

Changing an Overseas License to a Japanese License

Conditions for Changing Your License

- ① Your current license must still be valid.
- ② You must be able to prove that you have lived in the country where the driver's license was issued for at least three months in total after obtaining your license.
- ③ You must have the necessary knowledge of traffic procedures as established by Japanese rules and regulations, as well as any other knowledge and skills necessary for the operation of an automobile.

Preliminary Review

To change a foreign license to Japanese one, please submit a color or black-and-white copy of the following documents by mail.

After the preliminary review has been completed, we will provide you with the date that your documents will be examined.

Mailing address : 「〒994－0068 Yamagata Prefectural General Traffic Safety Center, Driving Test Section,1300, Oaza Takadama, Tendo City, Yamagata Prefecture 」

Please submit copies of the following documents for the preliminary review.

- ① Overseas Driver's License (both sides)
- ② Documents which can prove that you have lived in the country where the driver's license was issued for at least three months in total after obtaining your license. e.g. passport (with entry/exit stamps), certificate of entry and exit, certificate of enrollment at university, etc.
- ③ Resident Record or "Jumin-hyo-shohon" without an individual number. A record stating your permanent address (and your nationality, in the case of overseas residents). Your current address should be within Yamagata Prefecture.
- ④ Resident Card or Special Permanent Resident Certificate (if you are a resident from overseas)
- ⑤ A Japanese translation of your overseas license issued by any of the following faculties:
 - * Embassies or consulates
 - * The Japan Automobile Federation (JAF)
 - * ZIPLUS Co., Ltd
 - * Taiwan-Japan Relations Association (for licenses issued in Taiwan)
 - * The German Automobile Federation (for licenses issued in Germany)
- ⑥ Other documentation
 - * Those who have a Chinese License----an identity card issued by Chinese government
 - * Those who have a Philippine License ---- Official Receipt
 - * Those who have a Pakistan License----a license certification issued by embassies
 - * When the issuing date of your license is not clear, we might ask you to submit a document that certifies it. (e.g Driver's License Record, etc.)
- ⑦ Memo with a point of contact. (e.g, a daytime telephone number we will be able contact you on when your preliminary review is complete)

Examination of Paperwork

※After finishing the preliminary review, we will examine your paperwork together with you at a designated date and time.

Please bring the following documents

- ① Master copy of documents which you brought or mailed in for the preliminary review
- ② Any specific documents that have been requested following your preliminary review
- ③ An ID photograph(3.0cm long and 2.4cm wide)
- ④ Examination fee (e.g. License for Ordinary Motor Vehicles: 2550yen, License for Motorcycles: 2600yen)
- ⑤ Issuance fee 2050yen

If you are unable to communicate in Japanese, you must be accompanied by an interpreter or similar.

Theory Test

- ① A test of knowledge necessary to drive vehicles (available in 21 languages).
- ② Consists of 10 questions in 5 minutes.(A score of at least 7 out of 10 is required to pass the test)

Practical Test

- ① For those who have passed the theory test.
- ② Carried out at the General Traffic Safety Center, Driving Test Course.

Issuing the Driver's License

The Driver's License will not be issued on the same day on which you take the test.
The license will be issued later on after taking a photo at the center.

Contact Details and Appointment Information

- ① Phone Number: 023-655-2150 (Monday to Friday 9:00am-5:00pm)
- ② Please follow the audio instruction on the phone and press 「1」
- ③ You can book re-attempts for practical and theory tests in advance.

The countries and regions mentioned below are exempt from the theory test and practical test.

You are not required to take a theory test or practical test, if your license was issued by the authorities in the following countries and regions.

Australia, Austria, State of Hawaii / Maryland / Ohio / Oregon / Colorado / Virginia / Washington (U.S.A.), Belgium, United Kingdom, Canada, Czech, Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Taiwan

You are not required to take a practical test, if your license was issued by the authorities in the following countries.

The United States of America (State of Indiana only)

A Note of Caution When Using an International License

Due to a revision of the Road Traffic Law, the period during which you can drive using an International License has been reduced.

There are some people residing in Yamagata Prefecture who are driving on International Licenses obtained abroad.

International Licenses are issued based on the Convention on Road Traffic (the Geneva Convention). In Japan, these licenses shall be valid for driving for one year calculated from the date of arrival in Japan or for one year from the date of issue of the International License, whichever comes first.

The Road Traffic Law states the following;

“When a registered resident of Japan leaves Japan and returns in less than three months, the date of their return will not be used as the beginning of the period of validity of their International License.”

Therefore, in case the period of validity of your International License is over and you wish to drive vehicles in Japan with a reissued International License, you need to have been outside of Japan continuously for at least three months and get a reissued International License during this stay outside of Japan.

If you possess a Foreign Driver's License issued by the authorities of Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Monaco and Taiwan with a Japanese translation, you will be allowed to drive in Japan. But in the case the International License period is not within one year calculated from the date of arrival in Japan, you cannot drive vehicles in Japan with it.

Yamagata Prefectural General Traffic Safety Center Driving Test Section