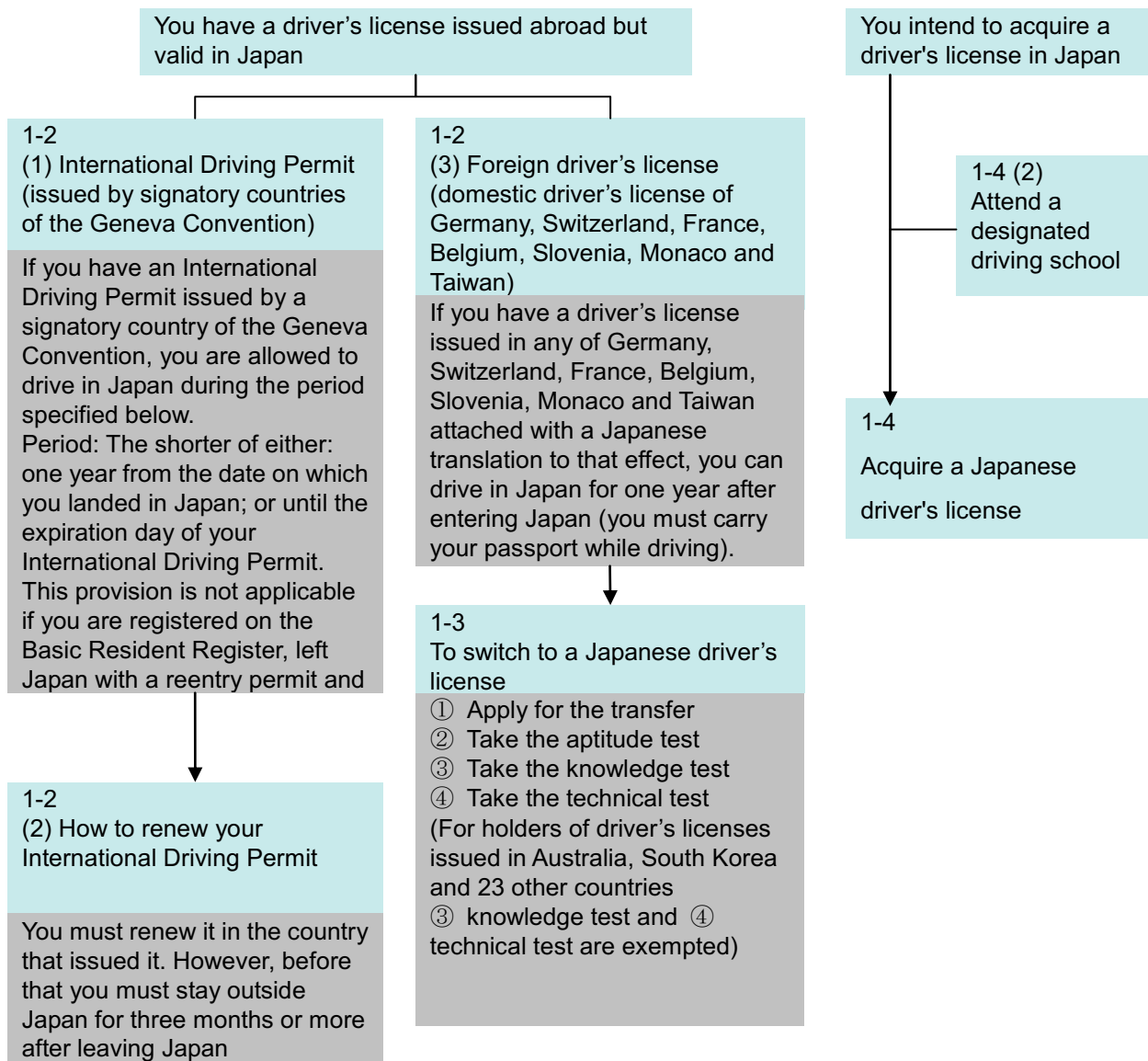




If you wish to drive automobiles in Japan





This part is devoted to explaining the facts about driver's licenses, registration, traffic rules and accidents that you need to know when you own and use an automobile, motorbike, bicycle, etc.

1 Driver's license

1-1 In order to drive automobiles in Japan

You need a valid driver's license when you drive an automobile or ride a motorbike in Japan. You must always carry your driver's license when you drive or ride your vehicle. The following are driver's licenses valid in Japan.

●Driver's licenses valid in Japan

- Driver's licenses acquired in Japan
- The International Driving Permit issued by signatory countries of the Geneva Convention
- Domestic driver's licenses of Germany, Switzerland, France Belgium, Taiwan and Italy ("foreign driver's licenses")

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1 Driver's license

1-2 International Driving Permit and foreign driver's licenses

(1) International Driving Permit

If you hold an International Driving Permit issued by a signatory country of the Geneva Convention, you can drive in Japan during the period designated below:

●The valid period of an International Driving Permit

The valid period is the shorter of either of the following: for one year after the date on which you landed in Japan; or the remaining valid period of your International Driving Permit. However, this provision is exempted if you are registered on the Basic Resident Register, thereafter departed Japan with a reentry permit and landed in Japan again after a period shorter than three months from the date of your departure. In this case, the valid period is calculated from the date of your first entry into Japan.

●Convention on Road Traffic (Geneva Convention) signatory countries (as of December 2017)

Asia	Japan	Africa	Mali	Europe	Iceland
	The Philippines		Niger		Bulgaria
	India		Rwanda		Malta
	Thailand		Senegal		Albania
	Bangladesh		Sierra Leone		Luxemburg
	Malaysia		Togo		Monaco
	Singapore		Tunisia		San Marino
	Sri Lanka		Uganda		Vatican
	Cambodia		Zimbabwe		Kyrgyz
	Laos		Namibia		Georgia
Republic of Korea	Burkina Faso	The Czech Republic			
Middle East	Turkey	Europe	Nigeria	North, Central & South America	Slovakia
	Israel		The United Kingdom		Slovenia
	Syria		Greece		The United States of America
	Cyprus		Norway		Canada
	Jordan		Denmark		Peru
	Lebanon		Sweden		Cuba
Africa	United Arab Emirates	Europe	Switzerland	North, Central & South America	Ecuador
	South Africa		France		Argentina
	The Central African Republic		Italy		Chile
	Egypt		Russia		Paraguay
	Ghana		Serbia		Barbados
	Algeria		Montenegro		Dominica
Morocco	Spain		Guatemala		
					Haiti



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Botswana		Finland	Oceania	Trinidad and Tobago	
Democratic Congo		Portugal		Venezuela	
Congo		Austria		Jamaica	
Benin		Belgium		New Zealand	
Cote d'Ivoire		Poland		Fiji	
Lesotho		Ireland		Australia	
Madagascar		Hungary		Papua New Guinea	
Malawi		Rumania		Hong Kong	
				Administrative Regions	Macao
(96 countries, 2 regions)					

Source : Metropolitan Police Department's Website

<http://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/menkyo/menkyo/kokugai/kokugai04.html>

(2) Renewal of International Driving Permit

In Japan you cannot renew any International Driving Permit issued in other countries: the International Driving Permit is independently controlled by each country pursuant to the treaty.

If your International Driving Permit has expired, you need to acquire a new one in the issuing country.

If you stay in Japan for longer than one year, you are advised to have a driver's license issued in Japan.

(3) Overseas driver's license (foreign driver's license)

If you have a driver's license issued in Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Taiwan or Italy with a Japanese translation attached to it, you can drive in Japan the shorter of the following periods : for one year after your entry into Japan or the validity period of the overseas driver's license. However, this does not apply to people who are registered on the Basic Resident Register, have received a re-entry permit and left Japan, and have returned to Japan within 3 months from the day they departed. In other words, in this case, the period of validity is calculated from the day you first landed in Japan. Such a translation, however, must be prepared in any of the issuing organization of your driver's license, the embassy or a consulate of the issuing country located in Japan or the Japan Automobile Federation (see [2-4 JAF](#)).

You must carry your passport and the above documents when you drive.





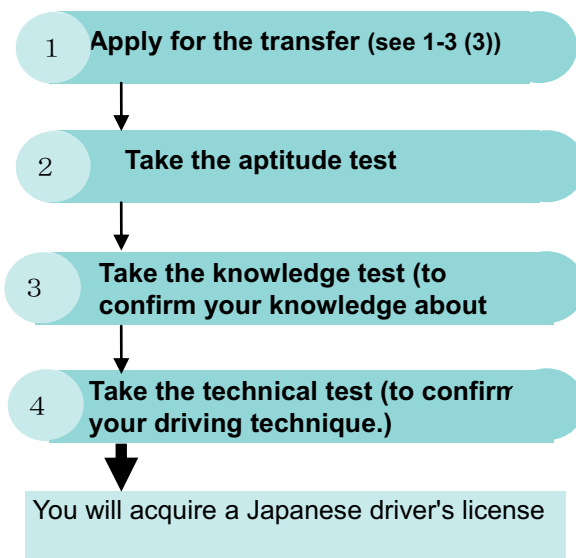
1 Driver's license

1-3 Switching to Japanese license

(1) Switching to Japanese driver's license for people who have an overseas driver's licenses

If you have a valid driver's license issued in a country other than Japan and can prove that you stayed in the country for three months or longer from the date on which you acquired the license, you are eligible to have your driver's license transferred to one issued in Japan. If you receive screening/confirmation that shows you have no difficulty driving in Japan, you will be exempt from a portion of the tests (to confirm your driving knowledge and technique) given at a driver's license center or a test site of driver's license run by the metropolitan or prefectural police headquarters that controls the area you live in.

(2) Process of switching to Japanese driver's license



* If you don't speak Japanese, you need to be attended by an interpreter

* You are exempted from 3. knowledge test and 4. technical test listed above, if you hold a driver's license issued by any of the following 25 countries, etc. (as of April 2017): France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Austria, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Canada, Czech Republic, the State of Maryland and the State of Washington of the United States, Slovenia, Monaco and Taiwan.



1 Driver's license

(3) Required documents for switching to Japanese driver's license

Required document	Where to submit	Fee
<p>1. Application form for driver's license (available at test sites)</p> <p>2. A portrait photo (3cm long x 2.4cm wide, taken within the last six months) the number of photos depends on the number of applications</p> <p>3. A resident record (juminhyo) containing your nationality (permanent legal address) (people who are not registered on the Basic Resident Register, require a letter of certification, etc. from the head of the household they are staying with or from their hotel manager)</p> <p>4. Your driver's license issued in your native country (or a country other than Japan) (if the license does not bear the date of delivery, material evidencing such date)</p> <p>5. Official Japanese translation of your driver's license (it must be issued by any of a foreign administrative body, a consular body or JAF)</p> <p>6. Your passport (it must bear your emigration/immigration record)</p>	<p>Driver's license center located in the area of your residence</p>	<p>About 5,000 yen for application, delivery and other services.</p> <p>Fees vary for types of license you apply for. For details, please enquire at the driver's license center of your area.</p>

Depending on the country, you may need documents other than those stated above. For details, please enquire at the driver's license center of your area.



1 Driver's license

1-4 How to obtain Japanese driver's license

(1) Requirements to obtain Japanese driver's license

Regardless of your nationality, you must take the following check and tests. In some cases you can take the knowledge test in English and other languages. Specifics must be confirmed.

●The inspection and tests you must take

Aptitude check	Measurement of your eyesight and other basic aptitudes
Knowledge test	Confirmation of your knowledge about traffic rules (questions are basically given in Japanese)
Technical test	Confirmation of your driving technique (the inspector gives directions in Japanese)

(2) Attending a driving school

In Japan people generally go to a driving school to gain the technique and knowledge needed to acquire a driver's license. Acquiring a Type I driver's license designed for most ordinary, non-commercial driving costs about 300,000 yen. The duration period differs among driving schools and specifics must be enquired at each school. If you complete courses at one of designated driving schools, you are exempted from the technical test. In that case, you will acquire a driver's license after passing the knowledge test and aptitude check held by the Public Safety Commission. Every lecture at driving schools, as well as the tests, is given in Japanese.



1 Driver's license

1-5 Valid period of driver's license/change in address

(1) Valid period of driver's license and expiration

Your driver's license is valid through one month after the third birthday you have after the delivery of the license. After that, your driver's license is renewed every third or fifth year depending on the duration of your holding the license and your record of penalties. When a renewal time nears, a "notice for renewing your driver's license" is sent to you (if you have changed your address, you must register it to the local police, in order to duly receive the notice). Upon the notice you will take the renewal procedure at the designated driver's license center or police station. Upon every renewal, you will take the aptitude check and renewal lecture.

If you fail to take the renewal procedure, your license will be expired (invalid) and you will need to take the tests again to acquire a new license.

(2) In case of change of address change

When you have changed your address, you must take the necessary procedures to have the address indicated in your driver's license changed. You must show a document proving your new address (a copy of your residence record (juminhyo), public health insurance card, etc.), to take the procedure at the police station or driver's license center governing your new address.



1 Driver's license

1-6 Suspension/cancellation of driver's license, and fines

(1) What is the Japanese points system?

In the Japanese points system, each driver is given points every time they breach traffic rules by acts such as ignoring a traffic light, speeding and parking violations, as well as when they cause a traffic accident. When the points accumulated in three years exceed a certain level, the driver has his/her driver's license cancelled or suspended. (When no administrative treatment has been imposed on the driver in the past three years, six to 14 points make the driver subject to the suspension of the validity of his/her driver's license, while 15 points or more makes the driver subject to the cancellation of his/her license.) In particular, hit-and-run, drink-driving (driving under the influence of alcohol) and driving without a license are considered to be serious offenses that result in heavy administrative treatments.

(2) Notification system for minor traffic offences

A driver who has committed comparatively minor traffic rule offenses (fouls), he/she is given a blue slip (notification for traffic rule fouls) and a provisional payment notice from a police officer at the site of the act. The driver can complete the necessary procedure when he/she pays the penalty fee using the payment notice at a post office or bank before the payment period expires (within eight days including the day of committing the foul) (of course a certain amount of points is added to the driver's record). The list below shows points

●Points for main traffic rule offenses and the amounts of the penalties

Type of traffic rule offense	Points	Amount of penalty (large-size vehicles)	Amount of penalty (regular-size vehicles)	Amount of penalty (motorcycles)
Excessive speeding (25km or more, below 30km)	3	¥25,000	¥18,000	¥15,000
Abandoned parking offense (park-forbidden sites, etc.)	2	¥21,000	¥15,000	¥9,000
Parking/stopping offense (park-forbidden sites, etc.)	1	¥12,000	¥10,000	¥6,000
Ignoring a traffic light (red light, etc.)	2	¥12,000	¥9,000	¥7,000
Passage prohibition offense	2	¥9,000	¥7,000	¥6,000

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Type of traffic rule offense	Points	Amount of penalty (large-size vehicles)	Amount of penalty (regular-size vehicles)	Amount of penalty (motorcycles)
Passage demarcation offense	2	¥12,000	¥9,000	¥7,000
Overtaking offense	2	¥12,000	¥9,000	¥7,000
Offense of safe progression requirement at intersections	2	¥12,000	¥9,000	¥7,000
Use of a mobile phone, etc. (possession)	1	¥7,000	¥6,000	¥6,000



2 Ownership/use of automobiles

Automobile owners and users are legally required to register their automobiles, secure places to keep them, have them inspected and enter into coercive insurance contracts for them, among other requirements. It is also necessary to keep in mind various costs needed to own and use automobiles, in addition to the purchase costs: for fuel, insurance, statutory inspection, automobile taxation, repairs, among others.

2-1 Registration of automobiles

For the occasions listed below, you are required to make registration at the local transport branch office that controls the location of your residence/office. Every automobile must bear a number plate. You may have the registration procedures undertaken by an entity such as the shop at which you bought your automobile. To buy an automobile and register it, you need your registered seal (for light-vehicles, a standard seal) (see [D Other notifications – 5 Personal seals](#)).

Occasions that require registration	Place of registration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you buy an automobile• When the name or address of the owner of an automobile changes• When you give or receive the ownership of an automobile to/from a third person• When you scrap an automobile• When you have lost your number plate	Local transport branch office that controls the location of your residence/office



2 Ownership/use of automobiles

2-2 Proof of parking space certificate

To own an automobile, you need a proof of parking space certificate (to prove that you have secured a place other than on a street to park your automobile).

When you have secured a parking place, you will submit an application for proving the place to keep an automobile at the police station controlling the area of your residence and have a document proving this and the mark for keeping the place (proof of parking space certificate) issued.



2 Ownership/use of automobiles

2-3 Inspection of automobiles (“shaken”)

Inspection of automobiles or shaken is designed to check on a regular basis whether your automobile satisfies standards designated by law. No automobile is allowed to run on public roads unless it has passed this inspection and has the proof of inspection (shaken-sho) delivered for it. The inspection is valid for the next two years for personally-owned cars (three years after the first inspection of newly purchased personally-owned cars). Automobiles must undergo an inspection every second year. A square seal is given as evidence of the completion of the inspection, which you must affix on the windscreen of your automobile.

When you have a professional agent undertake the shaken procedure and inspection for your automobile, you can easily clear all the requirements, while having to pay for fees. If you wish instead to undergo the process on your own, please enquire at your local transport branch office



2 Ownership/use of automobiles

2-4 JAF (Japan Automobile Federation)

JAF (Japan Automobile Federation) offers rescue services for automobile accidents and malfunctions 24 hours a day and throughout a year. Its members are furthermore able to receive various benefits such as driving information (an annual fee is required).

(1) Issuance of translation of overseas driver's license

To apply for the transfer of a foreign driver's license to a Japanese one, you need a translation copy of the foreign driver's license (into Japanese). A valid translated document must be issued by only any of JAF, foreign embassies or consulates in Japan or the organization that issued the foreign driver's license in question.

The application fee is 3,000 yen per license. If you apply by mail, you will additionally need 500 yen for the cost of the return mail (including handling charge).

●JAF online sites:

<http://www.jaf.or.jp/> (Japanese)

<http://www.jaf.or.jp/e/index.htm> (English)

●How to apply

Necessary documents	How to apply	Application counter	Application fee
1. Application form for the issuance of translation for foreign driver's license 2. The foreign driver's license 3. A copy of the Residence Card or a copy of certificate of Residence Record, etc.*	By directly visiting a JAF counter or sending the documents by registered postal cash envelope	The counter for issuing translation documents at every JAF branch	3,000 yen (in case of mail) An additional 500 yen required for the returning mail (including handling fee)

* Required when the driver's license is written in Arabic or Russian or issued in countries such as the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Myanmar.



(2) Sale of the foreign language versions of “Rules of the Road”

“Rules of the Road” (issued by the Japan Traffic Safety Association) is designed to be used for preparing to take the knowledge test at the driver’s license test site. JAF issues its foreign-language editions (in 4 versions: English, Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish). While the Japanese original is free of charge at some local governments, the foreign language editions cost 1,404 yen per copy (consumption tax included, postal fee excluded).

For more details, please visit the JAF online site.

<http://www.jaf.or.jp/>



3 Ownership/use of motorbikes or bicycles

Owners of motorbikes and bicycles must comply with the registration system and rules for parking and other matters.

3-1 Registration of motorbikes

Owners of motorbikes with emissions of 126cc or more must register their motorbikes at the local land transport branch office (automobile inspection and registration office) and have a number plate delivered for each vehicle. Owners of motor-assisted bicycles (with emissions of less than 125cc) must declare their bicycles at the municipal administrative offices serving their residence.

3-2 Theft-prevention registration of bicycles

A theft-prevention registration system is in place for bicycles. The registration process can be made in most cases at the shop where you bought your bicycle.

3-3 Parking

(1) No-bicycle/motorbike parking zones

Certain areas, such as those in front of train stations, are designated as no-bicycle/motorbike parking zones under local ordinances. Any bicycle or motorbike being parked in these areas can be forcibly removed to certain storage sites.

(2) Reclamation of illegally parked bicycles

To reclaim your removed bicycle, you need its key and your identity document (driver's license, etc.). In some cases reclamation is only possible after the payment of storage or relocation fees for reclamation. In these cases you are charged for fees incurred for removing and storing.

Signboard for no-bicycle parking zone





4 Traffic regulations

4-1 Japanese traffic regulations

In Japan traffic regulations are established for each of pedestrians, automobiles and motorbikes and bicycles. Learning these rules quickly and correctly is an important way to lead a safe life in Japan.

(1) Basic traffic rules

When there are no sidewalks, pedestrians must walk on the right side of the road. Automobiles and bicycles must run on the left side of the road.

Among pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles, pedestrians are prioritized. Pedestrians however must be fully cautious, as some people do not observe this rule.

You must follow traffic lights and signs. You must be fully cautious, however, as some people do not observe this rule.




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●Major traffic signs

			
Stop Automobiles and bicycles must stop temporarily	Slow Automobiles must run at speeds that allows for a stop any time	Do not enter Automobiles cannot proceed any farther	Passage banned Pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles must not pass through
			
Automobiles' passage banned No automobiles can pass through	One way Automobiles can go only to the arrowed direction	Only Automobiles can go only to the arrowed directions	Parking and stop banned during the designated hours No automobiles can park or stop during the designated hours
			
No parking during the banned hours during the designated hours No automobiles can park during the designated hours	No crossing by pedestrians Pedestrians must not cross the street	Only for pedestrians and bicycles Only pedestrians and bicycles may pass through	Only for pedestrians Only pedestrians may pass through

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(2) Basic rules for pedestrian

Where there is a sidewalk, be sure to walk on it.



Where there is no sidewalk, walk on the right side of the street.

Observe traffic lights even if you are in a hurry.



Do not cross the street through between two parked or stopped automobiles.



Be sure to use any crossings or a pedestrian bridge. Where there is no crossing or pedestrian bridge, cross the road after carefully looking in both directions and confirming no automobiles are approaching.



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(3) Basic rules for bicycles

Do not run parallel to another bicycle.



Ride on the left end of the road.



Be fully alert to the movements of automobiles and pedestrians.



A sidewalk with a sign allowing the passage of bicycles can be used by bicycles.



On sidewalks, pedestrians are given priorities. Bicycles must not speed along or force pedestrians aside by ringing the bell. Bicycles must stop temporarily when they likely hinder pedestrians.



At night be sure to run with the headlight on.



When you come across a place with a stop sign, be sure to follow it to confirm the safety of both sides.



At cross roads with traffic lights, be sure to follow the lights. When there is a bicycle lane along the cross roads, proceed on the lane.



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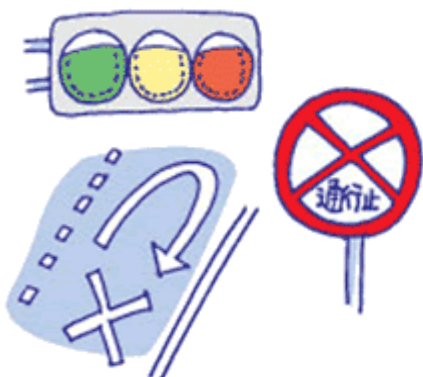
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(4) Basic rules for motorbikes and automobiles

Never drive automobile or motorbike if you don't have a driver's license or when you have drunk alcohol. Failure to observe this rule, which could pose grave dangers, is subject to severe punishment.



When you are aboard an automobile, you must wear a seatbelt whether you are the driver or a passenger. Children below six years of age must be seated on a child seat. Motorcyclists must always wear a helmet.



Follow traffic lights, traffic signs and road signs.



Do not use a mobile phone while driving.



When somebody is about to cross a crosswalk, stop to let them pass first before you drive through.

When you come across a place with a stop sign, be sure to follow to confirm the safety of both sides.



In Japan, accidents frequently occur involving elderly people. When you see them while driving, try to run with a special care.



5 Traffic accidents

Recently there has been an increasing number of traffic accidents caused by non-Japanese people. Traffic accidents can occur anytime anywhere. This part is spared for introducing insurance systems in possible cases for causing an accident or being a victim of it.

5-1 Traffic accident and automobile insurance

(1) In the case of causing a traffic accident

When you happen to have caused a traffic accident, immediately stop your vehicle, rescue the injured, take danger prevention measures on the road and notify police.

(i) Notification to police

Stop your vehicle at a safe place where it will not disturb the traffic and immediately notify police (telephone number: 110). If somebody is injured, call an ambulance to ensure the safety of the injured.



(ii) On-site inspection

When police arrive, have them confirm the site of the accident. Stay at the site until police arrive (except when there are any injured persons). If you do not obey this rule, you may lose your eligibility to receive insurance payments at later times.



(iii) Mutual confirmation

Tell the other party of the accident your address, name and contact number and receive the same information about them.



(iv) Notify the insurance company

Failure to notify this may void your eligibility to receive insurance payments. Insurance companies can give you advice to help you after an accident and negotiate with victims on your behalf. It is advisable to have negotiations in this way.



(2) In case of becoming a victim of a traffic accident

(i) Mutual confirmation

Confirm the address, name, telephone number, car number, etc. of the person who has caused the accident. Be sure to give them your name, address and telephone number as well.



(ii) Notification to police

Immediately notify a nearby police station (telephone: 110). This is a must to acquire an accident certificate, which you will need to seek damage from the person who caused the accident and insurance companies.



(iii) Go to a hospital and have a medical certificate prepared

You need your medical certificate to charge treatment expenses to the person who caused the accident and insurance companies. You are advised to have such certificate prepared even if your injury is minor.



(iv) Preparation of employment certificate

If your injury disables you from working, contact your employer (company) to have an employment certificate prepared. A certificate prepared by your employer is necessary, when you claim damage of absence from work to the one who caused the accident and insurance companies.

* If you are injured in a traffic accident, you are eligible for compensations provided by the automobile liability insurance and optional insurance contracted by the person who caused the accident.

** If you are hit in a traffic accident during work or while commuting, you are eligible for compensations provided by workers accident compensation insurance as well.



(3) Compulsory insurance (automobile liability insurance)

There are compulsory and optional insurance programs. In Japan every automobile owner is required by law to enter into an automobile liability insurance program. The entry is automatically made at the time of purchasing an automobile or undergoing a regular safety inspection. This type of insurance is applicable only when the insured automobile or motorbike causes death or injury to any third party while running. It compensates the damage incurred by the victim up to certain designated amounts. Such compensation can cover the minimum necessity but may not be sufficient in some cases that require huge sums of compensation. Automobile owners are advised to additionally enter into an optional insurance contract.

(4) Optional insurance

Optional insurance covers such types of damage as are excluded from the compulsory insurance coverage, such as property damage (caused by accidents in which third persons' belongings are damaged) and vehicle damage (theft of vehicles). They also cover those personal damage cases which are partly covered by the compulsory insurance but ultimately exceed the limits designated by the compulsory insurance.

You can enter into optional insurance programs provided by private insurance companies.



5 Traffic accidents

5-2 Consultation on traffic accidents and mutual aid traffic accident insurance plans

(1) Consultation on traffic accidents

If you have caused a traffic accident or been involved in one, consult an advisor at a specialized consultation office at the earliest possible time. An experienced counselor will look into your case. For complicated problems, a lawyer will give you advice. The consultation is free of charge and confidentiality is observed.

Please enquire at your local municipal administrative office for the information on these consultation services.

(2) Mutual aid traffic accident insurance plan

This plan offers a consolation payment when any of its members becomes a victim of a traffic accident caused by automobiles or motorbikes inside Japan.

For further details, please enquire at your local municipal administrative office.



5 Traffic accidents

5-3 Compensation for damages and calculation methods

(1) Compensation for damages

If you have become a victim of a traffic accident, there are basically four types of damage you can seek:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expenses related to medical treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compensation for damages caused by absence from work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consolation fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compensation for death or residual disabilities (lost earnings and consolation money)

(2) Calculation methods for damages

Calculation methods differ between automobile liability insurance, optional insurance and the calculation method of the Bar Association.

Automobile liability insurance	The upper limit for treatment expenses, etc. during the period required for medical treatment is 1.2 million yen. In addition to this payment, in cases where residual disabilities caused by the accident are diagnosed, insurance payments are made depending on the degrees of the disabilities. The payment of automobile liability insurance is basically not exempted unless the victim is found to have caused grave fault. But most of the payments are spent on treatment expenses, and in many cases little is left for work-absence compensation or consolation money.
Optional insurance	The upper limits differ among optional insurance programs
Calculation method by the Bar Association	Method used by the Bar Association for civil suits. The idea of "failure ratio" is used to determine the degree of liabilities owed by the person caused the accident and the victim, respectively. The amount of damage differs depending on this ratio.