

Guide to living in Japan

Minimum information Required for living in Japan

Preface

This leaflet is designed for people who are planning to live in Japan; it provides a collection of key information required to start your life in Japan.

You can live in Japan more easily by acquiring accurate information.

Please make use of the checklist in this leaflet in respect of what needs to be accomplished within one month and within three months after arriving in Japan.

We hope that your life in Japan is safe and comfortable.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[Checklist] **(Things which should be done within one month after your arrival in Japan)**

Housing

- Have you found a place to live?
- Have you entered into the lease contract after fully understanding the terms written in the contract and the conditions of living?

Alien Registration

- Have you completed alien registration?

Medical/Insurance

- Do you know where nearby medical clinics and doctor's offices are located?
- Have you joined public medical insurance ("health insurance" for working people or "national health insurance" for other people)?

Education

- Have you decided which school your children will go to?

Employment

- Have you found employment?
 - If not, you can consult Hello Work offices.
- When concluding the employment contract, have you personally confirmed the working conditions?

Community Life

- Do you know the common rules for the disposal of garbage in the area where you live?
- Are you careful not to make loud noise in your daily life (particularly at night and in the early morning)?
- Do you greet neighbors when you see them?
- Are you involved in your local community, by joining a residents association, etc.?
- Do you have contacts with other people from your country, by participating in networks among them, etc.?

Disasters

- Do you know where to evacuate in case of a disaster?

(Things which should be done within three months after your arrival in Japan)

Japanese Language Study

- Are you making efforts to learn Japanese; by going to a Japanese language school, attending Japanese class, etc.?

Social Insurance Premiums

- Do you know how to join social insurance (public health insurance, national pension plan, worker's accident compensation insurance, employment insurance and long-term care insurance)?

→ If not, please access the website of Multilingual Living Information at
<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengorev/en/index.html>

List of Consultation Service Contacts (※Some language services are available on certain days of the week)

General Services

- Consultation Support Center for Foreign Residents (Japanese, Chinese, English, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Indonesian, and Bengalese)
Tel.: 03-3202-5535

Legal Problems

- Japan Legal Support Center, "Houterasu" (Japanese and English)
Tel.: 0570-078374

Human Trafficking Problems

- The Counseling Center for Women – Anti Trafficking Project (NGO) (Japanese, English, Tagalog and Thai)
Tel.: 03-3368-8855, 045-914-7008

Work-Related Problems

- Tokyo Employment Service Center for Foreigners (Japanese, English and Chinese)
Tel.: 03-3588-8639
- Osaka Employment Service Center for Foreigners (Japanese, English, Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese)
Tel.: 06-6344-1135
- Nagoya Employment Service Center for Foreigners (Japanese, English, Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese)
Tel.: 052-264-1901

● The list of Hello Work offices where interpretation service is available can be obtained at the following website:

www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/koyou/naitei/dl/nihong1.pdf

Commonly Used Japanese Words and Phrases in Japanese

- THANK YOU ありがとう(ARIGATOU)
- GOOD MORNING おはよう(OHAYOU)
- HI/HELLO こんにちは(KON-NICHIWA)
- EXCUSE ME すみません(SUMIMASEN)
- I'M SORRY ごめんなさい(GOMEN-NASAI)
- I 私(WATASHI)
- HUSBAND 夫(OTTO)
- WIFE 妻(TSUMA)
- CHILD 子ども(KODOMO)
- SCHOOL 学校(GAKKOU)

Emergency Telephone Numbers

- Police Station Tel: 110
- Emergency cases (Ambulance) Tel: 119
- Fire Tel: 119



Emergency Words and Phrases in Japanese

- HELP! 助けて(TASUKETE)
- THIEF/ROBBER 泥棒(DOROBOU)
- POLICE 警察(KEISATSU)
- FIRE 火事(KAJI)
- AMBULANCE 救急車(KYUUKYUUSHA)
- HOSPITAL 病院(BYOUIN)
- HURRY UP. 急いで(ISOIDE)
- STOP IT. 止めて(YAMETE)
- GET OUT OF HERER. 出て行って(DETEITTE)
- I'M IN PAIN. (I'M HURT/SORE.) 痛い (ITAI)
- VIOLENCE 暴力(BOURYOKU)
- ILLNESS 病気(BYOUKI)
- ACCIDENTE 事故(JIKO)
- INJURY 怪我(KEGA)
- I CANNOT SPEAK JAPANESE. 日本語 話せません(NIHONGO HANASE MASEN)

Please visit the following websites if you would like more information.

This leaflet has been created referring to "Multilingual Living Information" prepared by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations.

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/index.html
- Office for the Coordination of Policies on Foreign Residents, Cabinet Office
<http://www8.cao.go.jp/teiju-portal/eng/index.html>
- Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)
<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengorev/index.html>

Things which should be done within one month after arriving in Japan

Housing

There are three types of housing available in Japan: private rental housing, publicly subsidized housing and privately owned housing.

You will enter into a contract when renting a house or an apartment. This contract is called a lease contract. The term of the contract is generally two years.

Aside from the rent, security deposit, key money, Agent fee, etc. will be required for the contract. Please ascertain the details of these charges at the real estate agency.

All types of publicly subsidized housing have specific conditions for foreign tenants such as being registered as an alien and satisfying certain income standards. For more information, please contact the Urban Renaissance Agency (UR) or the municipal office (*yakusho*) that manages the public housing in which you are interested.

In the case of rental private housing and publicly subsidized housing, it is important to keep in mind that you cannot live with someone who is not your family without obtaining permission from the landlord. For this reason, if you expect to live in a friend's house temporarily immediately after arriving in Japan, it is necessary for you to find your own place as early as possible.

Alien Registration

All foreigners planning to stay in Japan for longer than 90 days must complete the alien registration at the local municipal office within 90 days from the day of entry. (This procedure is not necessary for those who are leaving Japan in no more than 90 days).

The registration is also necessary for infants born in Japan (but do not have Japanese nationality) within 60 days of date of birth.

Registration should be filed by the person concerned. However, if the person is under 16 years of age or has special circumstances such as ill health, it can be filed by a proxy, such as a relative, who is 16 years of age or over and living with the said person.

The Certificate of Alien Registration validates your identity in Japan and you must carry it with you at all times if you are 16 years of age or over.

Medical Care / Insurance

(Medical Care)

When receiving medical treatment in Japan, it is best to bring someone who can speak Japanese since many medical facilities do not offer service in foreign languages. Also, this may be important in order to accurately communicate the symptoms you have. Some prefectures post information regarding medical facilities and their capacity in foreign languages on their website so it is recommended to check whether the staff at your local hospital or clinic can speak your native language.

There are two types of medical facilities in Japan: hospitals that are fully equipped for in-patient care and complete examinations and clinics that specialize in family practice. It is advised to go see a doctor at a local clinic first and then receive specialized treatment at a larger hospital if necessary.

If you have any medical restrictions due to your religion or allergy, it is important to notify the receptionist or the nurse in advance. Make sure you bring your health insurance card to medical facilities.

Also, if you are currently taking any medication, bring it with you on your visit to medical facilities.

(Insurance)

Anyone who lives in Japan must carry some form of public health insurance.

There are two types of health insurance in Japan: Employees' Health insurance (*kenko hoken*) offered to employees working at companies and factories and National Health Insurance (*kokumin kenko hoken*) for self-employed or unemployed people.

If you are enrolled in public health insurance, you are generally required to pay only 30% of the medical expenses which are standardized throughout the country. However, if you do not have any public health insurance, you will end up paying all the expenses.

Education

In general, education in Japan consists of three years in kindergarten, six years in elementary school, three years in junior high school, three years in high school and four years in university (or two years in junior college).

Japanese nationals are obligated to enroll their children in elementary school and junior high school. Like Japanese children, children of foreign nationalities of school age (between ages 6 and 15) who are living in Japan are entitled to enter or transfer to local public elementary schools or junior high schools without paying any tuition. There are also schools for children with foreign nationalities.

Please make sure to enroll your child in school for the sake of his or her future. For the enrollment please consult your local municipal office.

Employment

If you are a foreigner whose status of residence permits you to lawfully live and work in Japan, Public Employment Service Center (also known as *Hello Work*) is a good place to visit for support in order to improve your employment condition and in event you become unemployed.

It is crucial that you yourself confirm the terms and conditions of employment before entering into contract.

An employment contract is a contract concluded between you and your employer when you start working for the employer. When a contract is concluded, the employer is supposed to execute a written document that specifies the wage (salary), work hours and other binding labor-related terms and conditions. If the contract is written in Japanese, make sure you fully understand the content by having it translated into your native language or otherwise, if necessary.

Terms and conditions of employment that employers must notify in writing are as follows.

- Duration of the employment contract
- Job location and job responsibilities
- Working hours (start/end time and breaks), overtime work, paid holidays, paid vacation, etc.
- How to determine, calculate and pay the salary as well as cut-off date and payday
- Details of employment termination and retirement

The company you work for may have Employment Rules (Employee Handbook) that stipulate the terms and conditions of employment. In that case, it is best for you to familiarize yourself with the content.

Community Life

It will be good for you to voluntarily greet neighbors. They can often provide you with various information about the neighborhood. Give them a brief self-introduction such as your name and what you are doing for living.

Noises in daily life can cause conflicts with your neighbors. Be careful not to make loud noises not only late at night and early in the morning, but also in daily life in general.

Waste management practices differ depending on the area (municipalities) you live in. Residents are required to sort out garbage accordingly and put it out on a specific day of the week, time and place. Please be sure and understand these rules of your neighborhood.

In general, municipalities have some form of community organizations called *chounai-kai* (neighborhood association) or *jichi-kai* (residents' association). The activities are funded by fees collected from the residents in the neighborhood. People with foreign nationalities can also join them as long as they are residents. It is a good source for obtaining local information.

Disasters

Japan is a country that experiences a large number of earthquakes and typhoons. In order to minimize the damage from such natural disasters, please be sure to regularly take measure for disaster prevention and to confirm where to evacuate in the event of an emergency .

Things which should be done within three months after arriving in Japan

Learning Japanese and Maintaining Native Language

Japanese language ability is crucial if you are to live in Japan.

There are two types of places where you can learn Japanese: *Nihongo Gakko*, which are Japanese language schools, and courses and classes offered by others. *Nihongo Gakko* is not free of charge; other Japanese courses and classes by others are either free or relatively inexpensive. Municipalities, International Associations, non-governmental organizations and volunteer groups also offer Japanese courses and classes for free or at a nominal fee, making the learning experience more accessible to foreigners. For more details, please contact International Association, prefectural governments or municipal offices.

In order to help your child maintain his/her mother tongue, you can contact a network that uses your language or a school for foreign children. Gathering some information of Japan through newspapers and magazines written in your native language may also be helpful.

Taxation System in Japan

If you live in Japan and earn a certain level of income, you are obliged to pay taxes regardless of your nationality.

There are two types of taxes in Japan: national taxes and local taxes. National taxes are taxes imposed by the national government and local taxes are taxes applied by the prefectural or municipal authorities.

Please take note if you fail to pay taxes without any justifiable reasons, you may not be able to receive certain administrative services.