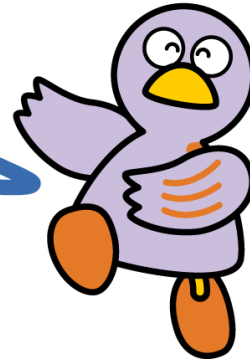


## Chapter 10

### Driver's License



Saitama's Prefectural Mascot  
Kobaton

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You must have a Japanese driver's license to be able to drive in Japan. To obtain one, you will either need to pass the Japanese driving test or pass a review to have your overseas driver's license converted into a Japanese license.

You can also drive a vehicle permitted by your license for up to one (1) year from the date of your arrival in Japan if you have:

- an international driver's license issued by a member nation/country of the Geneva Convention; or
- a driver's license from a country or region designated by Japanese government ordinance (Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Monaco, Taiwan) with a Japanese translation attached.

However, if your license expires during this one (1) year period, you will not be allowed to drive once it has expired.



## Consultations and Inquiries

Office	Phone	Address	Reception Hours
Driver's License Center, Saitama Prefectural Police Department	048-543-2001 (Main Number)	405-4 Konosu, Konosu-shi	Mon - Fri (Excluding National Holidays, holidays, and the New Year's holiday period) 8:30 - 17:15

### 1 Applying to Convert Your Overseas Driver's License

If you have a valid driver's license issued overseas that can be converted, you can apply to convert it into a Japanese license if you resided in the country that issued the license for at least 3 months after obtaining it. In Saitama, you can apply for this at the Saitama Prefectural Police Driver's License Center. You will need the following documents:

- Passport
- Residence Card, or Special Permanent Resident Certificate, etc.
- Resident Record (with all your details (excluding your Individual Number))
- Your overseas driver's license
- An official Japanese translation, either by your country's embassy or consulate in Japan, or by a corporation designated by the National Public Safety Commission (The Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) or ZIPLUS only)
- Two photos (3.0cm x 2.4cm)
- Application fee

Since you may need to provide documentation in addition to what is listed above, please check the Saitama Prefectural Police's website for the necessary materials to bring.

Please have your documentation screened at the Saitama Prefectural Police Driver's License Center before applying. (For your documentation to be reviewed, a reservation made online through the Saitama Prefectural Police's website is required. For those who have not had their documents screened beforehand, they will not be able to switch applications.)



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## 2 Renewing Your Driver's License and My Number Card

You must renew your license and My Number Card within the renewal period (from one month before your birthday to one month after your birthday, i.e., within one month of your birthday).

A Japanese driver's license is valid for 3 to 5 years, depending on the driver's age and driving history. The expiry date is written on the license.

(\*1) The period of validity is written on the driver's license.

Please check the renewal notification that will be mailed to you as well as the Saitama Prefectural Police's website just before the renewal period begins for specific details regarding where to renew your license, reception times, (\*2) application fees, as well as the (\*3) necessary items to bring (please bring a copy of one of the following: driver's license, residence card, special permanent resident certificate, or an official copy of your certificate of residence (juminhyo) that has the length of time that you plan to stay in Japan written on it).

If you have not received the renewal notification in the mail, please go to a nearby police station (excluding the Konosu Police Station) or the Driver's License Center during business hours to inquire.

\*1) For those of you that have a My Number Card, you can confirm the period of validity and other details within the specialized app.

\*2) At the offices, we only accept cashless payments.

For those that have difficulty making cashless payments, it is also possible to pay at institutions such as a convenience store, a bank, or a post office. However, since this will require extra time and effort, please prepare in advance for cashless payment.

\*3) ・ Those who have a My Number Card are not included.

・ For those not subject to the Residential Basic Book Act, identification issued from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or a similar institution, as well as a public institution, is required.

・ For those who do not have the required items, renewing identification such as your driver's license cannot be completed.

You will need the following to renew your driver's license:

- ・ Driver's license
- ・ Document that certifies your status of residence (Residence Card, Special Permanent

Resident Certificate, a copy of your Resident Record that does not show your Individual Number, or passport)

- Application fee

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### 3 Driver's License Tests

- (1) Place of application: Driver's License Center (Saitama Prefectural Police Department)
- (2) Reception hours: 8:30am - 9:15am, Monday to Friday  
(Closed on national holidays, holidays, and from 29 December until 3 January of the following year)

\*For written tests as well as technical tests, you must make an appointment through the Saitama Prefectural Police website.

- (3) You will need to bring the following (documents may vary depending on the type of license test):
  - Driver's License Written Application
  - Residence Card, Special Permanent Resident Certificate, or another form of identification
  - Resident Record (with all your details (excluding your Individual Number))
  - 2-3 photos (3.0cm x 2.4cm)
  - Application fee
- (4) Written tests can be taken in the following languages.
  - For Class One, Class Two, and Provisional Licenses (20 languages)  
English, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Indonesian, Ukrainian, Urdu, Korean, Khmer, Sinhala, Spanish, Thai, Tagalog, Nepali, Hindi, Persian, Burmese, Mongolian, Russian
  - For moped licenses (4 languages)  
English, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese

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### 4 What to Do When Your License Expires

If you do not renew your license before the expiration date, you will be required to apply for a new license. However, if you take the driver's license test within a certain period of time after the expiration date, it is possible to obtain a license with measures that exempt you from taking part of the test (the written and practical sections). (If your license expires, you cannot

drive until a new license has been issued.)

Procedures can be completed at the Driver's License Center, Saitama Prefectural Police Department.

**(1) If you failed to renew your license without a valid reason:**

- a) If it has been less than 6 months after expiration: Although it is possible to obtain a new license without taking the written and practical sections of the test, your driving history will not be carried over from your old license.
- b) If it has been more than 6 months, but less than 1 year after expiration: For large, mid-sized, semi-mid-sized or standard vehicle licenses, you can obtain for a provisional license without taking the written and practical sections of the test. For all other license types (vehicle types without provisional licenses, such as special large motor vehicles and motorcycles), there is no such exemption.

**(2) If you failed to renew your license due to unavoidable circumstances (such as hospitalization, living abroad, etc.):**

- a) If it has been less than 6 months after expiration: Through certain procedures, it is possible to obtain a new license without taking the written and practical sections of the test. In this instance, your driving record will be carried over from your previous license.
- b) If it has been more than 6 months, but less than 3 years after expiration: You can obtain a new license without taking the written and practical sections of the test if procedures are completed within one month after the unavoidable circumstances have subsided. In this instance, your driving record will be carried over from your previous license.

**(3) Important Information**

- a) Reception times  
13:00 - 13:45, Monday to Friday (Closed on national holidays, and from 29 December until 3 January of the following year)
- b) Required documents
  - ① Your expired license
  - ② Your Residence Card or Special Permanent Resident Certificate, etc.
  - ③ Resident Record (with all your details (excluding your Individual Number))
  - ④ One photograph (3.0cm x 2.4cm) (Three photographs if you are applying for a provisional license)
  - ⑤ Renewal Notification Postcard (it is still possible to apply without this)

- ⑥ Documentary evidence (medical certificate, passport, etc.) to prove you were unable to renew your license due to unavoidable circumstances
- ⑦ Application fee

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## 5 Updating Your Personal Details

When personal details such as your address or name change, you are required to register these changes on your driver's license and My Number Card. Please do this as soon as possible at your nearest police station (excluding the Konosu Police Station) or the Driver's License Center. You will need to bring the following documents with you:

### (1) Change of Address

- For those subject to the Residential Basic Book Act:  
Please bring one of the following: A copy of your residence card, special permanent resident certificate, or a certificate of residence (juminhyo) that has the length of time that you plan to stay in Japan written on it
- For those not subject to the Residential Basic Book Act:  
Please bring both of the following: Identification issued from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or a similar institution as well as a public institution is required.

### (2) Change of Name or Nationality

- For those subject to the Residential Basic Book Act:  
An official copy of your certificate of residence (juminhyo) that has the length of time that you plan to stay in Japan written on it
- For those not subject to the Residential Basic Book Act:  
A document such as your passport

\*For those who change their My Number Card, please carry your new card

\*For those who are just notified of a change, there will be no processing fee

\*For those who do not know what items are necessary to bring, please visit or contact your nearest police station (excluding the Konosu Police Station) or the Driver's License Center during business hours to inquire.

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## 6 Buying and Registering a Vehicle

When you buy or deregister a vehicle, or change the owner's name or address on record, you must register these changes with the relevant institution below:

Vehicle Type	Location
Standard vehicles, and motorcycles over 125cc	Vehicle Inspection and Registration offices within your jurisdiction
Light vehicles (660cc or less)	Saitama Branch of the Association of Light Vehicle Inspection, or other local branch offices
Motorcycles (125cc or less)	The tax division of your local municipal or ward offices

When purchasing and registering standard vehicles, you will need the following (to change the registered name):

- Transfer certificate (stamped with the registered seal of the former owner)
- Seals of both new and former owners (registered seals) or a power of attorney stamped with their registered seal (for proxy applications)
- Seal registration certificates from both the new and former owner (issued within the last 3 months)
- Parking space verification (issued within the past 40 days)
- Vehicle inspection certificate (must be within the period of validity)

\*When you also apply to change your car's license plate number, you will need to bring your car in addition to the documents listed above.

\*If details such as the address and name of the owner listed on the vehicle inspection certificate are different from the seal registration certificate, a document such as a Resident Record certifying the change is required.

When you move (change your address), you will need following:

- Resident record (issued within the last 3 months)
- Parking space verification (issued within the past 40 days )
- Power of attorney (for proxy applications)

\*If the vehicle owner and vehicle user differ, an application for each person is necessary.

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- Vehicle inspection certificate

\*When you also apply to change your car's license plate number, you will need to bring your car in addition to the documents listed above.

For more information, please contact the offices listed below.



### Consultations and Inquiries

Office	Phone	Address	Reception Hours
Saitama Transport Branch Office, Kanto District Transport Bureau	050-5540-2026 Service code: 037	2154-2 Nakakugi, Nishi-ku, Saitama-shi	Mon - Fri (Excluding National Holidays and the New Year's holiday period)  8:45 - 11:45 13:00 - 16:00
Kumagaya Automobile Inspection & Registration Office	050-5540-2027 Service code: 037	701-4 Shimobayashi, Miizugahara, Kumagaya-shi	
Tokorozawa Automobile Inspection & Registration Office	050-5540-2029 Service code: 037	688-1 Shimoharakotsu, Ushinuma, Tokorozawa-shi	
Kasukabe Automobile Inspection & Registration Office	050-5540-2028 Service code: 037	723-1 Mashito, Kasukabe-shi	

Saitama Transport Branch Office website:

[https://www.tb.mlit.go.jp/kanto/s\\_saitama/index.html](https://www.tb.mlit.go.jp/kanto/s_saitama/index.html)

For a light vehicle (*keijidousha*), you will need the following (to change the registered name):

- Resident Record of the new user (issued within the last 3 months)
- Vehicle inspection certificate
- Written application (for proxy applications)

\*For license plate number changes, you will also need your license plate in addition to the documents listed above.

\*If the names of the vehicle owner and user are different from what is listed on the vehicle inspection certificate, please contact the owner (the car dealership, loan company, etc.) in advance.

\*For more information, please contact:



**Consultations and Inquiries**

Office	Telephone	Address	Reception Hours
Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization	050-3816-3110	505-1 Mae, Hirakataryoryoke, Ageo-shi	Mon - Fri (Excluding holidays and the New Year's holiday period)  8:45 - 11:45 13:00 - 16:00
Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization, Tokorozawa Branch Office	050-3816-3111	360-3 Kitanagai, Miyoshi-machi, Iruma-gun	
Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization, Kumagaya Branch Office	050-3816-3112	960-2 Kitahara, Niibori, Kumagaya-shi	
Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization, Kasukabe Branch Office	050-3816-3113	115-1 Higashi-kochi, Shimoomashi Shinden, Kasukabe-shi	

Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization Website

<https://www.keikenkyo.or.jp/>

For inquiries about purchasing and registering motorcycles (125cc or less), please contact your local municipal office.

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## **7 Automobile Insurance**

There is insurance for automobiles in case you get into a motor vehicle accident. There are two types of automobile insurance: mandatory liability insurance (mandatory insurance) and automobile insurance (voluntary insurance). In addition to mandatory insurance, it is recommended that you enroll in voluntary insurance that covers damages.

### **(1) Mandatory Liability Insurance (mandatory insurance)**

When you purchase a vehicle or have it inspected, even including motorbikes and e-scooters, you must enroll in mandatory liability insurance (*jibaiseki hoken*) as it is required for all motorized vehicles. This is insurance that provides coverage if you cause injury or death to another person with your vehicle. As there is a limit on the amount of coverage, amounts in excess of this limit will not be covered by mandatory liability insurance. Usually, you enroll in this insurance at general insurance company agents such as car dealerships or mechanic's shops.

### **(2) Automobile Insurance (voluntary insurance)**

Voluntary insurance (*nin'i hoken*) provides coverage for damages in excess of the mandatory liability insurance limit and compensation that is not covered by mandatory liability insurance (including damage to other people's property, your own vehicle, and injuries). Typically, you apply for voluntary insurance at agencies of general insurance companies.

 **Consultations and Inquiries**

Name	Phone	Reception Hours
The General Insurance Association of Japan Counseling and ADR Center	03-4332-5241	Mon - Fri (Excluding National Holidays, holidays, and December 30 to January 4) 9:15 - 17:00 * Available only in Japanese. * You cannot apply for automobile insurance through this phone service. To apply for automobile insurance, please contact a general insurance company. Link to contact information of general insurance companies: <a href="https://www.sonpo.or.jp/soudan/reference.html">https://www.sonpo.or.jp/soudan/reference.html</a>

\* Website for visitors and foreign residents of Japan: "Information on Staying Safe in Japan"



<https://living-and-ins.jp/ja/>