

(4) Cars, Motorcycles, and Bicycles

① Valid driving permits in Japan

International Driving Permits (IDPs) issued by countries signatory to the 1949 Geneva Convention

Anyone with an IDP issued by a country signatory to the 1949 Geneva Convention can drive in Japan.

- It is valid for up to one year from the date you landed in Japan OR until the expiration date of your IDP, whichever comes first.
However, if you leave Japan with a re-entry permit and return to Japan within three months of the date you left, your landing date will be considered the date you first landed in Japan, not your re-entry date when counting the date for the validity of your IDP.
- Your IDP cannot be renewed in Japan.
- If you reside in Japan for one year or longer, you should change your IDP to a Japanese driver's license.

☆ Useful website:

http://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/multilingual/english/traffic_safety/drivers_licenses/geneva.html

Foreign driver's licenses

If you have a driver's license that was issued in Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Monaco, Estonia or Taiwan and always have a Japanese translation of your license with you, you can drive in Japan.

- It is valid for up to one year from the date you landed in Japan OR until the expiration date of your foreign driver's license, whichever comes first.
However, if you leave Japan with a re-entry permit and return to Japan within three months of the date you left, your landing date will be considered the date you first landed in Japan, not your re-entry date when counting the date for the validity of your foreign driver's license.
- A Japanese translation of your license must be prepared by the embassy or consulate of the issuing country in Japan or Japan Automobile Federation (JAF).
*Regarding a driver's license that was issued in Taiwan, a Japanese translation must be prepared by the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association (if you obtain a Japanese translation in Taiwan) OR the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan or Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) (if you obtain it in Japan).
- You must always have your original foreign driver's license, Japanese translation of your license, and your passport with you when you drive.

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☆ Useful website:

<http://www.jaf.or.jp/e/translation/with.htm>

Japanese driver's licenses

If you have a driver's license that was issued overseas and meet the two following conditions, you can change it to a Japanese driver's license.

There are some countries or regions where a written test or a driving test is exempted at the driving schools when you make the change.

- Your driver's license that was issued overseas is valid. (An expired driver's license cannot be changed.)
- You can prove that you stayed in the country that issued your license for at least 3 months in total including the date you obtained it.

In Japan, people generally go to a driving school to prepare for the written test and driving test to get a driver's license.

Driving school costs between 200,000 to 300,000 yen.

Please contact any driving school for further information.

★ Where to follow the procedures when you change to or newly obtain a Japanese driver's license (in Osaka):

- ◆ Kadoma Driver's License Examination Office
TEL: 06-6908-9121
- ◆ Komyoike Driver's License Examination Office
TEL: 0725-56-1881

☆ Useful website:

Metropolitan Police Department "Foreign Driver's Licenses and International Driving Permits"

http://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/multilingual/english/traffic_safety/drivers_licenses/index.html

② Cars and Motorcycles

A Registration or reports of any changes

Registration or reports of any changes are required in the following cases:

- When you buy a car/motorcycle at a shop. (The shop will take care of all the necessary procedures.)
- When you buy or someone gives you a car/motorcycle. (You will need to take care of all the necessary procedures on your own.)
- When you sell or give someone your car/motorcycle.
- When the owner of the car/motorcycle's name or address changes
- When you scrap your car/motorcycle.
- When you lose your car/motorcycle's license plate.

★Where to make enquiries and follow procedures:

- ◆ Cars: Izumi office for Motor Vehicle Inspection and Registration, Osaka District Transport Bureau
TEL: 050-5540-2060
- ◆ Kei cars (Lightweight cars): Izumi Branch, Osaka Office, Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization
TEL: 050-3816-1842
- ◆ Motorcycles (over 125cc): Izumi office for Motor Vehicle Inspection and Registration, Osaka District Transport Bureau
TEL: 050-5540-2060
- ◆ Motorcycles (125cc or under): Tax Administration Division at Izumisano city hall
TEL: 072-463-1212 (extension: 2131 to 2148)

B Parking space certificates (*Shakoshomei*)

To register your new car, you need a parking space certificate to show that you have a place to park it.

In Izumisano city, Kei car owners are not required to have one.

★Where to make enquiries and follow procedures:

- ◆ Your car dealer
- ◆ Izumisano Police Station
TEL: 072-464-1234

C Vehicle inspections (*Shaken*)

Your car must undergo a regular inspection to check that it meets all the standards under the law.

You are not allowed to drive cars that have not passed this inspection on public roads.

★Where to make enquiries and follow procedures:

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- ◆ Your car dealer
- ◆ Cars: Izumi office for Motor Vehicle Inspection and Registration, Osaka District Transport Bureau
TEL: 050-5540-2060
- ◆ Kei cars (Lightweight cars): Izumi Branch, Osaka Office, Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization
TEL: 050-3816-1842

D Purchasing car insurance

There are two types of car insurance: one is “Automobile liability insurance” that by law all drivers must have and the other is “Voluntary insurance” that drivers can choose to purchase or not.

We recommend purchasing “Voluntary insurance” to help minimize the financial impact if you are involved in an accident.

E Taxes

Automobile tax is imposed on an individual who owns a car, Kei car, or motorcycle as of April 1st of every year.

Please note that you must follow all the necessary procedures, such as changes of ownership, scrapping notifications, etc. at the designated municipal offices* when you sell, give away, or scrap your car/Kei car/motorcycle, or any of them was stolen.

Otherwise, the tax will be imposed on you forever.

*Designated municipal offices;

- ◆ Cars and motorcycles (over 125cc): Izumi office for Motor Vehicle Inspection and Registration, Osaka District Transport Bureau
- ◆ Kei cars (Lightweight cars): Izumi Branch, Osaka Office, Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization
- ◆ Motorcycles (125cc or under): Tax Administration Division at Izumisano city hall

How to pay

For car owners

Osaka Prefecture will mail you a tax payment slip at the beginning of May.

You will need to pay the tax by the end of May.

★Where to make enquiries:

Izumi Branch, Osaka Motor Vehicle Tax Office

TEL: 0725-41-1327

For Kei car or motorcycle owners

Izumisano city hall will mail you a tax payment slip at the beginning of May.

You will need to pay the tax by the end of May.

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★Where to make enquiries:

Tax Administration Division at Izumisano city hall

TEL: 072-463-1212 (extension: 2131 to 2148)

③ Bicycles

You are also required to register bicycles.

Registration

You need to get a security registration for your bicycle at a bicycle shop.

Purchasing insurance

All bicycle owners must purchase “Bicycle liability insurance.”

Cautions

To avoid having any problems, you should not use a bicycle that has been abandoned.

Do not use a bicycle unless you know who the owner is.

Parking

There are areas (often in front of a station, etc.) where it is prohibited to park motorcycles or bicycles (No Parking Areas).

If you park your motorcycle or bicycle in a No Parking Area, it will be taken away and transferred to a storage space.

It will be stored there for one month.

Once it has been taken away, you will have to pay a fee to get it back.

☆ Useful website:

Metropolitan Police Department “Traffic rules”

http://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/multilingual/english/traffic_safety/traffic_rules/index.html