No	Malta	No	Ukraine	No
Estonia	No	Moldova	Yes	Great Britain	No
Finland	Yes	Monaco	No	Vatican	No
France	No	Netherlands	No		
Georgia	No	Norway	No		

4 Is there a table summarizing the length of postcodes by country? I am trying to determine which countries have postcodes exceeding six characters in length.

Below is a list of postcode lengths by country. Please note that this list includes only countries which are UPU members and which provide their data for inclusion in the Universal *POST*CODE*® DataBase.

Universal DataBase (Mar. 2019)					
List of postcode lengths by country:					
Country/territory name	PC Lgth	Country/territory name	PC Lgth	Country/territory name	PC Lgth
A-Gr		Gu-No		No-Z	
Afghanistan	4	Guadeloupe	5	Norway	4
Algeria	5	Guatemala	5	Oman	3
Andorra	5	Guinea	3	Pakistan	5
Anguilla	6	Guinea-Bissau	4	Papua New Guinea	3
Argentina	5	Haiti	4	Paraguay	6
Armenia	4	Honduras	6	Peru	5
Ascension	8	Hungary	4	Philippines	4
Australia	4	Iceland	3	Pitcairn	8
Austria	4	India	6	Poland	6
Azerbaijan	7	Indonesia	5	Portugal	8
Bahrain	3	Iran	6	Romania	6
Bahrain	4	Iraq	5	Russian Federation	6

Universal DataBase

Bangladesh	4	Israel	5	Réunion	5
Barbados	7	Italy	5	S. Georgia and S. Sandwich	8
Belarus	6	Japan	8	Saint Barthélemy	5
Belgium	4	Jordan	5	Saint Helena	8
Bermuda	5	Kazakhstan	6	Saint Martin (FR)	5
Bhutan	5	Kenya	5	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	Korea (Rep.)	5	Samoa	6
Br. Indian Ocean Ter.	8	Kosovo (UNMIK)	5	San Marino	5
Brazil	9	Kuwait	5	Saudi Arabia	5
British Antarctic Territory	8	Kyrgyzstan	6	Senegal	5
Brunei Darussalam	6	Laos	5	Serbia	5
Bulgaria	4	Latvia	7	Serbia	6
Cabo Verde	4	Lebanon	4	Singapore	6
Cambodia	5	Lebanon	9	Slovakia	6
Canada	7	Lesotho	3	Slovenia	4
Cayman Islands	8	Liechtenstein	4	South Africa	4
Chile	7	Lithuania	5	Spain	5
China	6	Luxembourg	6	Sri Lanka	5
Christmas Island	4	Madagascar	3	St. Vincent and Grenadines	6
Clipperton Island	5	Malaysia	5	Sudan	5
Cocos (Keeling) Is.	4	Maldives	5	Svalbard and Jan Mayen	4
Costa Rica	5	Malta	3	Swaziland	4
Croatia	5	Malta	5	Sweden	6
Cuba	5	Malta	8	Switzerland	4
Cyprus	4	Martinique	5	Taiwan	5
Czech Republic	6	Mayotte	5	Tajikistan	6
Denmark	4	Mexico	5	Tanzania	5
Diego Garcia	8	Moldova	4	Thailand	5
Dominican Republic	5	Monaco	5	Trinidad and Tobago	6
Ecuador	6	Mongolia	5	Tristan da Cunha	8
Egypt	5	Montenegro	5	Tunisia	4
El Salvador	4	Montserrat	7	Turkey	5
Estonia	5	Morocco	5	Turkmenistan	6
Ethiopia	4	Morocco	5	Turks and Caicos Is.	8
Falkland Is. (Malvinas)	8	Mozambique	4	USA	10
Farøe Islands	3	Namibia	5	USA	5
Finland	5	Nauru	5	Ukraine	5
France	5	Nepal	5	Uruguay	5
French Guiana	5	Netherlands	4	Uzbekistan	6
French Polynesia	5	Netherlands	7	Vatican City	5
Georgia	4	New Caledonia	5	Venezuela	4
Germany	5	New Zealand	4	Venezuela	6
Gibraltar	8	Nicaragua	5	Viet Nam	5
Great Britain	6	Niger	4	Virgin Islands, British	6
Great Britain	7	Nigeria	6	Wallis and Futuna	5
Great Britain	8	Niue	4	Åland Islands	5
Greece	6	Norfolk Island	4		
Greenland	4	North Macedonia (Rep.)	4		

5 Is there a standard that a country should follow when it does not adopt a postcode?

No, there is no standard to follow. When a country implements a postcode, it should be kept as simple as possible. This is not always possible, however, as, in their postal operations, countries have to attach several elements to their coding method (ISO prefix, zone, regional distribution centre, delivery office, etc.).

6 Is there a single unified addressing rule for Europe?

There is no single unified addressing rule for Europe. In Europe, there are a variety of addressing systems as well as addressing rules, including usage of the ISO prefix. Therefore, addressing templates for European countries should be created on a case by case basis (for each individual country).

7 Some cities have double postcodes, one from the country they belong to and another from a neighbouring country. Which postcode is the right one?

The most common reason for assigning to a city the postcode of a neighbouring country is that the nearest mail dispatch centre is located in the neighbouring country. Consequently, dispatching the mail via the country in which the city is located would generate unnecessary mail traffic.

To avoid unnecessary mail circulation, Deutsche Post recommends that, for the city of Bünsingen, the Swiss postcode (8238) should be used for all mail posted in Switzerland. For mail to Bünsingen posted in Germany or other countries, the German postcode (78266) is recommended.

The same rule also applies for the following Austrian cities, to which both German and Austrian postcodes have been assigned:

<i>City name</i>	<i>Country in which city is located</i>	<i>Austrian postcode</i>	<i>German postcode</i>
Hirschegg	Austria	6992	87568
Jungholz	Austria	6691	87491
Mittelberg	Austria	6993	87569
Riezlern	Austria	6991	87567

The German postcodes should be used for mail to these cities dispatched in Germany, and the country indicated should be "GERMANY", while the Austrian postcodes should be used for mail to these cities dispatched from Austria and other countries, and the country indicated should be "AUSTRIA".

8 What are ISO country codes?

See ISO website at:

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes.htm

ISO 3166 is the international standard for country codes. The purpose of ISO 3166 is to establish codes for the representation of names of countries, territories or areas of geographical interest, and their subdivisions.

There are three related documents, which, taken together, make up ISO 3166:

- ISO 3166–1: this is the country code. It contains a two-letter or a three-letter code and a numeric-3 code.
- ISO 3166–2: this is the country subdivision code. This code is based on the two-letter element from ISO 3166–1, followed by a separator and a further string of up to three alphanumeric characters.

- ISO 3166–3: this is the official country name. It contains four alphabetical characters.

ISO 3166–1 is currently the most widely used system of abbreviation for country names. We also use it in our *POST*CODE*® DataBase to abbreviate country names. The short country names from ISO 3166–1 and the alpha-2 codes are made available by ISO at no charge for internal use and non-commercial purposes and can be downloaded at:

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes/iso-3166-1_decoding_table.htm

More detailed information is available on the ISO website at:

www.iso.org

9 Should ISO codes be applied in the mail address?

In most cases, and for the sake of simplicity, the common name of a country (and not the ISO one) should be used in addresses on envelopes. In most cases, common names are better recognized or simply easier to fit on the envelope than the official country name.

Examples:

- Venezuela (the common name) and not Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (the ISO name);
- Bolivia (the common name) and not Plurinational State of Bolivia (the ISO name).

10 Is any information available as to which postcodes are numeric only and which postcodes are alphanumeric? Are there any rules such as "anything over 5 is alphanumeric"?

No, there is no rule governing which postcodes are numeric and which are alphanumeric. The decision is purely conventional and up to the country concerned.

The list below contains information about postcode type per country. If a country has a single postcode, that postcode has been entered as a postcode type. There are some countries that have a numeric postcode but with a special character (or whitespace or dash "-"), such as Brazil or Czech Rep. those countries have been classified as Numeric (*).

Universal DataBase (Mar. 2019)					
Postcode type per country:					
Country/territory name A-Le	PCODE format	PCODE type	Country/territory name Le-Z	PCODE format	PCODE type
Afghanistan	9999	N	Lesotho	999	N
Algeria	99999	N	Liechtenstein	9999	N
Andorra	AD999	A/N	Lithuania	99999	N
Anguilla	AI-2640	A/N	Luxembourg	L-9999	A/N
Argentina	A9999	A/N	Madagascar	999	N
Armenia	9999	N	Malaysia	99999	N
Ascension	ASCN 1ZZ	A/N	Maldives	99999	N
Australia	9999	N	Malta	AA 99	A/N
Austria	9999	N	Malta	AAA	A
Azerbaijan	AZ 9999	A/N	Malta	AAA 9999	A/N
Bahrain	999	N	Martinique	99999	N
Bahrain	9999	N	Mayotte	99999	N
Bangladesh	9999	N	Mexico	99999	N
Barbados	BB99999	A/N	Moldova	9999	N

Belarus	999999	N	Monaco	99999	N
Belgium	9999	N	Mongolia	99999	N
Bermuda	AA 99	A/N	Montenegro	99999	N
Bermuda	AA AA	A/N	Montserrat	MSR9999	A/N
Bhutan	99999	N	Morocco	99999	N
Bosnia and Herzegovina	99999	N	Mozambique	9999	N
Br. Indian Ocean Ter.	BBND 1ZZ	A/N	Namibia	99999	N
Brazil	99999-999	N*	Nauru	NRU68	A/N
British Antarctic Territory	BIQQ 1ZZ	A/N	Nepal	99999	N
Brunei Darussalam	AA9999	A/N	Netherlands	9999	N
Bulgaria	9999	N	Netherlands	9999 AA	A/N
Cabo Verde	9999	N	New Caledonia	99999	N
Cambodia	99999	N	New Zealand	9999	N
Canada	A9A 9A9	A/N	Nicaragua	99999	N
Cayman Islands	KY9-9999	A/N	Niger	9999	N
Chile	9999999	N	Nigeria	9999999	N
China	999999	N	Niue	9974	N
Christmas Island	9999	N	Norfolk Island	9999	N
Clipperton Island	99999	N	North Macedonia (Rep.)	9999	N
Cocos (Keeling) Is.	9999	N	Norway	9999	N
Costa Rica	99999	N	Oman	999	N
Croatia	99999	N	Pakistan	99999	N
Cuba	99999	N	Papua New Guinea	999	N
Cyprus	9999	N	Paraguay	9999	N
Czech Republic	999 99	N*	Peru	99999	N
Denmark	9999	N	Philippines	9999	N
Diego Garcia	BBND 1ZZ	A/N	Pitcairn	PCRN 1ZZ	A/N
Dominican Republic	99999	N	Poland	99-999	N*
Ecuador	A99999	A/N	Portugal	9999-999	N*
Ecuador	A9999A	A/N	Romania	999999	N
Egypt	99999	N	Russian Federation	9999999	N
El Salvador	9999	N	Réunion	99999	N
Estonia	99999	N	S. Georgia and S. Sandwich	SIQQ 1ZZ	A/N
Eswatini	A999	A/N	Saint Barthélemy	99999	N
Ethiopia	9999	N	Saint Helena	STHL 1ZZ	A/N
Falkland Is. (Malvinas)	FIQQ 1ZZ	A/N	Saint Martin (FR)	99999	N
Farøe Islands	999	N	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	99999	N
Finland	99999	N	Samoa	WS9999	A/N
France	99999	N	San Marino	99999	N
French Guiana	99999	N	Saudi Arabia	99999	N
French Polynesia	99999	N	Senegal	99999	N
Georgia	9999	N	Serbia	99999	N
Germany	99999	N	Serbia	999999	N
Gibraltar	GX11 1AA	A/N	Singapore	999999	N
Great Britain	A9 9AA	A/N	Slovakia	999 99	N*
Great Britain	A99 9AA	A/N	Slovenia	9999	N
Great Britain	A9A 9AA	A/N	South Africa	9999	N
Great Britain	AA9 9AA	A/N	Spain	99999	N
Great Britain	AA99 9AA	A/N	Spain	AD999	A/N

Great Britain	AA9A 9AA	A/N	Sri Lanka	99999	N
Great Britain	GIR 0AA	A/N	St. Vincent and Grenadines	VC9999	A/N
Greece	999 99	N*	Sudan	99999	N
Greenland	9999	N	Svalbard and Jan Mayen	9999	N
Guadeloupe	99999	N	Sweden	999 99	N*
Guatemala	99999	N	Switzerland	9999	N
Guinea	999	N	Taiwan	99999	N
Guinea-Bissau	9999	N	Tajikistan	9999999	N
Haiti	9999	N	Tanzania	99999	N
Honduras	AA9999	A/N	Thailand	99999	N
Hungary	9999	N	Trinidad and Tobago	999999	N
Iceland	999	N	Tristan da Cunha	TDCU 1ZZ	A/N
India	999999	N	Tunisia	9999	N
Indonesia	99999	N	Turkey	99999	N
Iran	999999	N	Turkmenistan	999999	N
Iraq	99999	N	Turks and Caicos Is.	TKCA 1ZZ	A/N
Israel	99999	N	USA	99999	N
Italy	99999	N	USA	99999-9999	N*
Japan	999-9999	N*	USA	99999-99ND	A/N
Jordan	99999	N	Ukraine	99999	N
Kazakhstan	999999	N	Uruguay	99999	N
Kenya	99999	N	Uzbekistan	999999	N
Korea (Rep.)	99999	N	Vatican City	99999	N
Kosovo (UNMIK)	99999	N	Venezuela	9999	N
Kuwait	99999	N	Venezuela	9999-A	A/N
Kyrgyzstan	999999	N	Viet Nam	999999	N
Laos	99999	N	Virgin Islands, British	VG9999	A/N
Latvia	LV-9999	A/N	Wallis and Futuna	99999	N
Lebanon	9999	N	Åland Islands	99999	N
Lebanon	9999 9999	N*			

numeric = N
alphanumeric = A/N
numeric with a special character = N*