

17. Transportation

(1) Basic Traffic Rules

Pedestrians keep to the right while cars and bicycles must keep to the left.

Pedestrians take precedence over cars.

Obey instructions given by police officers, and observe traffic signals and signs.

Pedestrians

Use sidewalks if available. If none are available, keep to the right side of the road.

Use pedestrian crosswalks and observe pedestrian signals when crossing the road.

Bicycles

Keep to the left side of the road in a single file line.

Bicycles may use the sidewalk where so indicated.

Two persons riding one bicycle, riding without lights, and riding drunk are prohibited.

Two-wheelers · Automobiles

All drivers must possess a driver's license and obey all traffic rules.

Using a cell phone and drunk driving are both prohibited. Both driver and passengers will be punished for drunk driving.

A helmet must be worn when riding a two-wheeler.

When riding a car, everyone must put on seatbelts, and children under six years of age must be securely placed in a child safety seat.

(2) Public Transportation

Bus

When you get on a bus, please take a numbered ticket. Check the destination at the front of the bus or ask the driver where the bus is going before getting on. Push the buzzer when the bus stop you want to get off is announced. Check the fare by looking up the number of your ticket on the fare chart displayed at the front of the bus, and drop the fare in the fare box next to the driver's seat as you get off the bus.

Taxi

There are three ways to catch a taxi:

- a) Call a taxi company
- b) Flag down a cruising taxi on the street
- c) Get on at a taxi stand

Tell the driver your destination when you get on. Also, please note that taxis in Japan have automatic opening/closing rear doors.

Train

Purchase a ticket after you have found your destination and corresponding fare on the route map above the train station's ticket vending machines. You will pass through automatic ticket gates before and after getting on trains.

Tram (SHIDEN)

There are trams running in Toyohashi. The fare is a fixed 150 yen for adults and 80 yen for children. Please pay when you get on. Push the buzzer when the tram stop you want to get off is announced.

(3) Driving a Car

In Japan, one cannot simply use a driver's license obtained in another country.

Rules vary by country, but as a general rule, one must apply and pass an aptitude test, a subject test (English available), and a technical test.

A driver must have one of the following with them when driving a car in Japan:
Japanese driver's license.

International driver's license based on the Geneva Convention (licenses from countries which have not ratified the Geneva Convention, such as China, Brazil, and Iran, cannot be used)

Foreign driver's license (currently only those issued by Switzerland, Germany and France). A valid Japanese translation must be attached.

Period of Validity

: Until the license's expiration date

& : 1 year from the date of entry into Japan or until the license's expiration date, whichever is shorter

Changing a Foreign Driver's License into a Japanese Driver's License

You may apply to convert to a Japanese driver's license at The East Mikawa Driver's License Center (HIGASHI MIKAWA UNTEN MENKYO SENTA)

Mon, Tues & Thurs 9 am ~ 11:30 am

(Closed on holidays, substitute holidays, and Dec. 29 ~ Jan. 3)

TEL : 0533-85-7181 2-7, Kanaya Nishi-machi, Toyokawa (see map on p.109)

To convert to a Japanese driver's license, you must satisfy the following conditions:

- Have stayed in the country where the license was issued for a total of 3 months or more after getting your license.
- Have a legal driver's license that is still valid in the country where the license was issued.
- Pass the written and driving tests.

Note

- You must apply in person.
- Please have an interpreter accompany you if you cannot understand nor write in Japanese.
- 2nd-class driver's license (i.e. bus or taxi) cannot be converted.

Required Items

- Original and 1 photocopy (both sides) of your foreign driver's license
 - Japanese translation of your license contact information listed below
 - Original passport (with stamp indicating date of entry) and 1 photocopy of pages with ID picture, period of stay, and visa stamp
 - JYUMIN-HYO (Resident's Record) for Japanese citizens, Certificate of Details Recorded on Original Alien Registration for foreigners.
 - Original and 1 photocopy (both sides) of your Alien Registration Card
 - 1 photo (taken within the last 6 months, head uncovered, facing forward, plain background, from the chest up, 3 cm x 2.4cm)
- * Requirements may vary by country. Please contact East Mikawa Driver's License Center for details.

For questions concerning driver's license translations

Japan Automobile Federation - Aichi Prefectural Branch Toyohashi Office
1-8-6 Tsutsujigaoka, Toyohashi TEL : 0532-64-0150

"KOTSU NO KYOSOKU - Rules of the Road" available in English

Price: ¥1,000 Easy-to-understand explanation of Japan's traffic rules

To obtain a Japanese driver's license, one must take a written test (English available) and a driving test. One must study Japan's traffic rules beforehand.

It is possible to take the test straightaway at East Mikawa Driver's License Center, but one usually commuted to a private driving school.

(4) Owning a Car

Car Registration

You must register your car when purchasing a vehicle. The car dealership you purchased your car at usually handles most of the paperwork for you. You must notify whenever there is a change in your registration, even when discarding your car.

Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

<http://www.mlit.go.jp> (English available)

- Toyohashi Automobile Inspection and Registration Office
20-3, Kyonowari, Jinno Shinden-cho, Toyohashi TEL : 050-5540-2049
- Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization, Toyohashi Branch Office
18, Kyonowari, Jinno Shinden-cho, Toyohashi TEL : 0532-34-3311

Auto Insurance..... Insure your vehicle against accidents

a) Compulsory Insurance (automobile liability insurance)

.....Required by law for car and motorcycle owners.

b) Voluntary Insurance

.....Enrollment is not compulsory, but it is highly recommended because injuries and damages caused by accidents are extremely expensive in Japan.

Secure a Parking Space

You must keep your car off the road within 2km from your place of residence. If you do not have any space to keep it within your premises, you must rent a parking space or garage nearby.

Automobile Inspection (SHAKEN)

SHAKEN (periodic automobile inspection) is where the National Agency of Vehicle Inspection undertakes the process of examining whether vehicles comply with safety regulations for road vehicles. SHAKEN and a valid Motor Vehicle Inspection Certificate (SHAKEN-SHO) is required to drive in Japan. For further information, please contact the organization stated above.

Managing your Car

Never allow a drunk or unlicensed individual to drive your car. Keep your car keys in a safe place at all times so that no one drives your car without your permission.

(5) What should you do if you get into an automobile accident ?

Accident rates are rising. What if you are the one who caused an accident?

What to do if it happens to you:

If you are a driver, move your car out of the way of traffic to a safe place to prevent another accident, and then turn off the engine.

If there are any injured people, call an ambulance [119]

Do not move the injured person unless he/she is in danger. In such a case, move the person to a safe place.

Call the Police [110]

Inform the police the accident site, number of injured people, and degree of injury, and the police will give you appropriate instructions.

Confirm the other party's name, address, phone number and license plate number. This is because you will later be required to present a Traffic Accident Certificate (JIKO SHOMEI) issued by the police to your insurance company to claim for compensation.

Be examined by a doctor

Even a slight or minor injury should be reported to the police. Additionally, visit a doctor to be examined, especially if you hit your head.

Report about the accident to your insurance company