



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 (Dec. 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	Iran (Islamic Rep.)	Moldova	Saint Pierre and Miquelon
Åland Islands	Czech Republic	Iraq	Monaco	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Albania	Denmark	Isle of Man	Mongolia	San Marino
Algeria	Dominican Republic	Israel	Montserrat	Saudi Arabia
Andorra	Ecuador	Italy	Montenegro (Rep.)	Senegal
Argentina	Egypt	Japan	Morocco	Serbia
Armenia	El Salvador	Jersey	Mozambique	Singapore
Australia	Estonia	Jordan	Myanmar	Slovakia
Austria	Eswatini	Kazakhstan	Namibia	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Ethiopia	Kenya	Nauru	South Africa
Bahrain	Faroe Islands	Korea (Rep.)	Nepal	Spain
Bangladesh	Finland	Kosovo (UNMIK)	Netherlands	Sri Lanka
Barbados	France	Kuwait	New Caledonia	Sudan
Belarus	French Guiana	Kyrgyzstan	New Zealand	Sweden
Belgium	French Polynesia	Lao (People's Dem. Rep.)	Nicaragua	Switzerland
Bermuda	Federated States of Micronesia	Latvia	Niger	Svalbard and Jan Mayen Island
Bhutan	Georgia	Lebanon	Nigeria	Tajikistan
Bosnia-Hezergovina	Germany	Lesotho	North Macedonia (Rep.)	Thailand
Brazil	Great Britain	Liechtenstein	Norway	Trinidad and Tobago
British Antarctic Territory	Greece	Lithuania	Oman	Tunisia
Brunei Darussalam	Greenland	Luxembourg	Pakistan	Turkey
Bulgaria (Rep.)	Guadeloupe	Madagascar	Papua New Guinea	Turkmenistan
Cabo Verde	Guam	Malawi	Paraguay	Ukraine
Cambodia	Guatemala	Malaysia	Peru	USA
Canada	Guernsey	Maldives	Philippines	Uruguay
Cayman Islands	Guinea	Malta	Poland	Uzbekistan

Chile	Guinea-Bissau	Mariana Islands	Portugal	Venezuela
China (People's Rep.)	Haiti	Marshall Islands	Puerto Rico	Viet Nam
Clipperton Island	Honduras (Rep.)	Martinique	Réunion	Virgin Islands, British
Colombia	Hungary	Mauritius	Romania	Virgin Islands of the United States of America
Costa Rica	Iceland	Mayotte	Russian Federation	Wallis and Futuna
Croatia	India	Mexico	Saint Barthélemy	Åland Islands
Cuba	Indonesia	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Saint Martin (FR)	

Universal DataBase (Dec. 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-J	K-Si	So-Z
American Samoa (Single postcode: AS 96799)	Congo (Rep.)	Kiribati	Solomon (Islands)
Angola	Cook Islands	Liberia (<i>Not being used</i>)	Somalia
Anguilla (Single postcode: AI-2640)	Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.)	Libya	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Single postcode: SIQQ 1ZZ)
Antigua and Barbuda	Curaçao	Macao, China	South Sudan
Aruba	Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	Mali	Suriname
Ascension (Single postcode: ASCN 1ZZ)	Diego Garcia (Single postcode: BBND 1ZZ)	Mauritania	Syrian Arab Rep.
Bahamas	Djibouti	Nauru (Single postcode: NRU68)	Tanzania (United Rep.)
Belize	Dominica	Niue (Single postcode: 9974)	Timor-Leste (Dem. Rep.)
Benin	Equatorial Guinea	Norfolk Island (Single postcode: 2899)	Tokelau
Bolivia	Eritrea	Palau (Single postcode for the whole territory: 96940)	Tonga
Botswana	Falkland Islands (Single postcode: F1QQ 1ZZ)	Panama	Tristan da Cunha (Single postcode: TDCU 1ZZ)
British Indian Ocean Territory (Single postcode: BBND 1ZZ)	Fiji	Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands (Single postcode: PCRN 1ZZ)	Turks and Caicos Islands (Single postcode: TKCA 1ZZ)
Burkina Faso	Gambia	Qatar	Tuvalu
Burundi	Ghana	Rwanda	Uganda
Cameroon	Gibraltar (Generic postcode: GX11 1AA)	Saint Helena (Single postcode: STHL 1ZZ)	United Arab Emirates
Central African (Rep.)	Grenada	Saint Kitts and Nevis	United States Minor Outlying Islands
Chad	Guyana	Saint Lucia	Vanuatu
Christmas Island (Single postcode: 6798)	Heard Island & McDonald Islands	São Tomé and Príncipe	Vatican (Single postcode: 00120)
Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Single postcode: 6799)	Hong Kong, China	Seychelles	Yemen

Comoros	Ireland	Sierra Leone	Zambia
Congo (Dem. Rep.)	Jamaica	Sint Maarten (Dutch part)	Zimbabwe

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 (Dec. 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	Greenland	4	Norfolk Island	4
Algeria	5	Guadeloupe	5	North Macedonia (Rep.)	4
Andorra	5	Guatemala	5	Norway	4
Anguilla	6	Guinea	3	Oman	3
Argentina	5	Guinea-Bissau	4	Pakistan	5
Armenia	4	Haiti	4	Papua New Guinea	3
Ascension	8	Honduras	6	Paraguay	6
Australia	4	Hungary	4	Peru	5
Austria	4	Iceland	3	Philippines	4
Azerbaijan	7	India	6	Pitcairn	8
Bahrain	3	Indonesia	5	Poland	6
Bahrain	4	Iran	6	Portugal	8

Bangladesh	4	Iraq	5	Romania	6
Barbados	7	Israel	5	Russian Federation	6
Belarus	6	Italy	5	Réunion	5
Belgium	4	Japan	8	S. Georgia and S. Sandwich	8
Bermuda	5	Jordan	5	Saint Barthélemy	5
Bhutan	5	Kazakhstan	6	Saint Helena	8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	Kenya	5	Saint Martin (FR)	5
Br. Indian Ocean Ter.	8	Korea (Rep.)	5	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	5
Brazil	9	Kosovo (UNMIK)	5	Samoa	6
British Antarctic Territory	8	Kuwait	5	San Marino	5
Brunei Darussalam	6	Kyrgyzstan	6	Saudi Arabia	5
Bulgaria	4	Laos	5	Senegal	5
Cabo Verde	4	Latvia	7	Serbia	5
Cambodia	5	Lebanon	4	Serbia	6
Canada	7	Lebanon	9	Singapore	6
Cayman Islands	8	Lesotho	3	Slovakia	6
Chile	7	Liechtenstein	4	Slovenia	4
China	6	Lithuania	5	South Africa	4
Christmas Island	4	Luxembourg	6	Spain	5
Clipperton Island	5	Madagascar	3	Sri Lanka	5
Cocos (Keeling) Is.	4	Malawi	6	St. Vincent and Grenadines	6
Costa Rica	5	Malaysia	5	Sudan	5
Croatia	5	Maldives	5	Svalbard and Jan Mayen	4
Cuba	5	Malta	3	Sweden	6
Cyprus	4	Malta	5	Switzerland	4
Czech Republic	6	Malta	8	Taiwan	5
Denmark	4	Martinique	5	Tajikistan	6
Diego Garcia	8	Mayotte	5	Tanzania	5
Dominican Republic	5	Mexico	5	Thailand	5
Ecuador	6	Moldova	4	Trinidad and Tobago	6
Egypt	5	Monaco	5	Tristan da Cunha	8
El Salvador	4	Mongolia	5	Tunisia	4
Estonia	5	Montenegro	5	Turkey	5
Eswatini	4	Montserrat	7	Turkmenistan	6
Ethiopia	4	Morocco	5	Turks and Caicos Is.	8
Falkland Is. (Malvinas)	8	Morocco	5	USA	10
Farøe Islands	3	Mozambique	4	USA	5
Finland	5	Namibia	5	Ukraine	5
France	5	Nauru	5	Uruguay	5
French Guiana	5	Nepal	5	Uzbekistan	6
French Polynesia	5	Netherlands	4	Vatican City	5
Georgia	4	Netherlands	7	Venezuela	4
Germany	5	New Caledonia	5	Venezuela	6
Gibraltar	8	New Zealand	4	Viet Nam	5
Great Britain	6	Nicaragua	5	Virgin Islands, British	6
Great Britain	7	Niger	4	Wallis and Futuna	5
Great Britain	8	Nigeria	6	Åland Islands	5
Greece	6	Niue	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 (Dec. 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	Malawi	999999	N
Ascension	ASCN 1ZZ	A/N	Malaysia	99999	N
Australia	9999	N	Maldives	99999	N
Austria	9999	N	Malta	AA 99	A/N
Azerbaijan	AZ 9999	A/N	Malta	AAA	A
Bahrain	999	N	Malta	AAA 9999	A/N
Bahrain	9999	N	Martinique	99999	N
Bangladesh	9999	N	Mayotte	99999	N
Barbados	BB99999	A/N	Mexico	99999	N

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

Great Britain	AA9A 9AA	A/N	Spain	AD999	A/N
Great Britain	GIR 0AA	A/N	Sri Lanka	99999	N
Greece	999 99	N*	St. Vincent and Grenadines	VC9999	A/N
Greenland	9999	N	Sudan	99999	N
Guadeloupe	99999	N	Svalbard and Jan Mayen	9999	N
Guatemala	99999	N	Sweden	999 99	N*
Guinea	999	N	Switzerland	9999	N
Guinea-Bissau	9999	N	Taiwan	99999	N
Haiti	9999	N	Tajikistan	999999	N
Honduras	AA9999	A/N	Tanzania	99999	N
Hungary	9999	N	Thailand	99999	N
Iceland	999	N	Trinidad and Tobago	999999	N
India	999999	N	Tristan da Cunha	TDCU 1ZZ	A/N
Indonesia	99999	N	Tunisia	9999	N
Iran	999999	N	Turkey	99999	N
Iraq	99999	N	Turkmenistan	999999	N
Israel	99999	N	Turks and Caicos Is.	TKCA 1ZZ	A/N
Italy	99999	N	USA	99999	N
Japan	999-9999	N*	USA	99999-9999	N*
Jordan	99999	N	USA	99999-99ND	A/N
Kazakhstan	999999	N	Ukraine	99999	N
Kenya	99999	N	Uruguay	99999	N
Korea (Rep.)	99999	N	Uzbekistan	999999	N
Kosovo (UNMIK)	99999	N	Vatican City	99999	N
Kuwait	99999	N	Venezuela	9999	N
Kyrgyzstan	999999	N	Venezuela	9999-A	A/N
Laos	99999	N	Viet Nam	999999	N
Latvia	LV-9999	A/N	Virgin Islands, British	VG9999	A/N
Lebanon	9999	N	Wallis and Futuna	99999	N
Lebanon	9999 9999	N*	Åland Islands	99999	N

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