

## Private Housing

When looking for a place to rent, you should consult a real estate agent in the area in which you want to live. After finding a suitable place to live, you will need to enter into a lease contract with the landlord. Consequently, an understanding of these procedures and Japanese customs is essential to ensure that your move goes as smoothly as possible.

A Guide to Rental Housing and Rules for Living in Japan

(Saitama Prefectural Government International Division website: In Japanese, English, Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish)

URL: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0306/tabunkakyousei/sumaisupport.html>

### (1) Information on Private Housing

Rent and Management Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>① Rent is paid monthly in advance.</li><li>② A management or common service fee for common facilities used with other tenants, such as a cleaning service and shared lighting, is added to the rent.</li></ul>
Size of House and Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>① The size of a house is indicated by the total floor space, including not only living areas, but also the toilet, bathroom and kitchen. It is usually measured in square meters (e.g. 30m<sup>2</sup>).</li><li>② The size of each room is indicated by the number of tatami mats that can be laid on the floor. One <i>jo</i> (tatami mat) is about 1.6m<sup>2</sup>. The rooms are categorized as either Japanese or Western style.</li></ul>
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>① Basic wiring and piping for utilities such as electricity, water and gas are supplied. However, to use these utilities the tenant must contact the respective companies.</li><li>② Houses do not come furnished, nor are gas ranges or light fixtures provided.</li></ul>
Location	Location is usually indicated in number of minutes from the nearest station (e.g. A 15-minute walk from Urawa Station).

### (2) Before Entering into a Lease Contract

A lease contract clearly specifies the rights and obligations of both the tenant and landlord. Your signature on such a contract is legally binding and indicates that you agree to and will

abide by the terms and conditions listed therein. It is therefore imperative that you understand the contents of the contract before signing. When entering into a lease contract, you are required to present an official copy of your Resident Record and Residence Card, a certificate of income and your name seal certificate. A guarantor or written oath is also usually required.

### (3) Types of Lease Contracts

Regular lease contract	When a term of the contract terminates, the same contract will renew (continue) in principle. Contract renewal commissions and other fees may be charged.
Fixed-term lease contract	Once the term of the contract expires, the same contract will not be renewed. You may enter into another contract (a new contract) to rent the same apartment. To sign another contract, you will need to pay a realtor's fee, etc.

### (4) Payment Required when Entering into a Lease Contract

Rent ( <i>yachin</i> )	Rent is paid in advance. Therefore, when first moving into a property, you have to pay 2 months' rent (the current and the following month). Rent is usually paid by bank transfer.
Deposit ( <i>shikikin</i> )	A deposit of 1-3 months' rent is given to the landlord when you sign the lease contract. This money is used to pay any outstanding rent and expenses for repairing the property. The balance, if any, is refunded to you when you move out.
Key Money ( <i>reikin</i> )	Generally 1-2 months' rent is paid to the landlord as key money. This money is non-refundable.
Realtor's Fee ( <i>chūkairyō</i> )	This is the commission paid to the real estate agent. In principle, the tenant and landlord each pay the equivalent of half a month's rent, total 1 month's rent. However, if both parties agree, the proportion paid by each party may be changed.

## (5) General Terms and Conditions of a Lease Contract

Guarantor	Often you need to have a guarantor when applying for an apartment. If you do not have a guarantor you may discuss with the agent the option of using a company that supplies guarantors.
Payment of Rent	Rent must be paid 1 month in advance by the date stated in the lease contract.
Occupants	You cannot allow anyone other than family members to live with you without the prior consent of your landlord.
Subletting	You cannot sublet any or all of the property to a third party.
Renovating and Redecorating	You must obtain your landlord's permission before installing or changing fixtures such as gas piping or electric wiring, renovating, or redecorating the premises.
Lease Termination	When terminating a lease prior to its full term, you must notify your landlord of your intention to do so. This notification must comply with the time frames stated in your lease contract. If you terminate the lease without notifying your landlord, your deposit will not be refunded.
Conditions at the End of the Lease	Be aware that there are instances where deposits are not returned and exorbitant cleaning charges are made at the end of leases. You should agree as to what fees will be required at the end of the lease before you sign.
Pets	Most landlords do not allow pets. Therefore, if you wish to keep a pet, please clarify this point with the real estate agent and check if the contract allows a tenant to keep a pet before entering into the lease contract.



## Consultation and Inquiries

### Finding a Real Estate Agent to Help You Find a Home

Website	URL
Saitama Prefecture Housing Support Network (A list of real estate agents supporting foreigners, etc.)	<a href="http://www.sasn.jp/search/mise.php">http://www.sasn.jp/search/mise.php</a>
Saitama Prefectural Government International Division (Lists of real estate agents supporting foreigners, etc., one in Japanese with <i>furigana</i> and another in English)	<a href="http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0306/sumaisupportlist.html">http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0306/sumaisupportlist.html</a>

### Consultations on Lease Contracts

Problems	Office	Telephone	Hours (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rental contracts</li> <li>• Advice on problems related to living in or leaving a housing unit</li> </ul>	Housing Consultation Plaza, Saitama Housing Supply Corporation	048-658-3017	Daily (Open on National Holidays) 10:00 - 18:30
	Saitama of Real Estate Transaction Association	048-811-1820	Mon - Fri 9:00 - 17:00
	Saitama Headquarters, All Japan Real Estate Association	048-866-5225	Mon - Fri 9:00 - 16:30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rental contracts</li> <li>• Real estate agents</li> </ul>	Construction Safety Division, Saitama Prefectural Government	048-830-5488	Mon - Fri 9:00 - 16:30