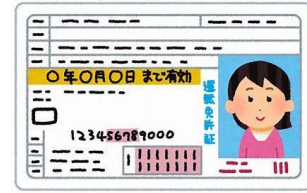


Cars & Driving

Driver's License

運転免許証
unten menkyoshō



You may drive a car in Japan with an international driver's license issued outside Japan or with a Japanese license.

International Driver's License

An International Driver's License that has been issued abroad is valid for 1 year from your entry into Japan or until your driver's license expires, whichever comes first. If your official license says you can ride a motorcycle, you can ride one here. Officially you can use your International Driver's License, but it is not renewable in Japan after 1 year. If you stay in Japan longer than 1 year, you must get a Japanese driver's license.

Japanese Driver's License

There are two ways to obtain a Japanese driver's license.

1. Obtaining a Japanese driver's license for the first time

It is necessary to do what every beginning native Japanese driver must do: attend a driving school, take a written test about traffic rules in Japanese, and take a driving skill test.

It will cost you about ¥300,000 to obtain a regular basic driver's license by attending a driving school in Niihama.

2. Obtaining a Japanese driver's license from your foreign driver's license issued in your home country

You need to make a reservation.

Ehime-ken Driver's License Center (ehime-ken unten menkyo center 愛媛県運転免許センター)

TEL: (089) 934-0110

You must go to the Ehime-ken Driver's License Center and must take with you:

- ① Your Residence Card
- ② Your passport (with entry and exit records)
- ③ A valid foreign driver's license with a translation in Japanese verified by *JAF, a foreign embassy or a consulate in Japan. The license must have been issued at least 3 months before. The translation/check by JAF is ¥3000.
- ④ One passport-size photo (3 cm x 2.4 cm) taken within 6 months
- ⑤ You will be required to take an aptitude test, a simple written test, and a road test. The written test is available in some foreign languages. (Please check before you go at the Ehime Prefecture Driver's License Center.)
- ⑥ Your international driver's license (If it does not include the date of issuance, some document that certifies the date of issuance is needed.)

(If you don't speak Japanese, you will need to take an interpreter with you.)

3. Fees: to convert your foreign driver's license to a Japanese driver's license: ¥4,200

Information on the Japanese Translation for Switching a Foreign Driver's License to a Japanese License by JAF:

https://jaf.or.jp/-/media/1/2590/2708/pdf_info_english_2017_ippan_001.pdf?la=ja-JP

*JAF: Japan Automobile Federation

Address 松山市 南江戸 5丁目 15-32
Matsuyama-shi Minami-edo 5 chōme 15-32
TEL: (089) 925-8668

Ehime Driver's License Center (ehime-ken unten menkyo center 愛媛県運転免許センター)

Address 松山市 勝岡 1163-7
Matsuyama-shi, Katsuoka 1163-7
TEL: (089) 978-4141

Application

From 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. and from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays.

Procedures will depend on where your foreign driver's license was issued. Applicants from exam-exempt countries and regions need only take the aptitude test. Applicants from other countries must take an aptitude test, a simple written test, and a driving test. It is advisable to call in advance.

Further information: Metropolitan Police Department

https://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/multilingual/english/traffic_safety/drivers_licenses/index.files/convert_license_english.pdf



Automobiles and Traffic Rules

交通法規
kōtsū hōki

Common Traffic Signs



Road
Closed



Vehicle
Entry
Prohibited



No Parking
or Stopping
8 a.m.-8 p.m.



Slow
Down



One-Way



Road Closed
to Vehicles



No U-turn



No Parking
8 a.m.-8 p.m.



Stop



Slow:
school, kindergarten,
nursery school zone



Bicycles and
pedestrians
only



No
Pedestrian
Crossing

Important traffic rules

Traffic in Japan drives on the left-hand side of the road.

All passengers must wear seat belts.

Children 6 and under must use a child safety seat.

NO DRUNK DRIVING! Driving under the influence of alcohol is prohibited in all circumstances.

No using mobile phones while driving. You will be stopped and ticketed.

You must not drive without a driver's license.

Cars must be parked in designated parking areas. If you park on the street without approval, this will be a parking violation and your car may be towed away.

You cannot buy a car unless you have procured a proper parking place.

If you become a member of JAF (Japan Automobile Federation), you can telephone for help to get your vehicle repaired if you have a breakdown.

When You Receive a Traffic Ticket

交通違反チケット

kōtsū ihan chiketto

If you receive a blue-colored traffic violation ticket, pay the fine noted on the ticket at one of the designated post offices or banks within 7 days after receiving the ticket. If you have any objections, you can go to court and dispute it.

If you receive a red ticket which is issued for comparatively serious violations or accidents, you must go to traffic court where the amount of the fine will be determined.

There is also a point system as a penalty for traffic violations and traffic accidents. Points are fixed for each kind of traffic violation and accident (drunken driving has the highest points). If the points accumulated over a 3-year period reach a certain level, your driver's license will be suspended or revoked.

For further information: Niihama Police Office Traffic Section (niihama keisatsu sho kōtsūka
新居浜警察署交通課)

TEL: (0897) 35-0110



Procedures for Buying a Car, Truck, or Motorcycle

車、トラック、バイクの購入手続
kuruma, truck, baiku no kōnyū-tetsuzuki

New vehicles:

Parking (shako 車庫)

Before you buy a standard-sized car, you must submit to the police a parking space certificate showing that you have a parking space to the police. Otherwise, you cannot either buy or register your car.

When you buy a light vehicle, you are required to submit a parking space certificate within two weeks from the registration. If you don't have a parking space of your own, you will have to rent a parking space within 2 km of your house and get written approval from the landowner.

Automobile Inspection (shaken 車検)

Automobiles and motorcycles 250cc and over must be inspected at regular intervals. You must carry an inspection certificate when driving. For further information:

Contact ① for a standard-sized car

Contact ② for a light vehicle

① The Ehime Office of the Shikoku District Land Transportation Bureau

1070 Morimatsu-chō, Matsuyama

For registration TEL: (050) 5540-2076

<http://wwwwtb.mlit.go.jp/shikoku/benri/touroku.html>

For Automobile Inspection (shaken) TEL: (089) 956-1561

<http://wwwwtb.mlit.go.jp/shikoku/benri/kensa.html>

② The Ehime Management Office of Inspection Association for Light Vehicle

1814-2, Minamitakai-chō, Matsuyama

TEL: (050) 3816-3124

<https://www.keikenkyo.or.jp/kagawa/ehime/ehime-000264.html>

Insurance (hoken 保険)

Two types of automobile insurance which cover traffic accidents:

1. Compulsory Insurance (kyōsei hoken 強制保険)

You must enroll in the compulsory automobile insurance plan when purchasing a vehicle or when having your vehicle inspected. Enroll where you purchase your vehicle or at a vehicle maintenance shop. (This insurance covers cases in which you kill or injure someone while driving a car or a motorcycle.)

2. Optional Insurance (nin-i hoken 任意保険).

Compulsory Insurance has only limited coverage. Optional Insurance plans will cover accidents not included in the compulsory insurance plan. Furthermore, since compulsory insurance may not completely cover increasingly expensive damage awards, some level of optional insurance sold by private insurance companies is recommended.

Vehicle Registration (sharyō tōroku 車両登録)

When you own or use a car or a motorcycle, you are required to have it registered under your own name or the name of a legal entity such as a company. To do that, you must submit a certificate of registration for a personal seal. If you have not had your seal registered, you must have it registered at the local government office.

What is needed to have your car registered?

1. When buying a new car

① Standard-sized car (White license plate with green characters):

Parking space certificate, certificate of registered seal, seal (self-inking stamps not allowed). The dealer will prepare an authorization letter for you to sign and seal.

② Light vehicle (yellow registration number plate)

Certificate of residence, any personal seal (but self-inking stamps not allowed) Something showing where you will park the car

For legal entities: the organization's registered seal is necessary.

Usually, your car dealer will have the car registered for you.

2. When buying a used car or getting a used car from an acquaintance

① Standard-sized car (White license plate with green characters)

Parking space certificate, authorization letter (Can be downloaded at www.milt.go.jp/common/001287982.pdf), deed of transfer, certificate of seal registration, seal (self-inking stamp not allowed)

Not only the new owner but also the previous owner are required to submit an authorization letter and a parking space certificate.

When ownership of a vehicle remains with the car dealer or credit company, make sure that they terminate their ownership.

② Light vehicle (yellow license plate)

Certificate of residence, personal seal (self-inking stamp not allowed) parking space certificate

When you buy a used car, your car dealer will have your car registered for you. If you buy a car directly from an acquaintance, you must carry out the proper procedure yourself by preparing what is needed for the procedure with the help of your acquaintance while checking ① and ②.



Automobile Safety Inspection

車の安全点検

kuruma no anzentenken

usually abbreviated as "Shaken"

When you drive a car in Japan, a periodic inspection of the car (shaken 車検) at an auto repair shop is mandatory. If you buy a new car, you must have your passenger car inspected 3 years after you get it. In the case of a truck or freight-carrying car, you must do it 2 years after purchase. After that, cars with white number plates must be checked every 2 years and trucks every year. For light vehicles (yellow registration number plate) both passenger cars and trucks must be checked every 2 years.

If you buy a used car, you must have it checked by the date of expiration of your “shaken” or inspection, which is shown on the automobile inspection certificate.

The inspection will take 1 to 2 days. The cost of the inspection depends on the size, type, and age of the car, its mileage, the level of its maintenance condition, its automobile weight tax, etc. Roughly speaking it costs ¥85,000 to ¥155,000 to have a standard car inspected and it costs ¥65,000 to ¥105,000 to have a light vehicle inspected.

Light Vehicles and Standard-sized Automobiles

A light vehicle is a car with a yellow license plate. The engine capacity and the body are smaller, so the automobile tax, automobile weight tax, and the inspection fee are lower.

A standard car is a car with a white license plate. Compared to a light vehicle, its engine capacity and body are larger. Although standard cars are superior in comfort and safety, the automobile tax and cost of maintenance, including the inspection, are higher. The procedures for registration, change of ownership, and disposal are much more complex than for a light vehicle.

