

# For Holders of Foreign Driver's Licenses

## How to Drive in Japan

---

■ In order to drive in Japan, drivers need to hold any one of the following driver's licenses:

- 1) A Japanese driver's license
- 2) An International Driving Permit pursuant to the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic

\* In cases where International Driving Permits are issued by countries or regions that are not contracting parties to the Geneva Convention, or where countries or regions that are contracting parties to the Convention do not issue such permits in the forms prescribed in the Convention, drivers cannot drive with International Driving Permits issued by these countries or regions.

- 3) Foreign driver's licenses

Driver's licenses issued by foreign countries or regions\*1 (limited to driver's licenses that are accompanied by Japanese translations prepared by persons\*2 prescribed by the Cabinet Order)

\*1 Only countries or regions that do not issue International Driving Permits and are prescribed by Cabinet Order as those with a system of driver licensing that is deemed to be of an equivalent standard to that of Japan (Kingdom of Belgium, French Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Principality of Monaco, Swiss Confederation, and Taiwan (as of September 7, 2021. Please check with the prefectural driver's license centers for the latest updates.))

\*2 Persons that the Cabinet Order prescribes as those who may prepare Japanese translations are as follows (they do not include legally certified translators of foreign countries or regions):

- 1) Competent administrative agencies with the authority to issue driver's licenses of foreign countries or regions, or the consular offices of the countries or regions (agencies that issue driver's licenses of foreign countries or regions, or embassies or consulates of the countries or regions in Japan)
- 2) Among legal or other persons notified by administrative agencies that have jurisdiction over laws equivalent to the Road Traffic Act (limited to the part pertaining to driver licensing) of foreign countries or regions to the National Public Safety Commission as those with the capacity to prepare Japanese translations of driver's licenses of the foreign countries or regions, those who the National Public Safety Commission finds to be appropriate (the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association in cases of Taiwanese driver's licenses and Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club e.V. in cases of German driver's licenses are recognized at the present time); and
- 3) Legal persons designated by the National Public Safety Commission as those who can properly and reliably prepare Japanese translations of driver's licenses by the administrative agencies of foreign countries or regions that pertain to licenses to drive vehicles, etc.

■ How long are drivers allowed to drive in Japan?

- 1) Japanese driver's licenses: during the valid period of the Japanese driver's license indicated therein
- 2) International Driving Permits or foreign driver's licenses: a period of not more than one year after the date of the driver's landing in Japan or the valid period of the International Driving Permits or foreign driver's licenses, whichever is shorter (however, in cases where persons registered in the Residential Basic Book departed Japan after the confirmation of departure, the granting of re-entry permission, etc., and returned to Japan within a period of not more than three months, their date of return to Japan (landing in Japan) shall not be the initial day of reckoning for the period when drivers with an International Driving Permit or foreign driver's license are allowed to drive\*).

\* Please refer to the attached figure for the period when drivers are allowed to drive with an International Driving Permit.

**How to Obtain a Japanese Driver's License**

■ When the prefectural public safety commission confirms that persons granted driver's licenses by foreign countries or regions have:

- (1) Knowledge of road traffic rules and other knowledge on driving motor vehicles, etc.
- (2) Records of driving motor vehicles, etc.
- (3) Skills related to driving motor vehicles, etc.

they will be exempted from the Japanese knowledge and skills tests and be able to obtain a Japanese driver's license to drive motor vehicles, etc., the driving of which was allowed by the driver's license of the foreign country or region.

In addition, persons with driver's licenses issued by countries or regions (\*) that have a system of driver licensing that is deemed to be of an equivalent standard to that of Japan will be exempted from the confirmation of their driving knowledge and skills as well.

\* Please check with the prefectural driver's license centers for the applicable countries.

■ Place of application

Driver's license centers, etc., of the prefectural police with jurisdiction for the domicile of the applicant in Japan

■ Notes

- 1) The applicant must have stayed in a country or region for a period of three months or longer in total after he or she was granted a driver's license of the country or region (documents that can verify the length of their stay, such as passports with the seals of verification for departure and entry, are required).
- 2) Applications by agents are not allowed. Please ensure that the applicant applies in person.

■ Documents, etc., necessary to apply for a driver's license

- 1) Application form
  - \* Along with the application form, the applicant needs to complete and submit the questionnaire on symptoms of diseases and other matters (available in 18 foreign languages, including English and Chinese). If the applicant has any pertinent question answer, officials will ask him or her about said answer, such as symptoms, in detail.
- 2) One photo for application
  - \* The photo must be taken within six months of the date of application and be 3.0 cm long and 2.4 cm wide, showing the applicant hatless (the applicant is allowed to cover his or her head with a cloth, etc., for religious or medical reasons, as long as the facial contour of the applicant is clear), in a front-facing pose, from the waist up, and against a solid background, with the name of the applicant and the date and time it was taken written on its back side.
- 3) An official copy of the applicant's resident record that includes his or her registered domicile (passport, etc., in cases where the applicant is not subject to the Residential Basic Book Act)
- 4) The health insurance card, Individual Number Card (My Number Card), residence card, etc., of the applicant (for presentation)
- 5) The driver's license of a foreign country or region (an International Driving Permit alone is not allowed)
- 6) Japanese translation of the above license (limited to one that is prepared by persons prescribed by Cabinet Ordinance (see \*2 on pages 1) and specifies the type of motor vehicles, etc., which the applicant is allowed to drive under the license, the valid period of the license, and the conditions imposed on the license)
- 7) Documents that can verify that the applicant stayed in the foreign country or region for three months or longer in total after the license was granted, including the passport with the seals of verification for departure and entry
- 8) Fees

■ Other Matters

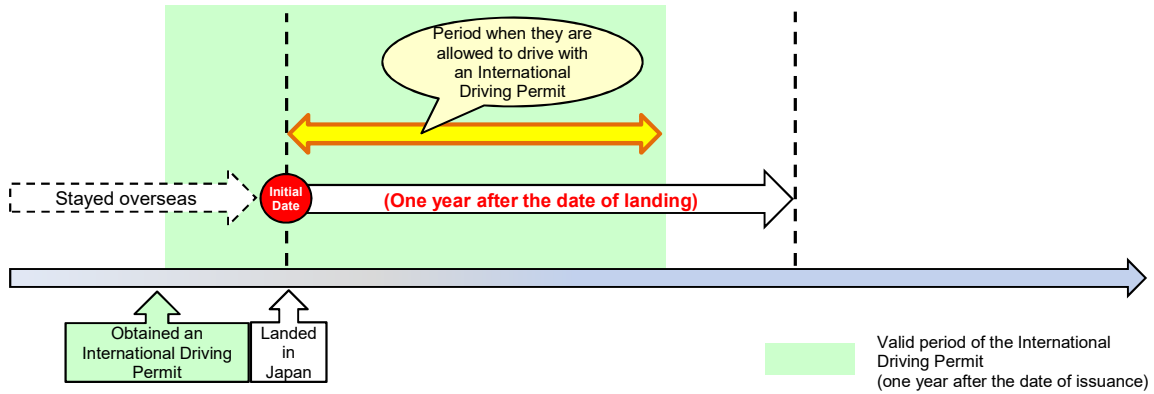
The safety driving consultation desks of the prefectural police, etc., can provide consultations on diseases, disabilities, and other matters.

Please inquire about the details of the place of application, hours for acceptance of applications, documents necessary for application, fees, and any other matters to the driver's license centers of the prefectural police where you are applying.

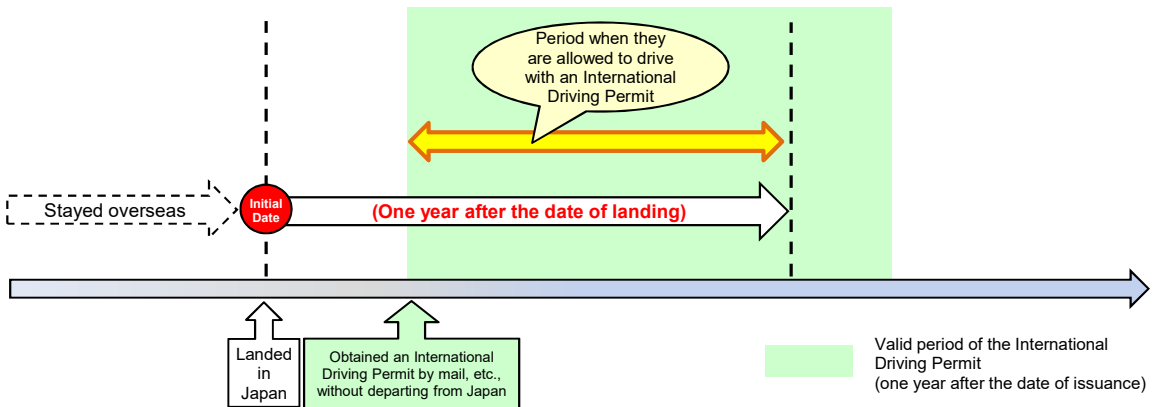
# How Long Drivers with International Driving Permits Are Allowed to Drive

## 1 If persons not registered in the Residential Basic Book land in Japan

(1) If they landed in Japan for the first time after obtaining an International Driving Permit

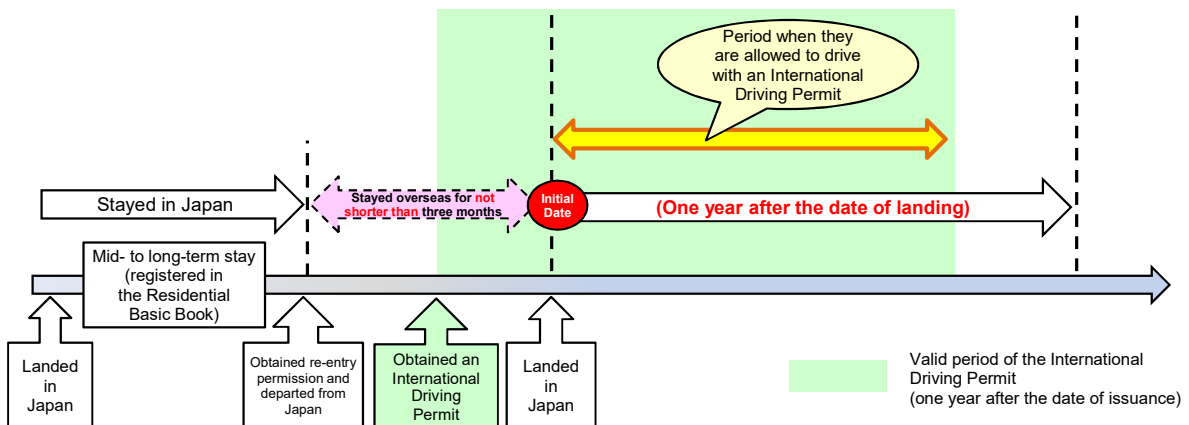


(2) If they obtained an International Driving Permit after the first landing in Japan

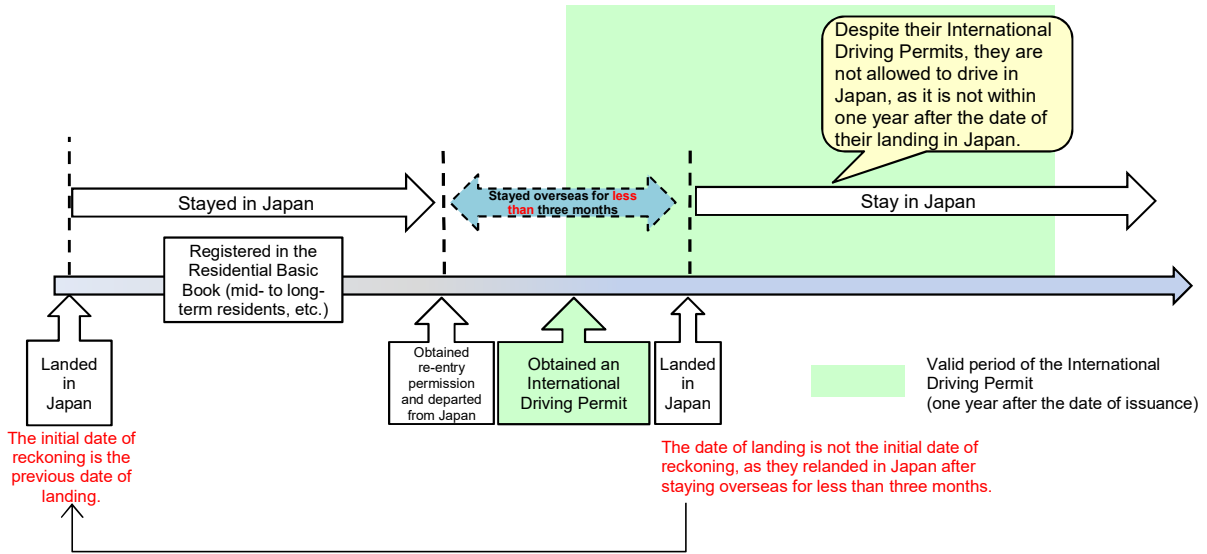


## 2 If persons registered in the Residential Basic Book departed from and relanded in Japan

(1) If they relanded in Japan after staying overseas for a period not shorter than three months



**(2) If they relanded in Japan after staying overseas for less than three months  
(common cases for foreign nationals)**



**(3) If they relanded in Japan after staying overseas for less than three months  
(common cases for Japanese nationals)**

