



Ministerie van Toerisme, Economische Zaken, Verkeer en Telecommunicatie

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The legal basis for the policy change is regulated in article 7 of the “Landsverordening Winkelsluiting”. Given the possibility of an exemption in article 3 regulated in Article 6, the proposed amended policy is in conformity with all laws and regulations.

4. GOALS & PRINCIPLES

The existing ordinance on business hours (“Landsverordening Winkelsluiting PB 1969 no.58”) allows stores to open from 6:30am and close at 6:30pm during weekdays and to be closed on Sundays and days equal to Sunday. Due to economic developments the existing trend is that many businesses, especially in the Philipsburg Center (Front Street, Back Street & Cannegieter Street) are closing later and opening on Sundays to accommodate consumers. In addition several supermarkets, hair salons, beauty supply stores, convenient stores attached to gas stations and barber shops – as being service providing businesses- have extended their daily opening hours to accommodate the market. The aforementioned trend is a consequence of Sint Maarten having developed into a dynamic metropolitan island and the demand by consumers (local and tourist alike) for more convenient hours has led several stores to extend their opening hours.

To facilitate the changing social and economic climate of St Maarten, a policy was approved in 1996 to allow for stores in certain areas to open later than the regulated hours. In addition, in 2009, the concept of ‘Koopavond’ was introduced on the Thursday evenings, allowing all stores on the Dutch side to be open until 9pm. However, due to the ongoing changing economic climate and in light of accommodating the business community, these policies need to be revisited and amended to further liberalizing of the opening hours.

5. Policy

Effective immediately, the Ministerial Decrees as well as this new Opening Hours Policy will go into effect, in which the opening hours are temporarily exempted for one (1) year- extended as follows:

- All supermarkets, beauty supply stores (wholesale & retail), hair salons, and barber shops are granted an exemption and extended opening hours until 11pm for all days of the week (including Sunday) for a period of one (1) year.
- All gas stations and the convenient store attached to the gas station are granted an exemption, and allowed extended opening of 24 hours, for all days of the week (including Sunday) for a period of one year.

Therefore those exempted form of businesses, no longer have to apply for extending hours.

By extending the opening hours of these service providing businesses, it is expected that consumers e.g. local community and tourists – in particular the shopping tourists from the surrounding neighboring islands- will be accommodated.

No exceptions will be granted for the following holidays: New Years Day, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, St. Maarten Day and any other day that has been designated as a National Holiday, as stipulated in the Arbeidsregeling 1952.

All other forms of businesses must abide by the Landsverordening Winkelsluiting, and where applicable apply for the extended opening hours.