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.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
# 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 a resident 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.

## Resident Registration

All persons in Japan who have changed their residential address must notify the local municipal office where they reside within 14 days from the date of the change. In case there are households who are foreign nationals, documents certifying the relationship with the householder will be required.

Residence registration is also required for infants born in Japan within 14 days of their birth. In addition, the infants must file an application to obtain "Status of Residence" at a regional immigration office within 30 days of the date of birth if the infants will reside in Japan more than 60 days after the date of birth.

A householder who can be the center of the group who shares lives with persons at a new residence or a person who located a new address will register the new address to a local municipal office.

## Resident Card

During their stay in Japan, foreign nationals who are 16 years of age or older who have been issued resident cards by the Minister for Justice are required to carry the resident card at all times, even if they are also carrying passports.

## 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 koken) offered to employees of companies and factories and National Health Insurance (kokumin kenko koken) 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.

## Community Life

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.

## Education

## 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 improving 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 (Emposu Hanbai) that stipulate the terms and conditions of employment. In that case, it is best for you to familiarize yourself with the content.

## 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 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 an school for foreign children. Gathering 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.